



MS | RISK

West Africa Report

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

January 5 - 18, 2015



About MS Risk

MS Risk is a privately owned company domiciled in the Isle of Man. It is underwritten by syndicate 2525 of Lloyd's of London for special risks case management in all jurisdictions. It also acts as retained advisors to syndicates in the Lloyd's of London specialty risk insurance markets: kidnap for ransom, extortion, hijack, illegal detention, illegal war tax, malicious product tamper, terrorism, political and war risk.

MS Risk is always mindful and compliant to legislation and guidelines on the use of private security services including, but not limited to the US FCPA (1977), UK Bribery Act (2010), Canadian Bill C-48 (2007), ASX 8 Corporate Governance Principles, and the World Bank/IFC Voluntary Principles on the Use of Government and Private Security Forces. MS Risk is a signatory of the Swiss government's International Code of Conduct. It is transparent and compliant to market expectations on legal and ethical conduct in the performance of services.

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

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

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

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

24 hr Contact Information:

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

Summary

January 5 - 18, 2015



Follow us on Twitter @ MS Risk_Security for regular updates on topical security events and issues.

Sahel Region

Regional Reporting

- **15 January 2015** – According to the United Nation's Ebola chief, while new cases of Ebola are on the decline, at least fifty Ebola hotspots remain across the three hardest-hit West African countries.
- **8 January 2015** – The World Health Organization reported Wednesday that while the West African countries currently affected by the on going Ebola outbreak have made great strides in a bid to stem the spread of the deadly virus, they have missed the 1 January targets towards halting the epidemic.

Benin

- **8 January 2015** – Benin’s president Thomas Yayi Boni has indicated that his country will “in a few weeks time” send medical practioners to assist Liberia in its fight to contain the Ebola outbreak.

Burkina Faso

On the Ground Reporting

- **14 January 2015** – Construction activities at the Vancouver-based miner True Gold’s Karma gold project in Burkina Faso were temporarily suspended on Wednesday after an impromptu protest damaged certain property and assets.
- **15 January 2015** – On Thursday, Amnesty International officials demanded a full inquiry into a bloody military crackdown on protesters that occurred just days before the toppling of president Blaise Compaore.

Domestic News

- **13 January 2015** – Members of Burkina Faso’s parliament have decided to cut their salaries by half.

The Gambia

On the Ground Reporting

- **11 January 2015** – President Yahya Jammeh has indicated that Britain had no involvement with dissidents who attempted to topple his government 30 December.
- **10 January 2015** – Relatives have reported that the mother of the man believed to have led last month’s coup attempt in The Gambia has been held by security forces for over a week.
- **7 January 2015** – On Wednesday, The Gambia’s government accused the former head of the presidential guard of leading a small group, which included two former US soldiers, in a failed coup attempt late last month.
- **6 January 2015** – Gambian President Yahya Jammeh has vowed to track down the plotters of a failed coup attempt, which sought to unseat him last week, promising to “get rid of them one by one.”

Domestic News

- **13 January 2015** – On Tuesday, Gambian President Yahya Jammeh appointed Mama Fatima Singhateh as attorney general and minister of justice in what is the latest change in the top ranks of the government after an attempted coup late last month.
- **9 January 2015** – Gambia’s President Yahya Jammeh has replaced Minister of Justice Basiru Mahoney in what is the second cabinet reshuffle to take place since a failed coup attempt late last month.
- **6 January 2015** - Less than a week after a failed coup attempt, President Yahya Jammeh has handed the foreign and communications portfolios to journalists in what is the latest government reshuffle.

International Developments

- **5 January 2015** – The United States Justice Department disclosed Monday that two men have been charged in the US with attempting to overthrow The Gambia’s President Yahya Jammeh.

Guinea

- **16 January 2015** – Guinea’s Health Minister announced Friday that all schools across the country will reopen on Monday, after being closed last year amidst the Ebola outbreak.
- **14 January 2015** – In the latest violence spurred by the deadly Ebola virus, police officials reported Wednesday that two men were killed and their bodies burned by an angry mob convinced that the victims had infected a local with Ebola.

Ivory Coast

On the Ground Reporting

- **10 January 2015** – The Ivory Coast's defense ministry announced Saturday that two Ivory Coast troops were killed in a night attack on army positions near the Liberian border.
- **6 January 2015** – On Tuesday, the first defendants in the trial of the Ivory Coast's former first lady Simone Gbagbo and 82 others accused of fomenting deadly post-election violence, were called to the stand.

Liberia

On the Ground Reporting

- **11 January 2015** – The Liberian government on Sunday announced that it is investigating reports of fighting near its border with neighboring Ivory Coast, which reportedly led to the death of two Ivorian soldiers.
- **5 January 2015** – An official announced on Monday that Liberia is planning to reopen schools in February, six months after the government ordered them closed because of the Ebola outbreak.
 - The lockdown in the northern Tonkolili district has been extended for two weeks as authorities increase the fight to contain the spread of Ebola.

Mali

On the Ground Reporting

- **17 January 2015** – Suspected Islamist militants attacked a UN base in northern Mali with car bombs and rockets on Saturday, killing one Chadian member of the UN peacekeeping mission and wounding another.
- **16 January 2015** – At least two Malian soldiers were killed Friday in a jihadist attack on the town of Tenenkou in central Mali.
- **9 January 2015** – In what is the latest in a string of attacks on foreign forces, seven UN peacekeepers were wounded by a blast that hit their vehicle near the airport in the northern Malian town of Kidal on Friday.
- **7 January 2015** – On Wednesday, suspected Islamist militants killed one person in an attack in central Mali, just two days after eleven troops were killed in an assault on a nearby military base.
- **6 January 2015** – France has deployed fighter jets to Mali where fresh attacks carried out by Islamist insurgents have left several dead near the Mauritanian border and in the country's northern area.
- **5 January 2015** – According to a UN military source, at least eight people were killed in a gun attack Monday on a Malian army base located close to the Mauritanian border.
 - The UN mission in Mali revealed Monday that at least six UN peacekeepers were wounded when their vehicle hit a roadside bomb in northern Mali on Sunday.

Domestic News

- **11 January 2015** – Mali's President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita named a new slimmed-down government on Saturday, with cabinet members replaced in key defense and economic posts.
- **8 January 2015** – On Thursday, Mali's Prime Minister Moussa Mara resigned, more than a year after his party lost parliamentary elections.

International Developments

- **5 January 2015** – The US Homeland Security Department is ending Ebola-related airport screening procedures for travellers from Mali.

Mauritania

On the Ground Reporting

- **16 January 2015** – On Thursday, police in Mauritania used tear gas in a bid to disperse protesters after three anti-slavery activists were sentenced to two years in prison.

Domestic News

- **6 January 2015** – Mauritania's main opposition bloc has rejected a call for dialogue by President Mohamed Ould Abdel-Aziz.

Niger

- **17 January 2015** – In a second day of violent protests in Niger over the depiction of the Prophet Mohammad on the cover of France's Charlie Hebdo weekly magazine, rioters torched at least eight churches in Niamey on Saturday.
- **16 January 2015** – Four people were killed Friday after protests, over the French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo publishing more cartoon images of the Prophet Mohammad a week after Islamist gunmen shot dead twelve people at its office in Paris, turned violent in Niger.
- **14 January 2015** – On Wednesday, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) warned about the plight of tens of thousands of refugees who have fled to Niger in a bid to escape the on going violence in northeastern Nigeria.
- **6 January 2015** – Nigerien officials have disclosed that they will not be involved in any attempts to retake the key northeastern Nigerian town of Baga from Boko Haram.
- **5 January 2015** – The mayor of a border town in Niger has revealed that towns in the country are living in fear following the advance of Boko Haram into neighboring northeastern Nigeria.
 - Two of the defendants in a baby trafficking case in Niger have been brought before prosecutors, accused of trying to leave the capital during their trial.

Nigeria

On the Ground Reporting

- **18 January 2015** – A suicide bomber drove a car packed with explosives into a busy bus station in the northeastern town of Potiskum on Sunday, killing four people and wounding 35.
- **16 January 2015** – A suicide bomber killed at least five people and wounded eleven on Friday near a marketplace in northeastern Nigeria.
- **15 January 2015** – On Thursday, Nigeria's President Goodluck Jonathan paid a surprise visit to the heartland of the Boko Haram movement.
- **15 January 2015** – Newly released satellite images by Amnesty International depict widespread destruction of Nigerian towns recently attacked by Boko Haram and suggest a high death toll.
- **14 January 2015** – Nigeria's military disclosed Wednesday that soldiers had repelled a new Boko Haram attack after a two-hour gun battle in the restive northeastern region of the country.
- **13 January 2015** – The United Nations reported on Tuesday that the latest wave of attacks in northeastern Nigeria has sent 11,320 people fleeing into Chad in a matter of days.
 - A suicide bomber was killed on Tuesday when his explosives vest detonated as he rode towards a security checkpoint in the northeastern city of Gombe.
- **12 January 2015** - Nigeria's police chief on Monday warned politicians and their supporters against violence before next months' presidential election.
- **11 January 2015** – At least four people were killed and twenty-one injured in the city of Potiskum on Sunday when two

female suicide bombers, one of them aged about fifteen, blew themselves up in a crowded market.

- **10 January 2015** – Red Cross officials and local vigilantes have reported that at least twenty people were killed and eighteen injured on Saturday when a young girl, believed to be aged 10, blew herself up at a crowded market in the northeastern city of Maiduguri.
 - Hours after a suicide bomber attacked the market in Maiduguri, a suspicious vehicle that had stopped at a checkpoint outside the city of Potiskum, in neighboring Yobe state, exploded at a police station as its driver was being taken in for questioning.
- **9 January 2015** – On Friday, militants fought running battles with troops in Damaturu, the state capital of Yobe, leading to the destruction of a mosque, a market and several shops.
 - On Friday, Nigerian forces, backed by air strikes, began fighting for control of the town as Amnesty International suggested the attack on Baga was the “deadliest massacre” in the Islamist militant group’s history.
- **8 January 2015** – Local officials reported Thursday that Boko Haram militants have razed at least sixteen towns and villages in a renewed assault just days after they captured a key military base in the restive northeastern region of Nigeria.
- **6 January 2015** – On Tuesday, Nigeria’s chief of defense staff acknowledged that Boko Haram militants have seized the headquarters of a multinational military force on Nigeria’s border with Chad.

Regional Reporting

- **18 January 2015** – Suspected Boko Haram militants have kidnapped dozens of people in raids carried out in neighboring Cameroon.
- **16 January 2015** – Ghana’s President John Mahama disclosed Friday that the African Union (AU) could seek a UN mandate for a force to fight Nigeria’s Boko Haram Islamist insurgents however he noted that it must first establish its own regional military operation to combat the militants.

Domestic News

- **14 January 2015** – Nigeria’s electoral commission has re-registered around ten million voters who were wrongly struck off the roll a year ago due to technical glitches.
- **13 January 2015** – Nigeria’s electoral agency disclosed Tuesday that next month’s elections will go ahead in the three northeastern states that have been the worst-hit by Boko Haram’s violence however they have warned that there is little prospect that voting will take place in those areas currently under the militant group’s control.
- **10 January 2015** – The spokesman for Nigeria’s main opposition All Progressives Congress (APC) party has denied accusations that the party is planning to electronically rig the February general elections by hacking into the server of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).
- **9 January 2015** – Five weeks before the presidential elections are due to take place, Nigeria’s electoral commission disclosed Friday that it has not yet finished printing the cards that voters will be required to present at polling stations.
- **8 January 2015** - On Thursday, Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan formally began his campaign for re-election with a mass rally at a key opposition stronghold.

Senegal

- **5 January 2015** – Senegal is preparing to deport an exiled Gambian opposition figure who called for his countrymen to rise up and overthrow President Yahya Jammeh during a failed coup attempt late last month.

Sierra Leone

- **14 January 2015** – Despite registering 19 new Ebola cases over a 24-hour period, Sierra Leone’s president has predicted that there will be zero new confirmed cases by the end of March.

- **13 January 2015** – According to the head of the Ebola Call Centre in Sierra Leone, Reynold Senessie, 80% of people phoning the toll-free Ebola help number are prank callers.
- **10 January 2015** – A district in Sierra Leone has been declared Ebola-free after 42 days with zero recorded cases of the deadly virus.
- **8 January 2015** – On Friday, President Ernest Bai Koromoa will visit parts of the country that have been severely affected by the Ebola outbreak.
- **7 January 2015** – On Wednesday, officials at the World Health Organization (WHO) disclosed that Sierra Leone, the country worst affected by Ebola, reported nearly 250 new confirmed cases in the past week, noting however that the spread of the virus may be slowing.

Togo

- **8 January 2015** – Party leaders confirmed Friday that Togo's opposition party has failed to persuade the ruling party to support a two-term presidential limit that would prevent President Faure Gnassingbe from running for office again.

Security Summaries for West African States

Sahel Region – Page 10

Benin – Page 12

Burkina Faso – Page 13

The Gambia

Ghana

An outbreak of the Ebola virus disease has been confirmed in Guinea, Sierra Leone, Mali and Liberia. There currently are no confirmed Ebola cases in Ghana. 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.

Guinea – Page 16

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, Mali 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.

Ivory Coast – Page 20

Liberia – Page 23

Mali – Page 26

Mauritania – Page 32

Niger – Page 34

Nigeria – Page 35

Senegal

Sierra Leone – Page 43

Togo

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, Guinea, Liberia, Mali 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.

Regional Reporting

- **15 January 2015** – According to the United Nation’s Ebola chief, while new cases of Ebola are on the decline, at least fifty Ebola hotspots remain across the three hardest-hit West African countries. The latest report released by the World Health Organization (WHO) shows a reduction of case reporting in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, which Dr David Nabarro has indicated “is very good news.” In the week leading up to the end of 11 January, the WHO indicated that Guinea reported its lowest weekly total of new Ebola cases since mid August while Liberia had its lowest total since the first week of June, with no confirmed new cases for the final two days of the week. In Sierra Leone, new cases have been declining for a second week to the lowest level since the end of August. While Dr Nabarro has noted that these declines in new cases means that the Ebola outbreak is starting to decrease, he cautioned that “there are still numbers of new cases that are alarming, and there are hotspots that are emerging in new places that make me believe there is still quite a lot of the disease that we’re not seeing.” According to Dr Nabarro, there are “at least 50 micro-outbreaks” currently underway, adding that chains of the transmission of the virus “have still got to be understood.” The current Ebola outbreak has been the worst. According to the latest figures released by the WHO on Wednesday, there have been more than 21,000 cases and 8,300 deaths. As of Sunday, the death toll in Liberia stood at 3,538, followed by 3,062 deaths in Sierra Leone and 1,814 deaths in Guinea. According to Dr. Nabarro, the key to ending this outbreak will be in getting the local communities to change

their traditional healing rituals, as well as their funeral and burial practices, which involve a lot of contact with body fluids that continue the spread of the deadly virus. WHO officials have reported that in some instances, evidence suggests that as many as fifty people may have become infected at a single funeral. While Dr Nabarro has noted that the national and international campaign for safe healing and burial practices, isolation of suspected cases and the quick treatment of Ebola victims is working, he appealed for greater global support, including “virus detectives” who can identify where there are cases, as well as “anthropologists who can tell us how the communities are reacting,” and managers to make sure treatment centres are adequately equipped.

- **8 January 2015** – The World Health Organization reported Wednesday that while the West African countries currently affected by the on going Ebola outbreak have made great strides in a bid to stem the spread of the deadly virus, they have missed the 1 January targets towards halting the epidemic. On 1 October, the United Nations had set a 90-day target aimed at isolating and treating all Ebola patients in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone in order to ensure safe burials for all bodies, which are highly infectious. In its last situation report, WHO officials acknowledged that the goals had not been met by the set deadline, stressing that “efforts to attain each target will continue until the epidemic has been brought to an end.” It did note that Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone have the capacity to ensure safe burials for all people known to have died from Ebola, warning, “the under-reporting of deaths means that the UNMEER target of 100 percent safe burial was not met.” The WHO has acknowledged that the true number of Ebola deaths is likely far higher than the recorded figures as many deaths continue to go unreported. Meeting the treatment and burial targets, along with meticulously tracing people who have come into contact with Ebola patients, have been seen as essential in ending the outbreak, which has infected 20,747 people in just over a year. The UN agency has reported a significant jump in the number of infected healthcare workers. According to the latest figures, as of 4 January, 838 health care workers have been infected, in which 495 of them have died.

Benin

No Travel Restrictions



Security Summary

Although there is currently no travel advisory for Benin, MS Risk advises all travellers to the country to remain vigilant, especially in areas bordering Nigeria. There is currently an Ebola virus outbreak in Guinea, Liberia, Mali 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 a confirmed outbreak of Lassa fever in the northern town of Tanguieta. In recent weeks, there have been a number of protests carried out in Cotonou, with civilians demanding that the government schedule local elections that have been repeatedly delayed. Similar protests have been carried out in other cities and towns across the country. Further demonstrations are likely to occur. MS Risk advises all travellers to Benin to avoid all protests as they may turn violent with minimal notice.

There is a heightened threat of terrorist attack globally from groups or individuals motivated by the current conflict in Iraq and Syria. Attacks could be indiscriminate and can occur in places where foreigners gather. 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.

On the Ground Reporting

- **8 January 2015** – Benin’s president Thomas Yayi Boni has indicated that his country will “in a few weeks time” send medical practioners to assist Liberia in its fight to contain the Ebola outbreak. The president noted that the primary objective of every member state of the African Union (AU) is to assist in the eradication of the deadly Ebola virus from Africa. Benin’s leader made the statement Wednesday at a news conference that was held at the Roberts International Airport in Margibi County when he, along with Nigerien President Mahamadou Issoufou, paid a one-day solidarity visit to Liberia. Speaking to reporters, Benin’s President stated “we want to join you in this fight because it is important that as a member of the sub-regional organization it is our obligation to help you fight this disease.” President Boni alluded to the efforts being made by members of the AU and other partners as an endeavour to galvanize more financial assistance and putting forth sensitization programmes to help Liberia and other affected nations to combat the Ebola outbreak.

Burkina Faso

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

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



Security Summary

Burkina Faso has elected a new interim president, Michel Kafando, who took office on 21 November 2014. He has named Lieutenant Col. Isaac Zida his prime minister. The president will be in power until November 2015, when presidential elections are due to take place. While an interim civilian leader has been put in power, the security situation across the country remains fragile, and violent protests may occur. MS Risk advises all travellers to Burkina Faso to avoid all demonstrations and protests as they may turn violent with minimal notice.

There is currently an Ebola virus outbreak in Guinea, Liberia, Mali 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

the 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. 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 AQIM and MUJAO, may cross the northern borders from Mali into Burkina Faso in order to carry out kidnaps. MS Risk therefore advises against all travel to the areas of Burkina Faso north of the town of Boulsa, which is 25 km north of the capital of Ouagadougou. We particularly advise against all travel to the regions that border Mali and Niger. Since 2008, over 25 Westerners have been kidnapped in the Sahel region, and a number of these hostages continue to be held. AQIM operates directly or through criminal gangs who carry out kidnappings on their behalf or pass on their kidnap victims in return for payment.

Crime

There is a high risk of armed groups stopping vehicles, including public buses, in order 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.

On the Ground Reporting

- **15 January 2015** – On Thursday, Amnesty International officials demanded a full inquiry into a bloody military crackdown on protesters that occurred just days before the toppling of president Blaise Compaore. According to the findings on an Amnesty report, during last October’s protests, troops killed at least ten people and wounded hundreds others. The official death toll stands at twenty-four and includes five prison inmates who were killed by their guards. Of the inmates who died in Ouagadougou central prison, three were shot in their cells during the upheaval on 30 October while two others died from dehydration and suffocation as a result of being locked away for three days. According to figures released by a panel that was set up by interim Prime Minister Isaac Zida, at least 625 people were injured. Amnesty is now reporting that the presidential guard, paramilitary police and the army all engaged in “excessive and often lethal use of force” in a bid to put down the mass street protests, which occurred between 30 October and 2 November 2014. The human rights watchdog further added “evidence suggests that little or no warning was given by the military before they opened fire on protesters, some of whom had their hands up and many of whom were shot in the back as they attempted to flee.” Officials at Amnesty International have indicated that security forces used batons and ropes as well as guns, with children amongst their targets, adding that as a “last-gasp attempt to crush legitimate protests and prop up the (Compaore) administration...resulted in the most violent repression by the military seen in Burkina Faso for decades.” Gaetan Mootoo, Amnesty’s research for West Africa, has stated “as part of the process of turning over a new leaf in Burkina Faso’s history, the transitional authorities must ensure these serious human rights abuses are independently and impartially investigated....All those suspected of killing and injuring protesters must be held account,” adding “urgent action must be taken to guarantee all victims and their families receive truth, justice and reparation.”
- **14 January 2015** – Construction activities at the Vancouver-based miner True Gold’s Karma gold project in Burkina Faso were temporarily suspended on Wednesday after an impromptu protest damaged certain property and assets. Company spokesperson Blaine Monaghan confirmed the suspension of operations, stating that several hundred members believed to be from two surrounding communities marched on the mine and threatened employees. According to the spokesperson, this prompted the mine’s management to suspend the operations and to evacuate the property in the interest of the safety of the employees and project security. This latest suspension comes after True Gold last month reported that a “disturbance” in a local community had resulted in the company temporarily halting part of the construction activities. Construction activities remained impeded while the communities and authorities were figuring out the issues. According to Monaghan, “we’ve been meeting with the communities since December, making presentations to demonstrate how we could mitigate any of those potential negative impacts and the benefits of mining to their communities,” adding “its important to note that during the several years that we were engaged in acquiring the Kama mine permits, we have had over 100 stakeholder meetings in about 15 communities within the permit area and we would not have been able to receive these permits without stakeholder approval.” According to the spokesperson, the company is uncertain as to who was responsible for organizing Wednesday’s demonstration. Sources have reported that the main issue appears to be local concerns about potential damage to a mosque and other buildings in the neighboring

town of Ramatoulaye, along with perceived negative effects that the Rambo West openpit mine could have on dust, noise and groundwater quality in the community.

Domestic News

- **13 January 2015** – Members of Burkina Faso’s parliament have decided to cut their salaries by half. The move comes shortly after heated exchanges on social media after it was revealed that MP’s were being paid more than US \$3,000 (£1,985) a month. Members of the 90-member parliament have been paid a gross salary in addition to attendance fees, office allowances, healthcare supplements and fuel costs. Several campaigners have stated that MP’s should not be paid attendance fees and have pointed out the substantial gap between their salaries and average earnings. The average salary in Burkina Faso is about US \$150 a month. One MP has indicated that the pay cut would promote better governance and would rebuild confidence in democracy during the yearlong transition towards presidential elections. As part of arrangements agreed on, following the forced resignation of long-serving ruler Blaise Compaore late last year, the former National Assembly has been replaced by an interim parliament, known as the Transitional National Council (CNT).

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. The situation in the capital Banjul has returned to normal following a gun attack on the President's residence and attempted coup on 30 December 2014. The attack was unsuccessful and resulted in the arrest of a number of suspects in The Gambia as well as in the United States. As a result of this failed coup attempt, Gambian authorities have increased security surveillance and there are a number of checkpoints that are currently operating in and around the capital city. MS Risk advises all travellers to the capital city to expect that your vehicle will be searched if you are stopped by security forces.

The Gambian government has reopened the country's border with those nations currently affected by the Ebola outbreak. Health officials will continue to screen people entering the country from Ebola affected countries. There are currently no confirmed Ebola cases in the Gambia.

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

- **11 January 2015** – President Yahya Jammeh has indicated that Britain had no involvement with dissidents who attempted to topple his government 30 December. In a speech on state television late Saturday, the President told members of the armed forces, “there is no evidence of British involvement in the attack on the State House. There is no single Gambian dissident who came from Britain to support...” the attackers, adding “I apologize to Britain, as far as the evidence gathered is concerned, there is no British Government involvement in the attack. They have Gambian dissidents there, but none of them came here to attack us.” Earlier this month, The Gambia's president blamed unidentified foreign dissidents and “terrorists” for the assault on this presidential place. In a speech, he warned opponents, “we will fight terror with terror and violence with violence.” In the wake of the failed coup bid, the army has launched a manhunt for two senior

officers suspected of taking part in it. Dozens of people have been arrested and police and troops have constantly patrolled the streets across the West African port city.

- **10 January 2015** – Relatives have reported that the mother of the man believed to have led last month's coup attempt in The Gambia has been held by security forces for over a week. Earlier this week, The Gambia's government named Lt. Col. Lamin Sanneh as "the leader of the attackers" in the failed 30 December coup. Sanneh died while fighting with soldiers loyal to President Yahya Jammeh, however his relatives, speaking on condition of anonymity over fear of reprisal attacks, have indicated that his mother, Metta Njie, was detained shortly thereafter and has since been held in an unknown location. A government spokesman earlier this week declined to comment on reports that relatives of coup-plotters were being arrested.
- **7 January 2015** – On Wednesday, The Gambia's government accused the former head of the presidential guard of leading a small group, which included two former US soldiers, in a failed coup attempt late last month. In a statement read on state-owned television, The Gambia's Foreign Affairs Minister Neneh Macdouall-Gaye named nine men she said had mounted the early morning assault on the presidential place in the capital Banjul on 30 December. The Minister indicated that the group was led by Lieutenant-Colonel Lamin Sanneh, who had once headed the elite State Guard before being dismissed and fleeing abroad. The group included retired US Army Captain Njaga Jagne and Papa Faal, a former US Army sergeant. Most of the other assailants that were named were identified as active and former members of the West African country's security forces. While Sanneh had previously been widely cited by local media as being the plots' leader, Wednesday's statement was the first time that the government named him publicly. According to officials, Sanneh and Jagne were amongst four plotters killed when palace guards fought back, ultimately repelling the attack. One of the attackers was taken prisoner. Faal, along with several other survivors, fled shortly after the assault. He and Cherno Njie, who had been waiting with other plotters 25 kilometres (16 miles) outside Banjul, have since been charged by US federal prosecutors with conspiring to carry out a coup and a weapons violation.
- **6 January 2015** – Gambian President Yahya Jammeh has vowed to track down the plotters of a failed coup attempt, which sought to unseat him last week, promising to "get rid of them one by one." At a meeting on Monday night, President Jammeh told his supporters "I have always been merciful despite reports to the contrary. But now I would be what I am supposed to be – a good, Muslim leader who has an eye for an eye philosophy." On 30 December, a group of heavily armed men attacked the presidential palace before dawn. The unidentified gunmen were repelled by the presidential guard. Military sources have reported that the gunmen, who were travelling by dugout, were led by an army deserter. President Jammeh has led the small West African nation since taking power in a coup in 1994. Sources have reported that the leader, who has in the past been accused of ruling with an iron fist, may use the failed coup as justification for a clampdown on dissenters. Sources close to the investigation have disclosed that dozens of soldiers and civilians have been arrested in the wake of the attack. The president has also accused unidentified foreign forces of attempting to unseat him. He has insisted that his army is and always was "very loyal."

Domestic News

- **13 January 2015** – On Tuesday, Gambian President Yahya Jammeh appointed Mama Fatima Singhateh as attorney general and minister of justice in what is the latest change in the top ranks of the government after an attempted coup late last month. Basirou Mahoney, the previous justice minister, was removed from

his duties last week. His replacement is not a trained lawyer, which under the country's constitution is a requirement. Singhateh's nomination comes after higher education minister Aboubacar Senghore was named to the job last week as part of a second broad reshuffle of the country's government. No reason was given for the successive changes. The country's capital city has been on lockdown since the leader of twenty years returned and vowed to hunt down those behind the attempt. The president has blamed the attempted coup on a foreign-backed "terrorist group." In a separate development, former managing director of the Daily Observer Newspaper, Modou Saidy, has been appointed director of programmes of the state owned national television.

- **9 January 2015** – Gambia's President Yahya Jammeh has replaced Minister of Justice Basiru Mahoney in what is the second cabinet reshuffle to take place since a failed coup attempt late last month. The Minister of Justice has been replaced by Aboubacarr Senghore, the former minister for higher education, research, science and technology. The President also replaced Kalilou Bayo, secretary general and minister for presidential affairs and the civil service, with Lamin Nyabally. State television provided no reason for the cabinet reshuffle in its announcement late Thursday. In recent days, security forces in The Gambia have made several arrests however few details have been released. This has raised fears in a country that has regularly in the past been accused of human rights violations.
- **6 January 2015** - Less than a week after a failed coup attempt, President Yahya Jammeh has handed the foreign and communications portfolios to journalists in what is the latest government reshuffle. According to a presidential decree, Sheriff Bojang, publisher of The Standard newspaper, will enter government as minister of information and communications, a post, which had been vacant since his predecessor was fired in late 2013. Another journalist, and former communications minister, Neneh Macdouall-Gaye, returns to government as foreign minister, effectively replacing Bala Garba Jahunpa. According to a source, Ms Macdouall-Gaye returned to The Gambia from the United States, where she had been living, just last week. No explanation for the government reshuffle has been released.

International Developments

- **5 January 2015** – The United States Justice Department disclosed Monday that two men have been charged in the US with attempting to overthrow The Gambia's President Yahya Jammeh. According to a statement released by the US justice department between 10 and 12 people had entered The Gambia to overthrow Mr Jammeh "with the expectation that others in the country would join and assist them." They included US citizen Cherno Njie, 57, and US-Gambian dual national Papa Faal, 46. Attorney General Eric Holder indicated in a statement "these defendants stand accused of conspiring to carry out the violent overthrow of a foreign government, in violation of US law," adding "the United States is committed to holding them fully responsible for their actions." According to documents filed in court, Mr Njie, a Texas businessman, was in charge of the alleged conspiracy and would have been appointed interim leader of The Gambia had the coup attempt succeeded. US officials allege that weapons, including M4 semi-automatic rifles and other military equipment, were shipped to The Gambia last year for use in the attempted coup. The justice department also disclosed that the plotters met in the woods near the presidential palace on 30 December before splitting into two teams, adding "Njie was not present at that meeting, instead waiting in a safe place until the assault teams took control of the facility. However, when one of the assault teams approached the State House and fired a shot into the air, the team began taking heavy fire from the guard towards," adding "...numerous conspirators on the assault teams were killed or injured during the failed attempt to take control of the government building..." After members of the group

were defeated at the State House, Faal escaped by ferry to neighbouring Senegal, where he walked into the US Embassy. He was later interviewed by US officials and gave the FBI permission to search his home in Brooklyn Centre, Minnesota. Faal told the authorities that the group was composed of men of Gambian descent who primarily lived in the US and Germany. According to prosecutors, most of them had military experience. Court papers allege that the group hoped to take control of the government without having to kill Gambians, and though its members initially contemplated ambushing the president's convoy, in the hope that he would surrender, they changed plans once the president left the country and decided instead to attack the Gambian State House. Faal appeared in court in Minneapolis on Monday and will remain held pending a detention hearing, which is due to take place later this week. Prosecutors allege that Faal identified Njie as one of the financiers and leaders of the coup. Njie was arrested Saturday after flying into Dulles International Airport from Senegal. At a brief court appearance in Baltimore on Monday, he agreed to remain in custody and to be transported to Minnesota to face charges. Last week, The Gambia's pro-opposition Freedom newspaper reported that at least four of the coup-plotters had been killed, including Lamin Sanneh, a former head of the presidential guard who was living in exile in the US. Officials however have not confirmed these reports. Since the failed coup attempt, numerous officials and opposition leaders have fled the country, indicating that they fear for their lives after the military conducted house-to-house raids. **Update (8 January)** – A Minnesota man accused in the failed coup in The Gambia has been denied release as his case is pending. Papa Faal, 46 of Brooklyn Centre, has been accused of conspiring to violate the Neutrality Act. On Thursday, Mr Faal's attorney Andrew Mohring had requested the US District Court in Minneapolis to free his client while the case is pending, citing his military service, community volunteerism and support from the community however Magistrate Judge Franklin Noel denied the request, calling Mr Faal a flight risk as he has siblings in Europe. He also noted that community support could facilitate his escape. Prosecutors have accused Mr Faal of purchasing rifles in Minnesota and shipping them to The Gambia in an unsuccessful plot to overthrow the president.

Guinea

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



Security Summary

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

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.

There is currently a low threat from terrorism. 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

- **16 January 2015** – Guinea’s Health Minister announced Friday that all schools across the country will reopen on Monday, after being closed last year amidst the Ebola outbreak. While on a visit to Accra, Ghana, to attend the economic Community of West African States summit, Health Minister Remy Lamah disclosed that the decision was made to reopen schools “because the situation has improved.” The announcement comes in the wake of Liberia announcing that schools will be reopened at the start of next month. The health minister in Sierra Leone however has indicated that schools will remain closed. According to Foday Sawi Lahai, officials in Sierra Leone are currently “...monitoring the situation and would take a decision after that.” Adding “we have imported thermometers to be used for surveillance in the schools. Once that is done and the number of cases keep falling, we would consider reopening schools.”
- **14 January 2015** – In the latest violence spurred by the deadly Ebola virus, police officials reported Wednesday that two men were killed and their bodies burned by an angry mob convinced that the victims had infected a local with Ebola. On the grounds sources have reported that residents of the western village of Dar-es-Salaam attacked a group of three police officers and their driver who had stopped there on Saturday while on their way to attend a funeral. According to police Commissioner Boubacar Kasse, during their visit, one in the group gave a sedative to a local healer, who was suffering from an described illness. After the healer died, his wife called for help from the local population, who responded violently. According to Kasse, the villagers grabbed machetes and clubs and beat the victims to death. They later set their bodies and vehicle on fire. The other police officers who survived the attack are currently recovering in hospital. Violent reactions to the Ebola virus have frequently occurred in Guinea, particularly in the southern region of the country, where tensions between local groups and the central government remain high. The most violent attack occurred September 2014 in the southwestern village of Womey when eight members of an Ebola prevention campaign were killed by locals.

Ivory Coast

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



Security Summary

On 14 December, the government increased troop deployments across the Ivory Coast, and particularly in the northern and western regions of the country, in response to an increase in banditry and overall insecurity during the Christmas holiday season. On 11 December, bandits killed a man in Meagui (Bas-Sassandra region) and robbed a minibus en route to Abidjan outside Bouna (Zanzan region). MS Risk advises all travellers to the Ivory Coast to take extra care if you are planning any road journeys over the upcoming holiday period.



An outbreak of the Ebola virus disease has been confirmed in Guinea, Sierra Leone, Mali and Liberia. While there currently are no confirmed Ebola cases in the Ivory Coast, the country has taken preventative measures and is at a particularly high risk as it borders Guinea, and Liberia, two countries that have been severely affected by the current outbreak. A previous ban on all flights from countries that have been affected by the outbreak has now been lifted. 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. As of 21 November 2014, there is a curfew in place from 10PM to 5AM in the town of Bondoukou, which is located in the northeastern region of the country. The curfew has been put in place in response to a high number of robberies that have been occurring at night. There is an underlying threat from terrorism. Attacks could be indiscriminate, including in places frequented by foreigners.

On the Ground Reporting

- **10 January 2015** – The Ivory Coast’s defense ministry announced Saturday that two Ivory Coast troops were killed in a night attack on army positions near the Liberian border. A statement released by the ministry disclosed that twenty “armed, unidentified” men attacked security positions in the western town of Grabo at around 3:00 AM (0300 GMT). Sources have indicated that they were seen off following an hour of fighting with soldiers and police. Meanwhile another group attacked army positions in the village of Dahoyke, which is also located near the border. In that attack, two soldiers and one of the assailants were killed. According to the defense ministry, the situation has since been brought under control. Due in part to ongoing ethnic tensions, the western region of the Ivory Coast remains the most unstable area in the country and has been affected by repeated deadly attacks over the past two years. The Ivory Coast’s government blamed a February 2014 clash on “unidentified people from Liberia,” which resulted in denials from the government in Monrovia and accusations that the attacks are “purely Ivorian.” The attack on Grabo in February left at least four people dead, including three civilians.
- **6 January 2015** – On Tuesday, the first defendants in the trial of the Ivory Coast’s former first lady Simone Gbagbo and 82 others accused of fomenting deadly post-election violence, were called to the stand. Six of the accused were summoned following a recess in the trial, which began 26 December in Abidjan. They were presented as “militias” who are loyal to former President Laurent Gbagbo and his wife. The first defendant called to the stand was identified as Jean-Marius Keipo. Mr Keipo has been charged with “damage to national defense, constituting armed groups, participation in an insurrectional movement (and) disturbing the peace,” as well as “tribalism” and “xenophobia.” Once the charges were read, Mr Keipo told the court “I don’t recognize the statements. I am a victim of this crisis.” While Mrs Gbagbo, along with some of the other defendants, were not present in court on Tuesday, the six accused were brought forward in handcuffs and fourteen witnesses were called to give evidence. Mrs Gbagbo and colleagues from the Ivorian Popular Front (FPI) party are accused of “attempting to undermine the security state,” by launching violence to support Laurent Gbagbo in a bid to keep power after he was defeated in elections in November 2010. Fighting in the commercial capital Abidjan claimed at least 3,000 lives before the Gbagbo’s were arrested in April 2011. Laurent Gbagbo was later transferred to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague, where he currently faces trial for crimes against humanity during the post-electoral conflict. While the ICC has also issued an arrest warrant for Simone Gbagbo, President Ouattara’s government has argued that to try her at home will be a major step towards national reconciliation. The proceedings are also widely seen as a test of the Ivory Coast’s justice system.

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.

Cases of the Ebola virus have been confirmed across Liberia, including in the capital city. A nationwide curfew has been lifted.

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 Sprigs 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. There is a low threat from terrorism.

On the Ground Reporting

- **11 January 2015** – The Liberian government on Sunday announced that it is investigating reports of fighting near its border with neighboring Ivory Coast, which reportedly led to the death of two Ivorian soldiers. On Saturday, Ivorian State media reported that two soldiers have been killed in a raid on military posts in the southwestern region of the country. According to the Ivorian Press Agency, the attack began early Saturday morning in the town of Grabo, near the border with Liberia. The soldiers were killed in the village of Dahioke, which is located 20 kilometres (12 miles) outside the town. On Sunday, The Liberian government's chief spokesman Information Minister Lewis Brown disclosed, "the Government of Liberia is concerned about new reports of recent attacks in border towns and villages of Cote D'Ivoire. Consistent with the policies of good neighborliness and a commitment to regional peace and security, the relevant Liberian security agencies are seriously investigating these reports as well as engaging their counterparts in Abidjan." The Minister added that the Liberian government is fully committed to working with and supporting Ivorian authorities and international partners in their bid to strengthen border security, regional peace and stability. The western region of the Ivory Coast was the hardest hit during the country's 2010 – 2011 postelection violence, which erupted after former President Laurent Gbagbo refused to concede defeat to his successor, Alassane Ouattara. Pro-Gbagbo fighters, along with civilians, later fled into neighboring Liberia, and raids targeting the new army have occurred sporadically since then. A raid in June 2012 killed seven UN peacekeepers and at least ten civilians. Last February, just a year after the two countries agreed to reopen their respective borders, a similar attack killed four Ivorian soldiers. In recent years, gunmen from Liberia have carried out several assaults on towns near the border. The government and the UN have blamed these attacks on allies of former president Laurent Gbagbo.
- **5 January 2015** – An official announced on Monday that Liberia is planning to reopen schools in February, six months after the government ordered them closed because of the Ebola outbreak. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf first made the announcement over the weekend, indicating that schools would reopen on 2 February. While officials have not specified whether the measure would apply to the entire education system, George Wuo, a director at the Education Ministry, has disclosed that authorities are currently assessing around 500 schools across the country for reopening. The school year was due to start in

September 2014 however the government decided in August to keep students at home in a bid to prevent further spread of the deadly disease.

- The lockdown in the northern Tonkolili district has been extended for two weeks as authorities increase the fight to contain the spread of Ebola. The move comes as the Liberian government imposed “additional screening measures” at Freetown International Airport after two workers apparently were infected with the disease. According to Health Minister Dr Abubakarr Fofanah, the screening of workers at the airport in the capital Freetown will now be done “on a 24-hour basis to detect any suspicion of Ebola on a worker or traveller.” According to Liberia’s National Ebola Response Centre (NERC), “a case of Ebola was detected and confirmed by laboratory tests on Friday involving a person who worked at the airport up to mid-December but had not worked since that time.” In a statement released by the NERC, another airport employee had been in contact with the person and has not come to work since Christmas Day, adding “due to these developments, additional measures have been put in place to enhance robust screening...these include documentation of employees temperatures at the airport front gate and entry to the terminal.” Last month, a five-day lockdown had been declared by the government across the badly-hit northern region of the country. During that period, more than seventy cases of the deadly virus had been confirmed. Authorities in the region have confirmed “the lockdown is extended for another two weeks to intensify monitoring efforts by all sectors in the district as we need this mopping up operation until January 17.” Authorities have disclosed that some people had been “reluctant to comply with health rules such as late reporting of suspected Ebola cases and undertaking secret burials.”

Mali

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

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



Security Summary

Summary

In recent months, northern Mali has seen a spike in terrorist attacks, abductions and clashes amongst armed groups that operate in the region. In the past week, al-Qaeda-linked terrorists killed eight Malian troops in Nampala. In a separate attack, the mayor of Aderanboukane was killed while another attack was carried out on the town of Tinefewa, in the region of Timbuktu. The UN mission in Mali has also reported armed clashes in the towns of Zarho and Bamba, in the Gao region. Further attacks are likely to continue as the Malian government prepares for a new round of talks.



MS Risk strongly advises against all travel to the northern parts of Mali and along the border with Mauritania. This is due to ongoing military operations in the region and the increasing threat of attacks and kidnappings targeting westerners. Despite ongoing military operations, Mali continues to face significant security challenges due to the presence of extremists and militant factions that continue to operation in the northern region of the country.

In October, Mali reported its first cases of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) epidemic. In mid-December, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced that all quarantined patients have been released from hospital and no further

cases of Ebola have been reported. Mali will be declared Ebola free on 18 January 2015 if no additional Ebola cases are recorded.

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

- **17 January 2015** – Suspected Islamist militants attacked a UN base in northern Mali with car bombs and rockets on Saturday, killing one Chadian member of the UN peacekeeping mission and wounding another. According to officials, gunfire erupted around the area of the UN camp in Kidal during the morning hours and was followed by the sound of rockets exploding. The shooting lasted around 10 minutes. A statement released by the UN mission in Mali (MINUSMA) indicated that the peacekeeper was killed when a suicide bomber exploded his vehicle at a UN checkpoint around a kilometer from the peacekeepers' camp. A second vehicle exploded at one of the entrances to the base. The statement further indicated that eight rockets were fired at the camp but only two of them landed inside, causing serious material damage. Arnauld Akodjenou, deputy UN special representative for Mali, has condemned the attack, stating, "such violence targeting the UN peacekeeping forces is a serious crime. Those responsible must be brought to justice." Saturday's attack came a day after at least two Malian soldiers were killed in central Mali.
- **16 January 2015** – At least two Malian soldiers were killed Friday in a jihadist attack on the town of Tenenkou in central Mali. According to a UN military source, "several people from both sides" may have died in the clash between troops and Islamist fighters in the town, which is located 470 kilometres (292 miles) north of the capital city Bamako. MINUSMA indicated that it had seen armed groups heading towards the area on Friday, adding that the attack is in violation of the terms of an earlier ceasefire. Peace talks between Mali's government and separatist groups on the future of the restive northern region are due to resume in Algiers soon.
- **9 January 2015** – In what is the latest in a string of attacks on foreign forces, seven UN peacekeepers were wounded by a blast that hit their vehicle near the airport in the northern Malian town of Kidal on Friday. UN officials have indicated that four of the soldiers were lightly wounded while three others suffered fractures. According to a witness, the troops involved in the attack were Senegalese and the area to the east of the town has been cordoned off. The UN Mission has indicated that an investigation is currently underway in order to establish if the vehicle hit a land mine or another kind of explosive device. UN peacekeepers have been deployed in Mali since mid-2013 however Islamist militants driven from the country's desert region two years ago by French forces have in recent months stepped up ambushes and bomb attacks, targeting UN and government troops. France has withdrawn troops from Mali in a bid to focus on a broader, Sahel-wide security operation against the militants, however diplomats have indicated that insurgents, some of who are linked to al-Qaeda's regional wing, AQIM, have regrouped and appear to have received new training and weapons. A total of thirty-three UN peacekeepers have died and 100 more have been wounded in Mali. Over the past week, seven Malian soldiers were killed in a raid on a military camp near the Mauritanian border while six UN peacekeepers from Niger were wounded by a roadside bomb.
- **7 January 2015** – On Wednesday, suspected Islamist militants killed one person in an attack in central Mali, just two days after eleven troops were killed in an assault on a nearby military base. According to on the ground sources, the latest attack took place in Djoura, a village located close to the border with Mauritania, and about 465 kilometres (290 miles) northeast of the capital Bamako. A senior official in Djoura confirmed the attack, stating that after firing shots in the village and setting fire to the town hall, the

attackers fled north, shooting dead a civilian as they sped towards Mauritania. A Malian military source also confirmed the report. Both sources have blamed the latest attack on gunmen who stormed a Malian army base in Nampala on Monday. The military base is located 60 kilometres from Djoura.

- **6 January 2015** – France has deployed fighter jets to Mali where fresh attacks carried out by Islamist insurgents have left several dead near the Mauritanian border and in the country's northern area. A statement released by the French Foreign Ministry on Tuesday indicated that Paris offered air support to its former colony including fighter jets, which were "deployed immediately to support Malian forces." France has condemned the militant's raid, which killed several local soldiers.
- **5 January 2015** – According to a UN military source, at least eight people were killed in a gun attack Monday on a Malian army base located close to the Mauritanian border. The assault, which is reported to have been claimed by al-Qaeda-linked militants, occurred at the base in Nampala, which is located 530 kilometres (330 miles) northeast of the Malian capital Bamako, where armed groups are known to operate. According to a source within UN's MIUSMA mission in Mali, unidentified gunmen slipped into the camp "with relative ease" at about 0615 GMT and started shooting, with Malian troops returning fire. Fighting went on for more than three and a half hours, with attackers only retreating at 1100 GMT. The UN source added "reconnaissance and fighter planes from the French-led Barkhane operation overflew the Nampala area in the afternoon to intervene if necessary." The attack is the deadliest in Mali since nine Niger peacekeepers were killed last October. **Update (6 January)** – AQIM has claimed responsibility for Monday's attack, which occurred in central Mali. The incident was the closest the militants have struck to the capital city Bamako, since a French-led war forced them from cities across the northern region of the country nearly two years ago. Defense Ministry adviser Lt. Col. Diarran Kone has indicated that Mali's forces were back in control of the areas by Monday night.
 - The UN mission in Mali revealed Monday that at least six UN peacekeepers were wounded when their vehicle hit a roadside bomb in northern Mali on Sunday. The vehicle transporting troops of the Niger contingent, which is part of the UN mission in Mali, was travelling on the road between Asongo and Menaka in the Gao region. The soldiers who were wounded, three of them seriously, will be evacuated to the city of Gao for appropriate treatment. Two years after France led a UN-backed intervention in a bid to drive al-Qaeda-linked militants from towns they seized in 2012, northern Mali remains highly volatile. Militants operating in the region have mounted a comeback and have targeted the Malian army and UN troops deployed in the region. Peace talks have so far failed to deliver improvements on the ground.

Domestic News

- **11 January 2015** – Mali's President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita named a new slimmed-down government on Saturday, with cabinet members replaced in key defense and economic posts. The new government is the third since President Keita took power less than two years ago and comes ahead of new peace talks with separatists in the troubled northern region of the country. The government of new Prime Minister Modibo Keita was appointed by presidential decree published overnight Saturday after his predecessor resigned under pressure on Thursday. The new government has 29 members in addition to the premier, in contrast to the 31 members in the previous administration. Tieman Hubert Coulibaly, a former foreign minister, will take over the defense and veterans portfolio while banker Mamadou Igor Diarra will become minister of economy and finance. Choguel Kokala Maiga will take over the digital economy and communication portfolio. A member of the Tuareg minority, Mohamed Ag Erlaf, is the new minister of the environment,

sanitation and sustainable development. There was no change at the key foreign affairs and mines ministries. The newly formed government now faces many challenges as the country continues to battle threats from militant groups that operate in the region. According to a close associate to the president, “this is a war government, but also a team that should make the return of peace in the north its priority.” An official close to the newly elected prime minister has disclosed that the new cabinet has been primarily tasked with taking on the serious economic and financial problems that Mali continues to suffer, however noting that it also represents “a team that must make the return of peace to the north its priority” within the national reconciliation process.

- **8 January 2015** – On Thursday, Mali’s Prime Minister Moussa Mara resigned, more than a year after his party lost parliamentary elections. His resignation effectively means that the entire Malian government also resigns. Mera, a former town planning minister, was appointed prime minister by President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita last April. He had failed to beat Keita in the 2013 presidential elections and his Yelega party won just a single seat in parliamentary elections that year. **Update (9 January)** – Late on Thursday, Mali’s President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita named a former head of government, Modibo Keita, as the new prime minister, just hours after the previous government resigned. Modibo Keita, who has no relation to the president, was prime minister for three months in 2002 under then-President Alpha Oumar Konare. Last year, he headed the government delegation in negotiations with separatists from the north of the country, which took place in Algeria.

International Developments

- **5 January 2015** – The US Homeland Security Department is ending Ebola-related airport screening procedures for travellers from Mali. Beginning Tuesday 6 January, travellers from Mali will no longer be subject to monitoring for possible symptoms of Ebola upon arrival. They will also no longer be required to enter the US through one of five designated airports. According to Homeland Security and the Centers for Disease Control, the requirements are being lifted as two 21-day incubation cycles have passed since the last Ebola patient in Mali had contact with someone not wearing personal protective equipment. There are currently no active Ebola cases in Mali. The US will maintain travel restrictions and monitoring for visitors coming from Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, which continue to be affected by the Ebola outbreak.

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, Mali 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.

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

- **16 January 2015** – On Thursday, police in Mauritania used tear gas in a bid to disperse protesters after three anti-slavery activists were sentenced to two years in prison. Biram Ould Dah Ould Abeid, the runner-up in last year's presidential elections and the head of an anti-slavery group, was convicted along with one of his aides, Bilal Ramdane, and Djiby Sow, a civic and cultural rights campaigner. According to their defense team, the activists have been charged with "belonging to an illegal organization, leading an unauthorized rally, and violence against the police." Brahim Ould E Betty, a defense lawyer for the three men has indicated that they "...are going to appeal" the guilty verdict. Seven others on trial for joining anti-slavery protests in November have been released. In the wake of the sentencing, dozens of their supporters stormed the courthouse and surrounded the prosecutor's office while others smashed the windows of the police van that was carrying the three. Police officials responded by firing tear gas. Private news agency Al-Akhbar has reported that at least four people were injured in the protests. A statement released by Amnesty International has condemned the police use of tear gas. The human rights organization has indicated that the activists were arrested while trying to educate people about and rights in Mauritania, where slave descendants are often forced to give up a portion of their crops. Mauritania was the last country in the world to abolish slavery, in 1981, and since 2007, its practice has been officially designated as a crime punishable by up to ten years in prison. Campaigners however have indicated that the government has failed in the past to acknowledge the extent of the trade.

Domestic News

- **6 January 2015** – Mauritania's main opposition bloc has rejected a call for dialogue by President Mohamed Ould Abdel-Aziz. A statement released by the National Forum for Democracy and Unity (FNDU) on Monday night disclosed that the regime's call for dialogue, which comes before a looming mid-term Senate election, was "an insult to the Mauritanian people." While the FNDU did express keenness on partaking in "serious dialogue" with the regime, it did accuse the latter of launching a "shallow" bid for dialogue two months before elections "to only serve the interests of an authoritarian agenda." Earlier this week,

President Abdel-Aziz called on forces from across Mauritania's political spectrum to engage in dialogue with the aim of "achieving the nations' best interest." The FNDU boycotted last summer's presidential elections in which Abdel-Aziz won a second term in office. Many local opposition parties indicated that their boycott of the vote was due to the government's failure to provide guarantees for the poll's transparency.

Niger

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

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



Security Summary

Violent protests have erupted in the capital city Niamey and in Zinder, Niger’s second largest city. The protests, over the depiction of the Prophet Muhammad in the French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo, have resulted in the deaths of at least four civilians. Further protests are likely to occur in the coming days. MS Risk advises all travellers to remain vigilant and to avoid large demonstrations.

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. As of 28 November, a curfew is in place in the whole of the region of Diffa. The curfew prohibits the movement of motorized vehicles from 8PM until 6AM. 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 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.

On the Ground Reporting

- **17 January 2015** – In a second day of violent protests in Niger over the depiction of the Prophet Mohammad on the cover of France's Charlie Hebdo weekly magazine, rioters torched at least eight churches in Niamey on Saturday. On the ground sources have reported that bars, hotels and various businesses under non-Muslim ownership or bearing signs of French companies in Niger's capital city were also targeted. By Saturday evening, calm returned to the capital city, where police were stationed outside the city's cathedral and other religious buildings. On Friday, angry protests left four people dead and around 45 injured in Niger's second largest city Zinder. According to a Western security source, around 255 Christians were placed under military protection in Zinder on Saturday, sheltered in barracks. Another 70 had sought refuge in an evangelical church protected by the police. French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius, whose country has defended the Charlie Hebdo cover as freedom of expression, condemned "the use of violence, today in Niamey and yesterday in Zinder."
- **16 January 2015** – Four people were killed Friday after protests, over the French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo publishing more cartoon images of the Prophet Mohammad a week after Islamist gunmen shot dead twelve people at its office in Paris, turned violent in Niger. The Niger government confirmed that four people were killed as police clashed with a crowd that attacked a French cultural center and set churches ablaze. Protesters in Niger's second-largest city of Zinder in the southern region of the country set French flags ablaze and attacked Christian shops with clubs and Molotov cocktails while police responded with tear gas. According to Interior Minister Hassoumi Massaoudou, three civilians were killed, including two who were shot by police during an attack on their station. A police officer was run over and killed while 45 other people sustained injuries. Speaking on state television, the Minister further indicated "Zinder experienced a quasi-insurrectional situation, a spontaneous protest of a criminal nature," adding "I would like to reassure Christians that the state is here to defend those living in Niger at all costs." Witnesses reported that a crowd of mostly youths ransacked the French cultural center as well as the homes of police officers and the local headquarters of President Mahamadou Issoufou's party. Protests also erupted in Algeria and Pakistan, resulting in several injuries. In Pakistan, police fired tear gas and water cannons at about 200 protesters outside the French consulate in the southern port city of Karachi while in Algeria, police clashed with demonstrators in Algiers after rioting broke out at the end of a protest against the publication of the French cartoons. On the ground sources have reported that several officers were injured as small groups of protesters threw rocks, fireworks and bottles at security forces around the waterfront of the Algerian capital. Elsewhere, peaceful marches were held after Friday prayers in the capital cities of former French colonies, Mali, Mauritania and Senegal. While last week, the presidents of Niger, Mali and Senegal marched alongside more than a million French citizens in a bid to show solidarity with the victims of the Paris attack, in an indication of the shifting mood, Senegalese President Macky Sall stated late on Thursday "freedom of the press should not, in our view, head in the direction of a totally pointless provocation."
- **14 January 2015** – On Wednesday, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) warned about the plight of tens of thousands of refugees who have fled to Niger in a bid to escape the on going violence in northeastern Nigeria. According to Red Cross spokesman Daddy Rabiou, "it's a very worrying situation," adding that last year, the agency provided food for more than 45,000 people. In a statement released by the head of the ICRC mission in Niger, Loukas Petridis disclosed "many were injured, many others were

sick and still others had lost contact with their families,” adding “most have been directly affected by the violence and have lost their property and their livelihoods.” Most of the refugees have settled in the arid southeastern region of Diffa, where the United Nations says droughts and floods have exacerbated the food crisis. Located 1,500 kilometers (900 miles) east of Niamey, the increasing insecurity in Nigeria has also cut off the region from its Nigerian supply sources. Officials at the Red Cross have also warned about the high risk of disease and infection due to the poor living conditions for many of those who have fled Boko Haram’s violence in northeastern region. As a result of this ongoing violence, most of the refugees have shown no signs of wanting to return home. According to the United Nations, since 2013, 115,000 people have fled Nigeria, where since 2009 Boko Haram has been waging an increasingly bloody insurgency.

- **6 January 2015** – Nigerien officials have disclosed that they will not be involved in any attempts to retake the key northeastern Nigerian town of Baga from Boko Haram. Niger’s Foreign Minister Mohamed Bazoum disclosed “we have 50 soldiers there and decided to withdraw them after Boko Haram captured Malam Fatori town in October and continued to operate in the area with impunity...As you know, Baga is under (the control of) Boko Haram terrorists and unless the town is recaptured from them, we will not send back our troops.” The Foreign Minister further added that Nigerien officials “...are still determined to work with our neighbors Cameroon, Chad and Nigeria to contain the situation – it is a problem for us all.” Niger’s decision is clearly a blow to Nigeria, which had previously indicated that the presence of a multinational task force in the area would help defeat Boko Haram. The withdrawal of the troops from Niger also effectively means that Nigeria’s neighbor now has no forces directly involved in tackling Boko Haram. Chad has also withdrawn its forces.
- **5 January 2015** – The mayor of a border town in Niger has revealed that towns in the country are living in fear following the advance of Boko Haram into neighboring northeastern Nigeria. According to Hankaraou Biri Kassoum, the mayor of one border town in Niger, “nearly all the villages and all the big towns in Nigeria near to Niger are now under Boko Haram’s control. We are living in fear of attacks from the Islamists.” The mayor further noted that in October, after the militant group overran Malam Fatori, a town in Nigeria’s northeastern Borno state located just two kilometres (1.3 miles) from the border with Niger, Boko Haram militants “fired towards Niger and our army responded with two bouts of cannon fire.” According to the mayor, “we can see the jihadists’ black flag flying on the other side of the border...one day these people are going to want to attack us so they can gauge the strength of our army.” In October, Boko Haram militants overran two Nigerian towns near Niger after fierce fighting with the Nigerian army. On Saturday, in one of its boldest moves yet, the militant group seized control of a Nigerian military base in a series of raids near Lake Chad, which sent soldiers and local civilians fleeing the region.
 - Two of the defendants in a baby trafficking case in Niger have been brought before prosecutors, accused of trying to leave the capital during their trial. According to a defense lawyer, Hadiza Amadou, wife of former parliament speaker Hama Amadou, was arrested while travelling to her home region in western Niger. A co-defendant, former bank manager Moussa Haitou, was also detained while en route to his home village, which is located south of the capital Niamey. Both were released on Monday after two days in custody. A hearing has been set for 16 January. The pair are amongst around twenty other senior political, military and business figures who have been charged over the trafficking of around thirty babies from neighboring Nigeria. Amongst the accused is the former parliamentary speaker who is being tried in absence after he fled to France last year.

Nigeria

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

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



Security Summary

Summary

On 20 October 2014, the World Health Organization declared Nigeria Ebola-free. An Ebola outbreak has been confirmed in Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia and Mali. While Nigeria has been declared Ebola-free, due to the intensity of the ongoing outbreak, a second outbreak of Ebola in Nigeria cannot be ruled out. MS Risk advises all travellers to the region to remain cautious.

Presidential and National Assembly elections will be held in Nigeria on 14 February 2015 and Governorial and State Assembly elections will be held on 28 February 2015. MS Risk advises all travellers to Nigeria to take extra care and to remain vigilant during the election period, particularly in areas where there are political or large public gatherings. We advise travelers to be aware that pre-election rallies may be called at short notice and will likely lead to travel disruptions. Restrictions on vehicle movements may be imposed with minimal or no notice, particularly on election days. MS Risk advises all travellers to monitor the local media for details of rallies or travel issues.



Boko Haram's Islamic State

On 3 January, Boko Haram militants stormed the town of Baga, taking control of the northeastern Nigerian town and at least fifteen other villages in the vicinity. While the Nigerian government has indicated that the attack resulted in the deaths of 150 people, Amnesty International has reported that upwards of 2,000 people were likely killed in the attack, in what Amnesty has named to be the worst in the militant group's six-year insurgency. Eyewitness testimonies have also placed the death toll between 2,000 and 3,000. Boko Haram's tempo of attacks has increased in recent weeks and will likely further increase as Nigeria approaches presidential elections, due to take place on 14 February. Boko Haram appears to have encircled Borno state capital Maiduguri. Further out in Borno, Boko Haram is 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.



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. 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.

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.

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.

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

Threats and Terrorism

Attacks by Islamist groups in northern Nigeria have become the biggest threat to stability in Africa's top oil producing country. This has been exacerbated by the fact that Western governments are currently concerned that militants may link up with groups elsewhere in the region, including al-Qaeda's North African wing, AQIM. These concerns have been further intensified by the conflict and military intervention in nearby Mali.

On the Ground Reporting

- **18 January 2015** – A suicide bomber drove a car packed with explosives into a busy bus station in the northeastern town of Potiskum on Sunday, killing four people and wounding 35. According to Yobe State police commissioner Danladi Marcus, “the information I have is that the car was pretending to be scouting for passengers,” adding “five people including the bomber were killed in the attack with about 35 others receiving treatment for various injuries at Potiskum General hospital.” While no group has claimed responsibility for the attack, it did bear the hallmarks of previous attacks carried out by Boko Haram insurgents. Sunday's attack further adds to Nigeria's litany of security issues and comes less than a month before presidential elections are due to take place.
- **16 January 2015** – A suicide bomber killed at least five people and wounded eleven on Friday near a marketplace in northeastern Nigeria. Ahmed Minin, head of operations of the National Emergency management Agency (NEMA) in Gombe, confirmed the attack, stating, “it was a suicide bombing.” According to eyewitness reports, the blast went off a 7:25PM (1825 GMT) in the packed market neighbourhood of Kasuwar Arawa, which is located close to the public university in Gombe, the capital city of Gombe state. According to a local, “the bomber went into the crowd of people waiting to recharge their telephones” at a public charging station “and then set off the explosive.” While no group has claimed responsibility for the attack, Boko Haram militants are increasingly carrying out dangerous attacks in the region. Gombe has been hit by several suicide bombers recently, most of them at bus stations and near military installations.
- **15 January 2015** – On Thursday, Nigeria's President Goodluck Jonathan paid a surprise visit to the heartland of the Boko Haram movement. The president, who is seeking to be re-elected, spent three hours

in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State, where he met with survivors of what is believed to be the worst attack in Boko Haram's six-year insurgency. During a visit to a camp, which is sheltering about 5,000 people who fled the 3 January attack on Baga in northern Borno, he disclosed that his security chiefs have promised "all areas under the control of Boko Haram will soon be recaptured," telling some of the displaced that he wants to "...assure you that you will soon go back to your houses." The attack on Baga, which is part of Boko Haram's upsurge in violence ahead of the 14 February presidential and parliamentary polls, is feared to have killed hundreds. The president's visit to Maiduguri, his first since March 2013, was shrouded in secrecy and came after a previous trip to the restive northeastern region was cancelled at the last minute in May last year. President Goodluck Jonathan has come under fierce criticism for his failure to end Boko Haram's six-year insurgency, during which over 13,000 people have been killed.

- **15 January 2015** – Newly released satellite images by Amnesty International depict widespread destruction of Nigerian towns recently attacked by Boko Haram and suggest a high death toll. The satellite images were taken on 2 January, the day before the attack, and again on 7 January and according to Daniel Eyre, an Amnesty researcher, "these detailed images show devastation of catastrophic proportions in two towns, one of which was almost wiped off the map in the space of four days," adding "it represents a deliberate attack on civilians whose homes, clinics and schools are now burnt out ruins." According to the human-rights group, the images show some 3,700 structures either damaged or destroyed in Baga and Doron Baga last week. Citing eyewitness's testimonies, Amnesty has indicated that the militants killed indiscriminately and that the damage in the area was "catastrophic." According to officials at Amnesty, the attack on Baga and neighboring Doron Baga is the largest and deadliest Boko Haram assault that it had analyzed. Nigeria's government however has disputed reports that as many as 2,000 people were killed in the attacks last week, instead putting the death toll at just 150.
- **14 January 2015** – Nigeria's military disclosed Wednesday that soldiers had repelled a new Boko Haram attack after a two-hour gun battle in the restive northeastern region of the country. The country's defense headquarters has indicated that the militants had been pushed back from Biu, in Borno State, adding that two anti-aircraft guns were captured. Five militants were also reportedly captured. Residents in the town, which is located 200 kilometres (125 miles) southwest of the state capital, Maiduguri, reported that the militants had stormed the town in 10 pick-up trucks at about 7:30 AM (0630 GMT) however they were intercepted by soldiers from a nearby barracks, leading to a two-hour gunfight. According to one resident, "soldiers opened fire on three pick-up vans carrying the gunmen that came as an advance party while the rest remained at a fuel station in Kigir village," adding "there were 10 gunmen in each vehicle and all of them were killed in the rain of bullets from the soldiers." The remaining insurgents later arrived at the scene in vans and motorcycles. On the ground sources have reported that the town's military base was the militants' apparent target. There has been no independent verification of the death toll.
- **13 January 2015** – The United Nations reported on Tuesday that the latest wave of attacks in northeastern Nigeria has sent 11,320 people fleeing into Chad in a matter of days. Boko Haram militants began their latest wave of attacks on 3 January, when they stormed the town of Baga. They later razed the town and at least sixteen surrounding settlements. While it has been impossible for aid workers to enter the area in order to verify the death toll, the attack is feared to have been the worst massacre since the militant group launched its insurgency in 2009. The UN refugee agency has indicated that some 20,000 people are said to have fled their homes in the wake of this attack, noting that some 11,320 people have arrived in neighboring Chad. According to UNHCR spokesman William Splinder, a full 60 percent of the new arrivals in Chad were women and girls, adding that 84 unaccompanied children had also crossed over the border. Another 2,000 people were stranded on an island in Lake Chad during their desperate escape. The

UNHCR is currently working to transport them to the mainland.

- A suicide bomber was killed on Tuesday when his explosives vest detonated as he rode towards a security checkpoint in the northeastern city of Gombe. Witnesses have reported that a large explosion rocked the Kasuwar Mata area of the city around 6:30 PM (1730 GMT) while most residents of the mainly Muslim city were attending evening prayers. Apart from the suicide bomber, no one was killed in the incident however a young boy, who was standing by the roadside, was injured in the blast. Residents in the town believe that the bomber was planning to target the checkpoint, which is manned by a joint military and police squad fighting the city's notorious "Kalare" street thugs.
- **12 January 2015** - Nigeria's police chief on Monday warned politicians and their supporters against violence before next months' presidential election. The warning came after reports emerged over the weekend of clashes erupting in the south and central regions of the country. Last week, the main opposition All Progressives Congress (APC) alleged that its supporters in the southern Rivers state had been attacked while on their way to a presidential campaign rally. On Sunday, an explosion damaged the APC office in town of Aba Ama in Rivers state while four party supporters were allegedly attacked with machetes in Rumueme near the state capital, Port Harcourt. Meanwhile in Jos, the capital of central Plateau state, thirteen suspects were arrested after buses belonging to President Goodluck Jonathan's campaign were torched on Saturday. On Monday, the Inspector General of Police, Suleiman Abba, stated "the perpetrators of these unacceptable and heinous acts will not go unpunished, as the police will do all it takes to bring them to justice." In the past, electoral violence has erupted on several occasions, and there have been warnings that there could be a repeat of the 2011 clashes, which left hundreds dead.
- **11 January 2015** – At least four people were killed and twenty-one injured in the city of Potiskum on Sunday when two female suicide bombers, one of them aged about fifteen, blew themselves up in a crowded market. According to a security source involved in the investigation, "one of the bombers looked 23 and the other 15," adding "the first bomber – the 23 year old – detonated her explosives just outside the entrance of the market, where volunteers were sweeping people going inside the market with metal detectors...the second bomber was terrified by the explosion and she tried to dash across the road but she also exploded." Witnesses have reported that the second blast went off as people were fleeing the first blast. The market was filled with traders and shoppers from all over Yobe state and beyond. The blasts, which took place at the Kasuwar Jagwal mobile phone market in the commercial capital of Yobe State, come just a day after a young girl, thought to be aged 10, killed nineteen people in Maiduguri in neighboring Borno State. In a separate attack on Saturday, two people were killed when a car exploded outside a police station in Potiskum. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the latest attacks however suspicion is likely to fall on Boko Haram, which has increasingly been using female suicide bombers to carry out deadly attacks. Older women may willingly become human bombs as they either share the Islamists' radical ideology or are out to avenge the death of loved ones who were killed by the Nigerian military. The young ages of some of the bombers, such as the girl in Maiduguri, suggest that coercion is likely being used. A civilian vigilante who witnessed the Maiduguri bombing has stated that he doubts if the young bomber "...actually knew what was strapped to her body." Meanwhile another eyewitness has disclosed that it appeared that the bomb was remote-controlled, which is inline with other testimony from other attacks across the wider north region of Nigeria.
- **10 January 2015** – Red Cross officials and local vigilantes have reported that at least twenty people were killed and eighteen injured on Saturday when a young girl, believed to be aged 10, blew herself up at a crowded market in the northeastern city of Maiduguri. Sources have reported that the powerful explosion rocked the market at about 12:40 PM (1140 GMT) when it was busy with traders and shoppers. One local

reported that the explosives detonated as the girl was being searched at the entrance to the market. While there was no immediate claim of responsibility, Boko Haram militants have increasingly been using women and young girls as suicide bombers. In December 2014, Zahra'u Babangida, 13, was arrested with explosives strapped to her body. She later told journalists that her parents had volunteered her to take part in a suicide attack in Kano. Boko Haram launched its first female suicide attack in June last year in the northern state of Gome. Since then there has been a number of bombings carried out, including four in one week that targeted the city of Kano in July. The same month, a 10-year-old girl was found in Katsina state wearing a suicide vest. This prompted fears that young girls were being forced into becoming human bombs rather than through ideological motivation. The popular market in Maiduguri was targeted twice last year by female suicide bombers.

- Hours after a suicide bomber attacked the market in Maiduguri, a suspicious vehicle that had stopped at a checkpoint outside the city of Potiskum, in neighboring Yobe state, exploded at a police station as its driver was being taken in for questioning. A police officer accompanying the car and the driver were killed in the attack.
- **9 January 2015** – On Friday, militants fought running battles with troops in Damaturu, the state capital of Yobe, leading to the destruction of a mosque, a market and several shops. While the Nigerian army managed to repel the Islamist militant attack on Friday evening, witnesses have reported that a number of buildings were burnt, including the police area command station, a mosque in the Abacha market, and several shops. No casualty figures have been released. The attack is said to have been a reprisal for an offensive that was carried out by civilian vigilantes and local hunters against a Boko Haram enclave in southern Yobe on Tuesday.
 - On Friday, Nigerian forces, backed by air strikes, began fighting for control of the town as Amnesty International suggested the attack on Baga was the “deadliest massacre” in the Islamist militant group’s history. A statement released by Mike Omeri, the government spokesman on the insurgency, disclosed “security forces have responded rapidly, and have deployed significant military assets and conducted airstrikes against militant targets.” On the ground sources have reported that hundreds of bodies remain strewn in the bush near the town. District head Baba Abba Hassan has disclosed that most of the victims are children, women and elderly people who were not able to run fast enough when the militants drove into Baga, firing rocket-propelled grenades and assault rifles on the town’s residents. A statement released by Amnesty International has indicated that there are reports the town was razed and that as many as 2,000 people were killed. Daniel Eyre, Nigeria research for Amnesty International, stated that if these reports are true, “this marks a disturbing and bloody escalation of Boko Haram’s ongoing onslaught.” The previous bloodiest day in the uprising involved soldiers gunning down unarmed detainees who were freed in a 14 March 2014 attack on the Giwa military barracks in Maiduguri city. At the time, officials at Amnesty International disclosed that satellite imagery indicated that more than 600 people were killed that day. According to the Washington-based Council on Foreign Relations, in the last year alone, more than 10,000 people have been killed with more than a million people displaced inside Nigeria and hundreds of thousands fleeing across the country’s borders into Chad, Cameroon in Nigeria. **Update (12 January)** – Nigerian officials have indicated that the number of people who lost their lives in an assault by Boko Haram militants on the town of Baga last week was no more than 150. According to the defense ministry, this figure included “many of the terrorists” who had attacked the town in Borno state and who had faced resistance by troops. This number however is in stark contrast to reports made by local officials, who had earlier estimated the number of deaths at as many as 2,000. The ministry

however has dismissed these estimates, stating that they were “exaggerated.” It further disclosed that the army is in the process of taking “necessary actions” to restore law and order there, however few details pertaining to the operation to recapture the town from the militant group have been released. Nigeria has in the past often been accused of underestimating casualty figures in a bid to downplay the growing threat from Boko Haram.

- **8 January 2015** – Local officials reported Thursday that Boko Haram militants have razed at least sixteen towns and villages in a renewed assault just days after they captured a key military base in the restive northeastern region of Nigeria. According to Musa Bukar, head of the Kkawa local government area, “they (Boko Haram) burnt to the ground all the 16 towns and villages, including Baga, Doron-Baga, Mile 4, Mile 3, Kauyen Juros and Bunduram.” Abubakar Gamandi, head of Borno’s fish trader’s union and a native of Baga, also confirmed the attacks, stating that hundreds of people who fled the area were now trapped on islands on Lake Chad. Local sources fear heavy casualties in the attacks that were carried out Wednesday in the remote north of Borno state; however there has been no independent corroboration of reports that some 2,000 people were killed in the raids. Boko Haram attacked the town of Baga on Wednesday just days after it overran the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) military base there on Saturday. On the ground sources have reported that almost the entire town had been torched and that the militants were now raiding nearby areas. With the military retreating, Boko Haram is now in control of Baga and 16 neighboring towns. Boko Haram’s offensive continued on Thursday, with reports that the group’s fighters set up checkpoints and killed those who were hiding in the bush. Nigerian lawmaker Maina Maaji Lawan has indicated that Boko Haram now controls 70% of Borno state, which has been the worst affected by the ongoing insurgency. The town of Baga is of strategic importance to Boko Haram, as it was believed to be the last town in northern Borno still under federal government control. The attack on the town was likely against civilian vigilantes who have been assisting the military. It is an ominous sign of the increasing violence before the general elections, which are set to take place next month. The militant group, which has seized more than two-dozen towns in northeastern Nigeria over the past six months, now control all three of Borno’s borders with Cameroon, Chad and Niger. Some 10,000 people have fled to Chad since Saturday in a bid to escape the violence. A large number reportedly drowned as they crossed Lake Chad. Others have fled to Maiduguri, the capital of Borno state, in buses provided by the government. President Goodluck Jonathan, who condemned the attack on a French satirical magazine in Paris, has not commented on the violence at home.
- **6 January 2015** – On Tuesday, Nigeria’s chief of defense staff acknowledged that Boko Haram militants have seized the headquarters of a multinational military force on Nigeria’s border with Chad. Speaking to reporters, Air Chief Marshal Alex Badeh disclosed that only Nigerian troops were at the key base at Baga, which is located on the shores of Lake Chad, when insurgents attacked it on Saturday. At a briefing after a security meeting with President Goodluck Jonathan, Badeh indicated “Chad had people on their own side but I believe they have withdrawn. Niger had people with us. They too withdrew, and left only Nigeria at the Multinational joint Task Force (MNJTF) headquarters.” A senior military officer in northeastern Nigeria has disclosed that Cameroon, Chad and Niger withdrew from Nigeria months ago. Badeh has denied rumors that Chad and Niger have pulled out of the task force and has refused to say what happened during the attack.

Regional Reporting

- **18 January 2015** – Suspected Boko Haram militants have kidnapped dozens of people in raids carried out in neighboring Cameroon. According to officials, many of those kidnapped in the cross border attack were children, with sources reporting that villagers who tried to fend off the attackers were killed. A security source has reported that the attack occurred in the villages of Maki and Mada, which are located in the Tourou district near Mokolo city in Cameroon's Far North Region, about 6 kilometres (4 miles) from the Nigerian border. The suspected militants arrived in the early hours of Sunday morning when it was still dark and left in the direction of Nigeria with scores of hostages. Cameroon's Information Minister Issa Tchiroma Bakary confirmed the attack, stating that between 30 and 50 people were kidnapped in the raids, however the exact number is currently difficult to establish as investigations are ongoing. One police officer has reported that the figure of hostages is around 60, adding, "most were women and children." It is believed that amongst those abducted there were 30 adults while the children were aged between 10 and 15.
- **16 January 2015** – Ghana's President John Mahama disclosed Friday that the African Union (AU) could seek a UN mandate for a force to fight Nigeria's Boko Haram Islamist insurgents however he noted that it must first establish its own regional military operation to combat the militants. The President, who chairs the West African body ECOWAS, further disclosed that West African leaders will seek a mandate from the AU at a summit meeting, which is due to take place next week, in order to put together a multifunctional force. The force however will take months before it is ready to deploy.

Domestic News

- **14 January 2015** – Nigeria's electoral commission has re-registered around ten million voters who were wrongly struck off the roll a year ago due to technical glitches. The opposition called out the commission when millions of voters were struck off because of biometric collection failures. This effectively decreased the registered number from 70.4 million to just 58.9 million. However during a press conference on Tuesday evening, the commission announced the final tally of permanent voter ID cards. According to commission spokesman Kayode Idowu, "even though their finger prints were not captured the first time, they had an opportunity to come out and re-register," adding "the final list has captured everyone." The permanent voter ID cards were introduced by President Goodluck Jonathan's administration and were launched in a bid to weed out fraudulent practices, including multiple voting and ballot box stuffing, which have marred previous elections. Ahead of what is expected to be a close race on 14 February between President Goodluck Jonathan and his leading challenger, former military ruler Muhammadu Buhair, officials at the commission are working overtime in order to complete all the preparations on time. The commission confirmed Tuesday that nearly half of all registered voters have yet to receive new voter identification cards. This has raised questions about the preparations for the vote, which is due to take place in a month. Investors and foreign powers will closely monitor Nigeria's upcoming presidential elections.
- **13 January 2015** – Nigeria's electoral agency disclosed Tuesday that next month's elections will go ahead in the three northeastern states that have been the worst-hit by Boko Haram's violence however they have warned that there is little prospect that voting will take place in those areas currently under the militant group's control. According to the body's chairman, Attahiru Jega, "INEC (Independent National Electoral Commission) has always said that it is preparing to conduct elections in all the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory, including the three northeast states experiencing the challenge of insurgency," noting

“there are areas that are occupied by insurgents and obviously it stands to reason that elections are unlikely to take place in these areas.” The country’s main opposition will likely appeal for next month’s presidential elections to be postponed. The opposition parties have previously stated that those people living in the affected state now risk being disenfranchised, which could call into question the overall election result. Mr Jega however has indicated that efforts are currently under way in order to enable internally displaced persons to cast their ballots, adding that the INEC is “...doing everything possible to ensure that elections are conducted in these three states.” In the last six months, Boko Haram has seized dozens of towns and villages in the northeastern states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe. The militant group is now reportedly in control of the border areas of Borno state with Cameroon, Chad and Niger. These rapid territorial gains have led to fears of a total loss of government control in the remote region.

- **10 January 2015** – The spokesman for Nigeria’s main opposition All Progressives Congress (APC) party has denied accusations that the party is planning to electronically rig the February general elections by hacking into the server of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). The Department of State Services (DSS) has accused the APC of plotting to hack into the INEC’s voter registration data base however Lai Mohammed has indicated that the allegations are aimed at preventing the electoral commission from using the biometric system as the INEC is planning to use the system in a bid to reduce voter irregularities. Local media has quoted DSS spokesperson Marily Ogar as stating that officials from the organization, who were acting on a tip off, seized a computer hard drive containing a video of twenty-one hacking tutorials during raids that were carried out on the APC center in Lagos state. According to Ogar, “the tutorial video focused on how to become a hacker and steps to take to avoid detection in the process of hacking web servers, steps and procedures of system hacking, passwords cracking, decrypting, escalating access privileges, and creating backdoors to servers...The video explains how to hack into the systems of media houses, with the aim of broadcasting fake stories and headlines.” The APC’s spokesman however has dismissed these accusations, stating that they are a ploy to thwart efforts of the party to win next month’s elections. He further indicated that the DSS has changed its previous accusation from the APC attempting to clone cards to plotting to hack into the INEC’s database in a bid to rig the elections. While Mohammed has indicated that the alleged bias against the APC violates the mandate of the DSS, officials at the DSS have denied that the organizations work to investigate the alleged attempt by APC supports to rig the February elections shows bias against opponents of the administration.
- **9 January 2015** – Five weeks before the presidential elections are due to take place, Nigeria’s electoral commission disclosed Friday that it has not yet finished printing the cards that voters will be required to present at polling stations. According to Kayode Idowu, an electoral commission spokesman, across the country, 38.8 million voters have retrieved their cards, out of the 54.3 million that the commission, which is known as the INEC, had produced at the end of last year. He further indicated that of the cards that are ready, about 15 million have not yet been collected by voters, indicating that some of them have not been collected because of apathy while others due to geographical remoteness. Mr Idowu stated that the INEC is “...making this data public to remind people to pick up their cards. We can’t take it to their homes.” The INEC is currently setting up more pickup locations outside the main towns in order to make it easier for rural voters. While the INEC’s spokesman has insisted that despite these delays, everything will be ready on time, he declined to comment on how many cards were left to print and distribute. Data released by Nigeria’s electoral commission indicates that no voter cards have been delivered to Borno state, the region the worst hit by Boko Haram attacks, with sources reporting that the distribution of voter cards only began on Friday. The 14 February elections in Nigeria are expected to be a close contest between President Goodluck Jonathan and his leading challenger, Muhammadu Buhari. The conduct of the elections will be

closely monitored as past polls have been marred by widespread ballot stuffing and violence. While Jonathan's administration has created permanent voter cards in an effort to stamp out fraudulent practices, such as voting multiple times, there have been controversies over technical glitches and data collection failures. Last year, around 11 million people were struck off the voting list, many of them wrongly, in an incident that resulted in the opposition condemning the electoral commission. Mr Idowu declined to indicate how many had been re-registered.

- **8 January 2015** - On Thursday, Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan formally began his campaign for re-election with a mass rally at a key opposition stronghold. All roads to the venue were cordoned off as armed soldiers and police searched the crowds. President Jonathan, a 57-year-old southern Christian, is pushing for a second term in office, calling for more time to build on his first and complete his "transformation agenda." The country's main opposition All Progressives Congress (APC) party however has denounced Jonathan's presidency as a failure, specifically highlighting his inability to end the Islamist insurgency and to tackle endemic corruption. Nigeria, which is Africa's top oil producer, has also been affected by the fall in global crude prices, which has effectively forced officials to revise the 2015 budget estimates and devalue the currency against the US dollar. The election campaign has now effectively transformed into a smear campaign. A recent newspaper advertisement supporting the AP candidate Muhammadu Buhari read "under his watch, Nigeria has become No 1 in broken promises." On Wednesday, Jonathan's campaign chief Femi Fani-Kayode described former military ruler Buhari as a "great danger" for the unity of the country, adding that he "represents a return to an ugly past which is best forgotten." He also questioned Buhari's democratic credentials and described his record in public office as "shameful and disastrous." The meeting in Lagos comes as the President's People's Democratic Party (PDP) mounts increasingly personal attacks on Jonathan's main challengers and as doubts continue to linger over whether the vote will be held. Nigerians are due to elect a new president on 14 February however there are growing concerns that polling in large areas across the northeastern region of the country may be ruled out over Boko Haram's violence. For now, the country's electoral body has maintained that there are no plans to postpone the election.

Senegal

No Travel Restrictions



Security Summary

On 17 October 2014, the World Health Organization declared Senegal Ebola-free. An Ebola outbreak has been confirmed in Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia and Mali. While Senegal has been declared Ebola-free, due to the intensity of the ongoing outbreak, a second outbreak of Ebola in Senegal cannot be ruled out. MS Risk advises all travellers to the region to remain cautious.

MS Risk advises all travellers to avoid all outdoor rallies and demonstrations as they may turn violent. Although there are currently no travel restrictions for Senegal, MS Risk advises avoiding road travel in the Casamance region, to the west of Kolda. The Casamance region of south-western Senegal (between the southern border of Gambia and the northern border of Guinea-Bissau) remains affected by incidents involving armed separatist groups and banditry, particularly in the regions of Bignona and Sindian. There has been an increase in clashes between the Senegalese army and suspected elements of the armed separatist group Movement of the Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC). MS Risk advises against all road travel in the Casamance region to the west of Kolda, other than on the main road from Ziguinchor to Cap Skiring (which is often used by groups of tourists during daylight hours) and on the road north of the Guinea-Bissau/Senegal border, from Sao Domingos to Ziguinchor (N4 bis). If you travel on either of these roads, you should do so only during daylight hours and monitor the local security situation before travelling. Severe water shortages in Dakar have led to a number of demonstrations in the suburbs. Youths have blocked some roads with burning tyres and have clashed with police. MS Risk advises travellers to avoid all demonstrations and to leave any affected areas at the first sign that unrest may develop. There have been a number of deaths and injuries. There is currently an underlying threat from terrorism. Attacks could be indiscriminate, including in places frequented by expatriates and foreign travellers. With the ongoing French military intervention in Mali, authorities in Senegal have increased security in the capital city as well as along the border with Mali. MS Risk advises that al-Qaeda militants may cross the border into Senegal and they may target Western interests as well as foreigners.

On the Ground Reporting

- **5 January 2015** – Senegal is preparing to deport an exiled Gambian opposition figure who called for his countrymen to rise up and overthrow President Yahya Jammeh during a failed coup attempt late last month. In a video that was posted on the Internet, and in a later interview on Senegalese television, Sheikh Sidia Byao, head of the Dakar-based National Transitional Council of The Gambia, called upon Gambians to support the move. Mr Bayo's lawyer, Assane Dioma Ndiaye, disclosed Monday "we received an official notification from the Senegalese authorities that my client Byao will be expelled in the coming hours from Senegal." While Senegalese authorities have not provided a reason for their decision, one official indicated that Bayo, who holds both French and Gambian citizenship, was expected to be sent to France. On 30

December, gunmen attacked the presidential palace in The Gambia's capital Banjul while the president was out of the country. Gambian security forces successfully repelled the coup attempt. President Jammeh has blamed the attack on political dissidents backed by foreign powers based abroad. Gambian authorities have since arrested an unknown number of people suspected of being involved in the attempted coup. On Monday, the US Justice Department disclosed that two Americans with ties to The Gambia were arrested and have been charged by US authorities with conspiring to carry out the violent overthrow of a foreign government. Washington has denied any involvement in last week's unrest.

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.

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. MS Risk therefore advises all travellers in the country to exercise due caution when travelling by road throughout the season.

On the Ground Reporting

- **14 January 2015** – Despite registering 19 new Ebola cases over a 24-hour period, Sierra Leone's president has predicted that there will be zero new confirmed cases by the end of March. President Ernest Bai Koroma has also predicted that the West African country, which has been one of the hardest hit in the current outbreak, will be Ebola-free by World Health Organization (WHO) standards by May. The president made this announcement during town hall meetings that were held this week in the northern Districts of Port Loko, Tonkolili and Bombali. It comes as WHO officials announced that they are starting to see signs that the Ebola outbreak is slowing in Sierra Leone. According to government statistics, the country's southern Pujehun district has registered zero cases for more than 42 days. Despite this, the country has continued to record new cases in other regions. Amongst the 19 new cases the government reported countrywide, at least eight were reported in and around the capital city Freetown. According to WHO statistics, over the past 21 days, Sierra Leone has recorded about 900 cases. By WHO standards, a country cannot be declared Ebola-free until it has registered no cases for 42 consecutive days.
- **13 January 2015** – According to the head of the Ebola Call Centre in Sierra Leone, Reynold Senessie, 80% of people phoning the toll-free Ebola help number are prank callers. While Mr Senessie indicated, "such prank calls are affecting the smooth operation of the center," he did note that the good news is that "genuine calls are dwindling and response to such calls have been swift." Palo Conteh, the head of the National Ebola Response Centre (NERC) in Sierra Leone, who paid an unannounced visit to the call center on Tuesday, has warned that the mobile numbers of the prank callers "will be traced and legal action taken against them." The 117-call center is the first point of contact for anyone dealing with possible Ebola sufferers or the bodies of those who may have died of the disease, which has swept through Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.
- **10 January 2015** – A district in Sierra Leone has been declared Ebola-free after 42 days with zero recorded cases of the deadly virus. Pujehun, which is the first district in the West African country to be declared free of the virus, is located in the southeastern region of the country, near the border with Liberia. Ebola was first reported in this district in August 2014. Since then, 24 deaths from 31 cases have been reported however the district has not recorded a case since 26 November. This effectively means that it has achieved the World Health Organization's (WHO) benchmark for Ebola-free status. District council chairman Sadiq Silla has credited the early decision to close markets, ban social activities and worship in churches and mosques as being responsible for the minimal spread of the virus. He had implemented emergency measures across the district before the country's president took action, a move that resulted in him suffering strong local opposition and death threats as a result of his decision. Pujehun's Ebola-free declaration is a glimmer of hope in a country where almost 3,000 people have died however officials are warning that new cases could be discovered as the outbreak in Sierra Leone is far from over. Sierra Leone has been the hardest hit by the Ebola outbreak. According to statistics released by the WHO, the country has reported 7,718 cases up to 9 January, more than neighboring Guinea and Liberia combined. Officials have reported that they are starting to see signs of the outbreak slowing down with the capital city reporting 89 confirmed new cases in the week leading up to 9 January, compared with 153 in the previous week and 199 cases in the first week of December. The fragility of these improvements however has been illustrated

in the district of Kenema, which recorded a new case on 4 January after nineteen days of no new reported cases.

- **8 January 2015** – On Friday, President Ernest Bai Koromoa will visit parts of the country that have been severely affected by the Ebola outbreak. According to a spokesman for the administration, the move is part of the government's efforts to combat the spread of the deadly virus. The spokesman further indicated "the president will be travelling to lead the social mobilization (effort in) the rest of the country, starting in the north," adding that the trip will include flying to Kambia, then travelling by road to Port Loko, Lunsar, Makeni, and Tonkolili. The visit by the president to the affected areas comes in the wake of the government's decision to extend by two weeks a programme to contain the virus in the western region of the country. The first phase of the programme concluded on 31 December and the second phase will be a collaborate effort between the Ministry of Health and Sanitation along with other partners. Sources have reported that phase two of the programme will also include the creation of flyers and billboards and the purchase of other material to address the public. It will also see an increase in surveillance and in the number of officials available to trace the infection rate. The effort will also continue to encourage residents to report to health officials Ebola infections in an effort to contain the virus at the community level.
- **7 January 2015** – On Wednesday, officials at the World Health Organization (WHO) disclosed that Sierra Leone, the country worst affected by Ebola, reported nearly 250 new confirmed cases in the past week, noting however that the spread of the virus may be slowing. According to the WHO, "there are signs that case incidence may have leveled off in Sierra Leone, although with 248 new confirmed cases reported in the week to 4 January 2015, it remains by far the worst-affected country at present." Officials have noted that while cases are continuing to be under-reported and are spreading unevenly in West Africa, the virus is spreading most rapidly in western Sierra Leone, with the capital city Freetown reporting 93 of the new confirmed cases. Officials have stated, "an increasing emphasis will be put on the rapid deployment of smaller treatment facilities to ensure that capacity is matched with demand in each area."

Togo

No Travel Restrictions



Security Summary

There is currently no travel advisory for Togo. Crime is on the rise in Lomé. 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 Lomé city limits, especially after dark. There is a possibility of retaliatory attacks in Togo, due to its participation in the intervention in Mali.

On the Ground Reporting

- **8 January 2015** – Party leaders confirmed Friday that Togo's opposition party has failed to persuade the ruling party to support a two-term presidential limit that would prevent President Faure Gnassingbe from running for office again. According to party leaders, talks to change the constitution began on Monday at the National Assembly, however they broke down on Wednesday, ending with the party's blaming each other. Isabelle Ameganvi, the president of the main opposition national Alliance for Change confirmed "the three days of talks we have just had with out parliamentary colleagues in the majority didn't move a single step forward," adding that the two sides had only discussed the first point on the agenda, which was the distribution of natural resources in the West African coastal nation. Few were surprised by the breakdown of the talks. The parliamentary head of the ruling Union for Republic party, Christophe Tchao, accused the opposition of procedural obstacles and time wasting, reasons he cited for the failure of the talks. President Gnassingbe is expected to run and win a third five-year term in elections, which are set to take place in the first half of this year, however he has yet to announce his candidacy. In 2002, Togo changed its constitution to abolish presidential term limits and a further reform would require the assent of four fifths of the National Assembly's 91 deputies, 62 of whom belong to the ruling party. Civil society groups have indicated that they would march Tuesday to oppose what they said was the President's plan for two more terms.



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

24 hr Global Contact: +44 207 754 3555
www.msrisk.com

Directors

S.J. Bingham, V.K. Prentice, P.O.J Tracy
Registered in the Isle of Man No. 007435V