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THE CENTRAL AFRICA REPORT



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

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

FEBRUARY 23 – MARCH 8, 2015

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 - Crisis Response
 - Business continuity management
 - Hostile operations support to commercial interests
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References are always available.

More information is found at www.msrisk.com

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The Central Africa Report ~ Summary

February 23 – March 8, 2015



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Cameroon

On the Ground Reporting

- **3 March 2015** – At around 2 PM (1300 GMT) on Tuesday, armed men on a motorbike killed at least two people in Kerawa, in the Far North region of Cameroon.
 - The UN refugee agency reported Tuesday that some 16,000 Nigerian refugees fled to Cameroon's Far North region over the weekend in a bid to escape clashes in the northeast of Nigeria between Boko Haram militants and regional military forces that are combatting the insurgents. attack by Nigerian insurgents in recent weeks.
- **28 February 2015** – Thousands of Cameroonian youths have held what they describe a patriotic march in support of the country's military, which is battling Boko Haram insurgents in the northern region of the country.
- **26 February 2015** – Cameroonian officials have disclosed that prisons are overcrowded with suspected Islamic extremists.
- **25 February 2015** – A Cameroonian soldier and an officer were killed Wednesday when their vehicle ran over a roadside bomb in the Far North Region of Cameroon.

Central African Republic

On the Ground Reporting

- **5 March 2015** – On Thursday, France announced that it was reducing its troop numbers in the CAR as it gradually hands over the mission to the 8,500-strong UN peacekeeping mission force that has been deployed in order to contain the deadly sectarian conflict.
- **25 February 2015** – Sources close to negotiations disclosed Wednesday that two ex-presidents of the CAR, who have been accused of undermining the democratic transition in the Central African nation, are now ready to join the reconciliation process.
- **24 February 2015** – The United Nations reported Tuesday that increasing violence in the CAR has forced tens of thousands of flee their homes in recent weeks in order to escape killings, rape and pillaging by militias.

Chad

On the Ground Reporting

- **4 March 2015** – On Wednesday, Chadian President Idriss Deby vowed to “wipe out” Boko Haram as he called for the militant group’s leader, Abubakar Shekau, to give himself up and warned that he knew where the militant leader was hiding.
- **3 March 2015** – Chadian troops operating in northeastern Nigeria have driven Boko Haram militants out of the Nigerian town of Dikwa.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

On the Ground Reporting

- **1 March 2015** – A government spokesman disclosed Sunday that the Congolese army has killed seven rebel fighters and captured territory and weapons since beginning its campaign to remove rebels from the eastern region of the country.
- **26 February 2015** – Villagers have begun to flee their homes in the eastern DRC as the army pursues Rwandan Hutu rebels in a new offensive that was launched earlier this week.
- **24 February 2015** – According to military and officials sources, the DRC’s army on Tuesday launched an assault against Rwandan Hutu rebels in its volatile eastern region.

International Developments

- **3 March 2015** – On Tuesday, the International Criminal Court (ICC) ruled that convicted Congolese warlord Thomas Lubanga should “personally” be liable for reparations to his victims, including paying to help reintegrate child soldiers who served in his rebel army.
- **28 February 2015** – The appeals chamber of the ICC has upheld a decision to acquit Mathieu Ngudjolo, the leader of a Congolese militia, of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Republic of Congo

On the Ground Reporting

- **1 March 2015** – On Sunday, thousands of women staged a march for peace in the capital city of Brazzaville as pressure is rising over possible constitutional changes that would pave the way for the president to extend his hold on power.

Central Africa Report ~ Security Summary

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Gabon - There are currently no travel advisories for Gabon.

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

Angola

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

Luanda

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

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

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

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



Cabinda Province

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

Lunda Norte and Lunda Sul

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

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

Cameroon

Security Summary ~ Cameroon has closed, air, land and sea borders with countries affected by Ebola. Flights and ships travelling from or via Ebola affected countries are banned. MS Risk advises all travellers to Cameroon to make sure your onward/return travel arrangements are flexible and to take account of these travel restrictions. These preventative measures have been taken in order to halt the further spread of Ebola.

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

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

The threat of kidnapping and hostage taking remains high at this time, with further such incidents likely to occur. While officials in Nigeria have requested Cameroon to increase security along the shared border between these two countries, the border regions continue to be porous and remain a safe haven for Boko Haram militants seeking shelter from the ongoing military operation in northern Nigeria.

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. MS Risk



advises against all travel to the Bakassi Peninsula as well as within 20km of the border with Nigeria in the Ndian Division of the South West Province. We also advise against all travel to within 40km of the border with Chad in the North and Far North Provinces. This is due to a heightened risk of banditry and armed poachers in Bouba Ndjidda National Park in the North Province. There is currently a travel advisory north of Maroula in the Far North Province resulting from the heightened threat of armed banditry and other threats associated with the borders of Chad and Nigeria. The Government of Cameroon is expected to cut fuel subsidies in the near future, which may cause strikes and civil unrest throughout the country. Finally, there have been attacks on commercial shipping vessels in the Gulf of Guinea, including the coastline of Cameroon around the port of Douala. Vessels travelling throughout this area have been advised to exercise extreme caution.

On the Ground Reporting

- **3 March 2015** – At around 2 PM (1300 GMT) on Tuesday, armed men on a motorbike killed at least two people in Kerawa, in the Far North region of Cameroon. According to a Cameroonian army officer, “we think it was a revenge killing. We suspect that a del went wrong between the two people who were killed and Boko Haram. That the only way to explain their presence in that frontier zone.”
 - The UN refugee agency reported Tuesday that some 16,000 Nigerian refugees fled to Cameroon’s Far North region over the weekend in a bid to escape clashes in the northeast of Nigeria between Boko Haram militants and regional military forces that are combatting the insurgents. Cameroonian authorities have reported to the UNHCR that the refugees had come from villages that were caught in the fighting along the border, adding that more refugees continued to cross into the extremely volatile border zones, including Makaria, Logone Birni, and Fotokol, which lies just south of Lake Chad and which has come under attack by Nigerian insurgents in recent weeks. The UNHCR is now working with Cameroonian authorities in order to relocate refugees as quickly as possible away from the area of active conflict and to a transit site at Koussseri, which is located 90 kilometres from the border and 370 kilometres north of Minawao, where there is an established refugee camp. According to UNHCR spokesman Adrian Edwards, “because of conflict between military forces and insurgents happening on Cameroonian territory, we do not have access to border areas where refugees have arrived,” adding that the agency and partners are ready to conduct screening at the transit site and to provide emergency assistance in health, nutrition, water and food for new arrivals. The spokesman further indicated that relocation convoys from the border to Koussseri will begin on Wednesday, adding that following screening procedures, UNHCR will then organize daily transfers of 2,000 refugees to Minawao camp where urgent shelter and sanitation construction is underway. At the camp, UNHCR officials will also provide basic relief, including blankets, kitchen sets and soap. The camp is currently hosting more than 32,600 Nigerian refugees. The Cameroonian government continues to provide critical escorts for humanitarian and relocation convoys to ensure the physical

protection of refugees and humanitarian actors,” adding “because of the evolving security situation in the region and the prospect of more refugee arrivals, we are discussing the setting up of a second refugee camp, further away from the insecure border. Given the scarcity of water in the area of Minawao, we are looking to secure a second camp location that will provide adequate levels of potable water for a rapidly growing refugee population in the Far North region.” Once screening has been completed, these latest movements are expected to bring the total number of Nigerian refugees in Cameroon to nearly 66,000, of whom some 41,500 have already been verified by UNHCR.

- **28 February 2015** – Thousands of Cameroonian youths have held what they describe a patriotic march in support of the country’s military, which is battling Boko Haram insurgents in the northern region of the country. The youths, numbering between 10,000 and 15,000 marched through the streets of the capital city, Yaoundé, carrying the Cameroonian and Chadian flags. The march was organized by several journalists who have been reporting on the war on Cameroon’s northern border with Nigeria. Journalist Guibal Gatama of Cameroon’s L’oeil de Sahel newspaper, which is the main organizer of the event, has indicated that the patriotic march was a sign of solidarity for the millions of people suffering from Boko Haram’s ongoing insurgency.
- **26 February 2015** – Cameroonian officials have disclosed that prisons are overcrowded with suspected Islamic extremists. Maroua Central Prison registrar Ngeh Emmanuel indicated that 30,000 people have been detained in 25 prisons across Cameroon since May 2014, adding that this number is up from the 22,000 that were already detained. Emmanuel has indicated that additional soldiers are needed in order to stop inmates from attempting to break out of jail.
- **25 February 2015** – A Cameroonian soldier and an officer were killed Wednesday when their vehicle ran over a roadside bomb in the Far North Region of Cameroon. According to a senior officer, the explosives probably came from a stock that Boko Haram had stolen last May when they attacked a Chinese workers’ camp in Waza. At the time, the kidnappers had seized a large amount of explosives and had kidnapped ten Chinese nationals.

Central African Republic

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

In recent months, armed groups have increasingly targeted aid workers operating across the CAR. In November, medical charity Medecins Sans Frontieres reported two incidents, in which an armed group, operating on the route that links Paoua in the north and the capital city Bangui, between the towns of Yaloké and Bossembélé, targeted a transport trucks carrying medical and humanitarian supplies.



Both vehicles were later released upon the payment of a ransom. Further such incidents are likely to occur in the area as the security situation across the country remains fragile.

MS Risk strongly advises you not to travel around Bangui after dark. At other times, it is advised that you take extreme care, and travel in groups if possible. There are armed patrols at night in Bangui and you may encounter several roadblocks, both official and unofficial, that are likely to be manned by armed personnel. We advise that you take particular care when approaching these.

Crime

Incidents of theft and robbery occur regularly. Armed gangs are known to operate in the outlying areas of Bangui. You are advised to take personal security precautions and be vigilant in public places at all times.

Avoid carrying valuables or wearing jewelry in public. Do not walk alone at night and avoid any isolated or poorer areas.

On the Ground Reporting

- **5 March 2015** – On Thursday, France announced that it was reducing its troop numbers in the CAR as it gradually hands over the mission to the 8,500-strong UN peacekeeping mission force that has been deployed in order to contain the deadly sectarian conflict. According to army spokesman Gilles Jaron, “we are going to begin a first cutback phase in the following days, going from 2,000 to 1,700 men.” The spokesman further indicated that France’s Operation Sangaris will be reorganized around two zones, one between the capital city Bangui and the central town of Bambari and the other around Kaga Bandoro and Ndele, with the UN mission in the CAR, MINUSCA, taking over almost all of the responsibility in the eastern region of the country. Although it is reducing its number of troops in the central African nation, France will continue to provide support to the UN.
- **25 February 2015** – Sources close to negotiations disclosed Wednesday that two ex-presidents of the CAR, who have been accused of undermining the democratic transition in the Central African nation, are now ready to join the reconciliation process. According to sources, ex-president Francois Bozize and his successor Michel Djotodia, who stepped down in January 2014 amidst strong international pressure over his failure to rein in rogue ex-rebels, have initialled a deal expressing their support for a 2014 agreement on the “cessation of hostilities.” Top representatives of the mainly Christian anti-balaka militia and the ex-Seleka fighters close to Djotodia have been meeting in the Kenyan capital Nairobi since December. The CAR interim government however has not been participating in the talks. In January, the two sides agreed to a new ceasefire agreement however the deal was rejected by the CAR’s interim government. The agreement is now expected to be formally signed at a ceremony attended by Congo President Denis Sassou Nguesso, who is mediating the crisis. Both Bozize and Djotodia are expected to urge their followers to support the peace efforts.
- **24 February 2015** – The United Nations reported Tuesday that increasing violence in the CAR has forced tens of thousands of flee their homes in recent weeks in order to escape killings, rape and pillaging by militias. According to the UN refugee agency UNHCR, since the beginning of this year, some 30,000 people have left their homes and found refuge within the CAR while more than 20,000 others have crossed into neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) from the CAR’s Kouango district since December 2014. UNHCR spokeswoman Karin de Grujil told reporters in Geneva Tuesday, “there is just total lawlessness, and the civilian population is being caught in the middle.” According to Ms Grujil, the most recent violence has been associated with seasonal movements of livestock and clashes that have erupted between herders, local farmers and the anti-balaka, adding, “some herders have turned to ex-Seleka militias for protection. Recent military operations against ex-Seleka militias in the eastern mining town of Bria have also resulted in deadly reprisal attacks by the rebels on nearby villages. According to Ms Grujil, “civilian

populations were caught in the middle and saw their villages, houses and belongings burned.” Since 15 February, some 2,400 refugees, most of them children, have crossed into the DRC from Mobayi, which is located in the CAR’s north, ahead of expected violence by ex-Seleka rebels after the military operation in Bria. UNHCR teams operating in the CAR have also received “alarming reports of sexual violence” by militias, including of three refugee girls who were kidnapped from the border area in the DRC and taken back to the CAR. According to Ms Gruijl, “one girl who managed to escape told us that they were raped... The other girls are still missing... We fear that there are many more cases that remain unreported.” The CAR is still struggling to recover from the 2013 coup that ousted president Francois Bozize and plunged the country into conflict, pitting the country’s Christian and Muslim populations against one another. According to the UNHCR, in total, more than 873,000 people have been displaced by violence in the CAR, mainly since December 2013. Around half of them are living as refugees in neighbouring Cameroon, Chad, DRC and Republic of Congo.

Chad

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

On 13 February, Boko Haram militants launched an attack on the Chadian village of Ngouboua – the first such assault to take place on Chadian soil. Boko Haram's leader, Abubakar Shekau, has threatened Chad with further attacks if it continues to participate in the regional force combatting the militant group. MS Risk advises all travellers to Chad to remain vigilant at all times.

MS Risk advises against all travel to the following areas: areas within 30 kilometers (18 miles) of the border with Libya, Nigeria, Niger and the Central African Republic; areas bordering Lake

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



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

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

There is currently a low threat from terrorism.

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

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

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

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

On the Ground Reporting

- 4 March 2015** – On Wednesday, Chadian President Idriss Deby vowed to “wipe out” Boko Haram as he called for the militant group’s leader, Abubakar Shekau, to give himself up and warned that he knew where the militant leader was hiding. Speaking at a press conference with his visiting Nigerian counterpart, President Deby stated, “it is in Abubakar Shekau’s interest to surrender, we know where he is. If he refuses to give himself up, he will suffer the same fate as his comrades.” The Chadian president has revealed that Shekau had fled the strategic northeastern Nigerian town of Dikwa after Boko Haram fighters were forced out of the town by Chadian troops in fierce clashes that occurred last month. At the time, the Chadian army officials disclosed that two of their soldiers and 117 Boko Haram militants had been killed in fighting around Dikwa, which is located in the Nigerian state of Borno, on 17 February. President Deby also promised that the

region is “...going to win the war and we are going to wipe out Boko Haram, contrary to what certain media think. The Chadian and Niger forces will continue their mission to finally put an end to this shadowy group.” Last month, Nigeria, along with its neighbors, Cameroon, Chad and Niger, launched a joint campaign against Boko Haram after the militant group widened its offensive by staging attacks in neighboring countries.

- **3 March 2015** – Chadian troops operating in northeastern Nigeria have driven Boko Haram militants out of the Nigerian town of Dikwa. According to Chadian Colonel Azem Bermandoua, “we have total control of the town,” disclosing that one Chadian soldier was killed in the battle along with many Boko Haram militants. On the ground sources have reported that the black and white Boko Haram flags are still flying in the town which has been deserted of residents after several weeks of occupation. Chad has deployed thousands of soldiers, stationing them at strategic positions around Lake Chad in an effort to contain the radical group within Nigeria. Its troops have on a number of occasions chased the militants across the borders.

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

Security Summary ~ The WHO has declared the DRC Ebola-free. An outbreak of the deadly disease, unrelated to the ongoing outbreak in West Africa, was first discovered in August near the remote town of Boende, in Equateur province.

A draft electoral reform bill was introduced to parliament on 12 January. On 19 January, violent demonstrations erupted outside parliament and quickly spread to other areas of the capital Kinshasa, including at city's main university. Shots were fired in several neighborhoods of the capital city. Protests continued on 20 and 21 January, resulting in troops being deployed to the streets of Kinshasa in a bid to maintain order. The ongoing protests have led to several schools being closed and movement around Kinshasa being restricted. Credible reports indicate that between 5 and 30 people have been killed as a result of the violence, including two members of the police. There have also been violent demonstrations, looting and general unrest in other areas of the country, including in Bukavu, Bas-Congo, Equator, Goma, Mbandaka and South Kivu. While the airport in Kinshasa remains open, some flights were cancelled on 20 January and there may be further cancellations. In the event of escalating tensions and civil unrest, further commercial flights may be suspended and borders may be closed. MS Risk advises all travellers to check your airline before travelling. Further demonstrations are likely to occur around parliament in Kinshasa, and elsewhere. MS Risk advises all travellers to remain vigilant and to monitor the situation in your area closely. We advise you to avoid unnecessary journeys during periods of potential unrest. We advise that



you avoid the area around the parliament in Kinshasa and stay away from gathering crowds as protests may quickly turn violent without warning.

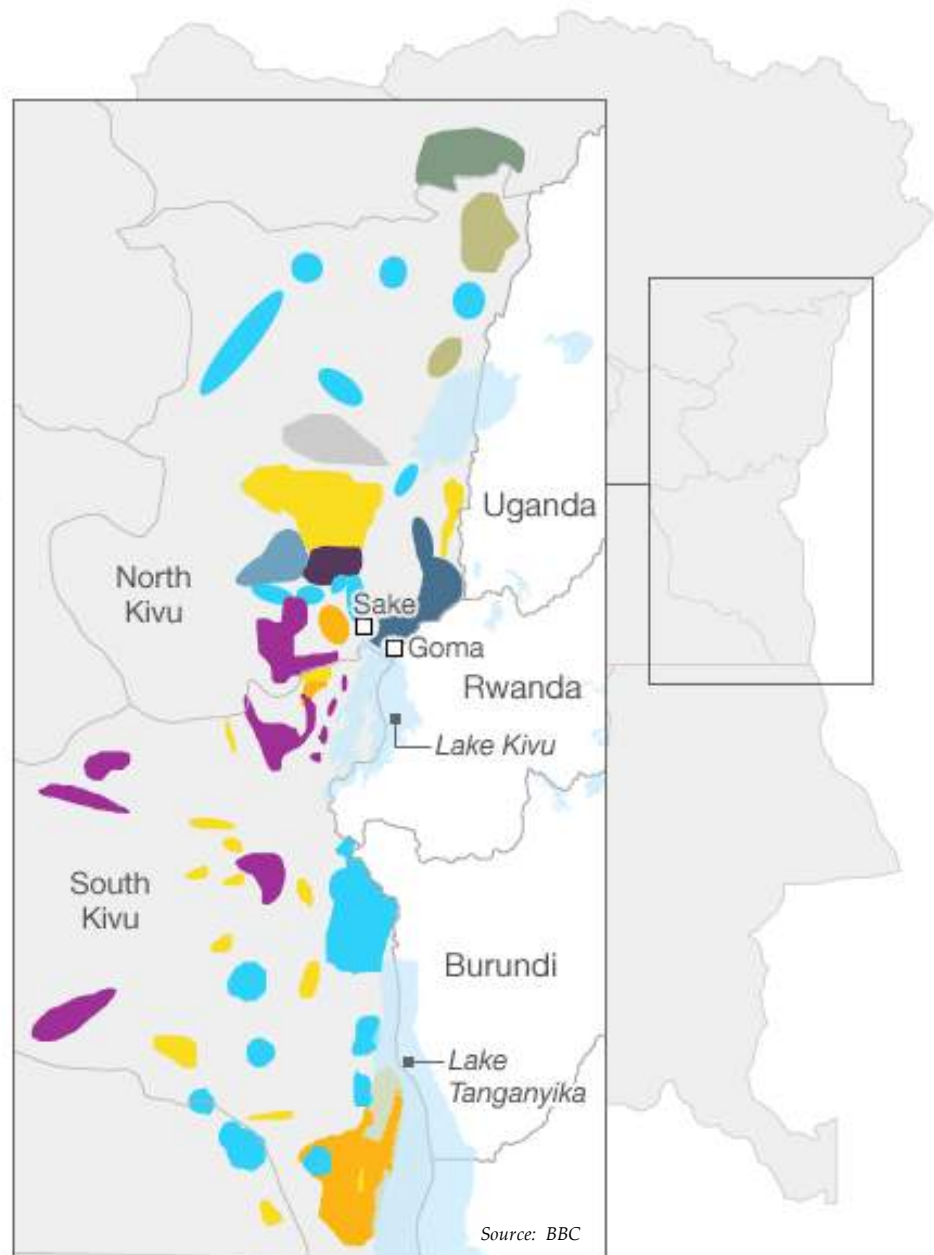
The security situation in eastern DRC, including Beni and Goma, remains unstable. Ugandan rebels have killed over 100 people in and around the town of Beni. Officials have since imposed a overnight curfew on the town. Any foreigners in North Kivu, including Goma, are currently advised to keep their security situation under review. During fighting in the region in recent months, shells landed on Goma, causing a number of civilian deaths and injuries. There was also shelling around the border with Rwanda and explosions in the town of Gisenyi on the Rwandan side of the border. Further shelling may occur. You are therefore advised to avoid travelling alone and at night.

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

REBEL GROUPS

UN forces and the Congolese army are present in large towns

- ADF-NALU**
Ugandan-led Islamists
- APCLS**
Mai Mai group
- FDLR**
Mostly Hutu Rwandan rebels
- FRPI**
Based in gold-rich Ituri region
- M23**
Mostly Tutsi, said to be Rwandan-backed
- Rai Mutomboki**
Anti-FDLR group
- Sheka**
Mai Mai group
- UPCP**
Loose coalition of smaller nationalist groups
- Mai Mai groups**
Local forces claiming to act in self-defence
- Other armed groups**



Source: BBC

On the Ground Reporting

- **1 March 2015** – A government spokesman disclosed Sunday that the Congolese army has killed seven rebel fighters and captured territory and weapons since beginning its campaign to remove rebels from the eastern region of the country. According to Lambert Mende, one soldier has been killed since the launch of the campaign last week in the North and South Kivu provinces against the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda. Mr Mende further disclosed, “they (the rebels) are being chased. They are abandoning the majority of their arms. They are less dangerous than when they are living in their usual sites.” After routing the fighters from the hills around the town of Kirumba on Friday in North Kivu’s Virunga National Park, the army units are now battling the rebels some 30 kilometres (18 miles) to the south, near the town of Tongo. According to Mende, in all, 93 rebels have been captured in the two provinces.
- **26 February 2015** – Villagers have begun to flee their homes in the eastern DRC as the army pursues Rwandan Hutu rebels in a new offensive that was launched earlier this week. According to an officer, since launching the offensive two days ago in the Uvira territory of South Kivu province, troops have captured all positions of the FDLR around Mulenge, adding “Mulenge and the surrounding villages have no more FDLR in them, so there is no more fighting in these centres, but we are taking the battle to the deep forests where the FDLR hold out.” Residents have reported, “many inhabitants have fled Mulenge 1 and 2 and taken shelter in Katala and Mushegereza. Some have been taken in by families and others are in the two primary schools and a Protestant church.” A resident of Lemera, which is located 30 kilometres (19 miles) from Mulenge, disclosed on Thursday that the situation was fine, stating, “we’re fine. We can no longer hear guns being fired, but the soldiers who went up (on to higher ground) have still not come back. It seems that they may have already moved further up on to the plateau.” According to military spokesman General Leon-Richard Kasonga, troops from the national armed forces (FARDC) have killed three FDLR fighters and captured eight rebels, adding “its above all in the forest of Kitavu-Kambegere” to the south “were they have sought shelters....We are pursuing them. Our goal is for them to lay down their arms and return to Rwanda.”
- **24 February 2015** – According to military and officials sources, the DRC’s army on Tuesday launched an assault against Rwandan Hutu rebels in its volatile eastern region. An officer in the armed forces (FARDC) has reported, “operations against the FDLR (Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda) began in South Kivu early this morning and will last as long as these people resist.” An official disclosed that the operation began in Uvira in the southern region of South Kivu and that Congolese troops were acting without the support of troops from the UN mission that is deployed in the DRC. The army officer confirmed that “unilateral operations” were taking place under the command of Brigadier-General Espera Masuid in the Mulenge region, on the Uvira plateau. The assault was first announced by President Joseph Kabila’s government last month. While initially, strategic, logistical and operation support had been offered by the UN mission MONUSCO, which includes a brigade with a special UN mandate to take the offensive

against armed groups, MONUSCO withdrew its support when Kinshasa refused to remove two generals who were designated to lead the offensive. Bruno Mandevu and Sikabwe Fall have been accused by the UN of carrying out numerous atrocities. The FLDR is believed to number between 1,500 and 2,000 fighters, with the rebels accused of carrying out serious human rights violations, including rape, killings, looting and the forcible enlistment of children. Last year, the international community gave FDLR rebels six months, until 2 January 2015, to surrender however only 300 fighters turned themselves in. None of the FDLR's leaders, who are wanted by Rwandan and international justice, were amongst those that surrendered.

International Developments

- **3 March 2015** – On Tuesday, the International Criminal Court (ICC) ruled that convicted Congolese warlord Thomas Lubanga should “personally” be liable for reparations to his victims, including paying to help reintegrate child soldiers who served in his rebel army. Handing out a ruling at the Hague-based headquarters, ICC appeals judges stated that the court’s trial chamber “erred in not making Lubanga personally liable for collective reparations.” In March 2012, trial judges convicted Lubanga of war crimes, specifically for using minors in the conflict in the eastern DRC. He was found guilty of abducting children as young as eleven from their homes, schools or football fields and forcing them to fight and commit atrocities. He was sentenced to fourteen years in prison. Shortly after the verdict, victims’ lawyers appealed the trial judges’ decision, as it had not stated whether Lubanga himself was liable, with trial judges adding he had no funds to pay his victims. The ICC’s appeals judges have indicated that the war crimes court judged accused on their individual criminal liability in cases, with judges stating “this context strongly suggests that reparation orders are intrinsically linked to the individual whose criminal liability is established in a conviction and whose culpability for those criminal acts are determined in a sentence.” The judges further told officials of the Trust Fund for Victims (TFV) to draft a plan for collective reparations to Lubanga’s victims within six months. Judges also noted that even though Lubanga was never accused or convicted of crimes involving sexual violence, those who suffered sexual abuse in the northeastern province of Ituri should also be compensated. Judges have ruled that the money should collectively include the possibility of medical services and psychological support as well as “general rehabilitation, housing, education and training” for victims and it should also include measures to “reintegrate former child soldiers.” The verdict against Lubanga marked the first-ever conviction at the ICC. Lubanga, now 54, was sentenced for his part in a war in the gold-rich northeastern Ituri region where rights groups say that some 60,000 people were killed between 1999 and 2006.
- **28 February 2015** – The appeals chamber of the ICC has upheld a decision to acquit Mathieu Ngudjolo, the leader of a Congolese militia, of war crimes and crimes against humanity. On Friday, presiding judge Sanji Mmasenono Monageng admitted that while mistakes in assessing the evidence may have been made during the 2012 trial, “the chamber errors had no material impact on the acquittal decision.” Speaking shortly after the verdict, chief prosecutor of the ICC, Fatou

Bensouda stated that although “it brings the case to a close... The decision does not negate the fact that crimes were committed in Bogor or the suffering of the victims... My Office spared no effort in the prosecution of the case and exhausted all judicial remedies available to it,” adding that her office “...remains most committed to bringing an end to impunity for mass crimes perpetrated in the situation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo” and that “this crucial work will continue unabated.” Prosecutors had challenged a 2012 ruling that had found Ngudjolo not guilty on charges of murder, rape and pillaging in relation to a 2003 massacre in the eastern region of the DRC. That attack had killed some 200 people.

Republic of the Congo

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

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

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



On the Ground Reporting

- **1 March 2015** – On Sunday, thousands of women staged a march for peace in the capital city of

Brazzaville as pressure is rising over possible constitutional changes that would pave the way for the president to extend his hold on power. According to one of the marches organizers, “confronted with differing opinions due to (possible) changes to the constitution, we thought we had to warn, try to inform and alert our brothers and our politicians that women want peace.” While the organizers indicated that they expected 13,500 people to participate in the march, police figures placed the turnout at over half that number. President Denis Sassou Nguesso, who is one of the African continent’s longest serving leaders, is constitutionally mandated to step down in 2016, when the second of his two most recent terms in office concludes. Under the country’s new constitution, which has been in place since 2002, he is not allowed to stand for election again. However his party has asked for a revision of the constitution that would effectively allow the president to seek another term in office in the country’s next presidential elections.

Equatorial Guinea

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

Compared with other countries in the region, the level of violent crime is low; however there are regular reports

of petty theft, which has affected both visitors and expatriates. MS Risk advises all travellers to avoid walking around Malabo and Bata at night and to avoid travelling by road after dark. Although the political situation has been calm in recent years, you should be aware that political events can lead to an increased presence of police, military or security forces on the streets. Consequently you should avoid any political rallies, demonstrations or large public gatherings. There is a low threat from terrorism; however you should be aware that attacks can occur at any time and place, including those frequented by expatriates and foreign travellers.



Gabon

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

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



São Tomé and Príncipe

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

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

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

