



MS | RISK

West Africa Report

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

February 2 - 15, 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

February 2 - 15, 2015



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

Sahel Region

- **12 February 2015** – World Health Organization (WHO) officials reported Wednesday that the number of new Ebola cases in West Africa rose for the second week after a previous decline, including a “sharp increase” in Guinea.
- **11 February 2015** – The Pentagon announced Wednesday that the US military is planning to pull out troops from West Africa that were deployed to help stem the Ebola outbreak, effectively ending the five-month mission.
- **5 February 2015** – According to new data released by the World Health Organization (WHO), the number of Ebola cases in West Africa has gone up for the first time this year, with officials warning that the coming rainy season could complicate efforts to contain the disease.
 - The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has announced that it will provide close to US \$100 million in debt relief to the three West African countries that have been the hardest hit by the Ebola outbreak.

Burkina Faso

- **7 February 2015** – Hundreds of people protested on Saturday, calling for the dissolution of the presidential guard, which is a power unit within the military that earlier this week called for the prime minister's resignation.
- **4 February 2015** – Burkina Faso's elite presidential guard has called for interim Prime Minister Isaac Zida to stop down.

The Gambia

- **9 February 2015** – Rights activists have demanded the release of a former government minister and a top army officer who they say are being held without charge by Gambian secret police.

Ghana

- **5 February 2015** – At least one person has been killed and four others injured after clashes erupted when inmates attempted to escape after a fire broke out at a prison in Kumasi city.
 - The chief executive of Ghana's Chamber of Mines, Sulemanu Koney, has indicated that the country's power crisis, which has seen long electric cuts on a nearly daily basis, will hurt gold production if it continues.
- **2 February 2015** – Government officials disclosed Monday that they have ordered a small fleet of emergency barges, with the capacity to generate up to a total of 1,000 megawatts of electricity, in a bid to address the country's worsening power crisis.

Guinea

- **11 February 2015** – On Wednesday, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement denounced a series of violent attack on its volunteers who are fighting the deadly Ebola epidemic in Guinea.
 - Panic spread through schools in the capital city Conakry on Wednesday over false rumors that a Red Cross team was coming to take Ebola infected students.
- **9 February 2015** – At least a dozen people were wounded Monday after clashes erupted with police in the wake of the arrest of an imam who led funeral prayers for a suspected Ebola victim.
- **6 February 2015** – A judicial source reported Friday that Guinea has put fifty-eight people on trial over an attack on Ebola outreach workers.
 - According to a Guinean health official, the number of Ebola patients in the West African country has doubled over the past week following the discovery of cases previously unknown to health authorities.
- **4 February 2015** – Government officials disclosed Wednesday that around fifty people were injured in riots that erupted in the northern town of Labé after people protesting a shake-up in the civil service clashed with security forces.

Ivory Coast

- **4 February 2015** – Six United Nations peacekeepers in the Ivory Coast died in a road accident that occurred along the road linked the North to the capital Abidjan.

Liberia

- **11 February 2015** – Liberia's education minister on Wednesday announced a further postponement of the reopening of the country's schools, which were closed six months ago in a bid to limit the spread of Ebola.
- **3 February 2015** – The trial of a potential Ebola drug in Liberia has been stopped as case numbers in the West African countries are now so low that officials believe the study will likely not provide a clear result.
- **2 February** – Officials have disclosed that the first large-scale trials of two Ebola vaccines are due to begin in Liberia on Monday.

Mali

On the Ground Reporting

- **4 February 2015** – Fresh violence erupted Wednesday between rebels and pro-government fighters in the restive northern region of Mali.
 - According to a MINUSMA source, a Malian army vehicle hit a landmine near the city of Timbuktu. The source reported “the terrorists crossed the Niger river by canoe.
- **2 February 2015** – France’s defense ministry disclosed Monday that French forces operating in northern Mali have killed around a dozen Islamist militants in the region of the Adrar des Ifoghas mountains.

Regional Reporting

- **10 February 2015** – The Algerian army has disclosed that late Tuesday, its troops killed two militants on the border with Mali.
 - Visiting Malian Prime Minister Modibo Keita has held talks with Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, where the two discussed bilateral cooperation and the Malian peace dialogue as well as the security situation in the Sahel region.

Mauritania

- **12 February 2015** – On Thursday, hundreds of Mauritians staged a protest in the capital city Nouakchott, demanding the release of three anti-slavery activists who are facing riot and vandalism charges.
- **5 February 2015** – Mauritania has postponed its senatorial elections in order to focus on persuading the opposition to stop its plans to boycott the vote.

Niger

- **15 February 2015** – Local officials have reported that several dozen people suspected of having links to Boko Haram have been arrested in Niger’s Zinder region.
- **12 February 2015** – On Thursday, Niger’s ruling coalition called for a national day of protest against Boko Haram in the wake of several attacks staged on its soil.
 - Two female suicide bombers attacked the town of Diffa on Wednesday.
 - Nigerien security sources disclosed Thursday that they have killed 260 Boko Haram militants since the terrorist group began cross-border attacks on Niger’s southeastern Diffa region on 6 February.
- **11 February 2015** – Canadian Special Forces are due to take part in a multi-country military training exercise that will take place in a region of West Africa that is being targeted by Boko Haram’s insurgency.
- **10 February 2015** - On Tuesday, Niger declared a 15-day state of emergency in the border region of Diffa after several attacks carried out by Nigerian-based militant group Boko Haram.
 - The UN food agency has voiced concern for the 125,000 Nigerian refugees who have fled to southeastern Nigeria, where Boko Haram militants have launched a string of attacks in recent days.
- **9 February 2015** – Boko Haram militants continued their escalation of attacks on neighboring countries Monday as a car bomb exploded in a Niger town that has in recent days been repeatedly targeted by the militants.
 - According to humanitarian sources, Islamist fighters from Nigeria’s Boko Haram launched a new attack in neighboring Niger on Monday, raiding a prison in the southeastern border town of Diffa.
- **8 February 2015** – In what appears to be a sign that Boko Haram’s offensive against Niger is intensifying, Boko Haram militants staged an overnight assault on a border town in Niger, with on the ground sources reporting that a shell struck a market in the same town a few hours later.
- **6 February 2015** - Witnesses reported Friday that Nigeria’s Boko Haram militant group has attacked a town in neighboring Niger for the first time.

- **5 February 2015** – France has sent military advisers to Niger's southern border with Nigeria to help coordinate military action by regional powers fighting Boko Haram.
- **3 February 2015** – On Tuesday workers at Niger's oil refinery launched a four-day strike - the third work stoppage to occur in less than two weeks at the facility, which is a joint venture between the Nigerian government and China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC).

Domestic News

- **9 February 2015** – Niger's parliament has voted to deploy troops to Nigeria to join the fight against Boko Haram. According to lawmaker Mohamed Ben Omar, "the resolution was passed unanimously."

Nigeria

Coverage of the Presidential Election ~ 28 March 2015

- **13 February 2015** – Nigeria's human rights commission (NHRC) disclosed Friday that political violence in the run-up to the country's presidential elections has killed 58 people, with rising "hate speech" between rival camps threatening to spark further unrest in the coming weeks.
- **11 February 2015** – On Wednesday, Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan rejected claims that his political interests motivated the six-week delay in national elections, stating that he was "not consulted" on the widely-criticized decision and vowing that the vote would take place with an elected government sworn in on 29 May.
 - On Wednesday, Nigeria's military pledged not to get involved in party politics amidst growing concerns pertaining to its role in pushing for the country's presidential elections to be delayed by six weeks.
- **9 February 2015** – National Security Advisor Sambo Dasuki announced Monday that Nigeria's general elections will not be postponed past 28 March.
- **7 February 2015** – In a move that is likely to infuriate the opposition, on Saturday Nigeria's electoral commission announced that it has postponed presidential elections until 28 March, stating that security forces fighting Boko Haram militants cannot ensure voters' safety across the country.
- **2 February 2015** – On Monday, the International Criminal Court's (ICC) prosecutor urged all parties in Nigeria's upcoming presidential elections to refrain from violence before, during and after the vote.

On the Ground Reporting

- **15 February 2015** – A female suicide bomber has killed at least seven people in northeastern Nigeria.
- **14 February 2015** – Boko Haram militants invaded the northeastern city of Gombe on Saturday, warning residents against voting in next month's presidential elections.
- **12 February 2015** – A suicide attack carried out by a female bomber killed at least seven people at a market in northeastern Nigeria on Thursday.
 - Reports emerged Thursday that Boko Haram militants stormed a police station in Kanamma in Yobe state late Monday.
 - Militants on Thursday continued their insurgency in northeastern Nigeria, killing at least 21 people in two separate attacks in Borno state.
 - Meanwhile in Yobe's economic capital Potiskum, multiple witnesses have reported that an attempted suicide bombing was thwarted outside the campaign office of Governor Ibrahim Geidam.
- **11 February 2015** - During the early morning hours Wednesday, Boko Haram militants attacked Chadian troops stationed in a Nigerian border town.
- **10 February 2015** – Nigeria will investigate reports of rapes, child trafficking and other abuses in camps for people fleeing Boko Haram's violence.
- **9 February 2015** – Boko Haram's leader Abubakar Shekau has vowed that the group will defeat a regional force fighting the extremists in Nigeria's far northeastern, Niger and Cameroon.

- **6 February 2015** - According to US intelligence officials, while after a string of battlefield advances, Boko Haram is “flush with cash and weapons,” the militant group could face a tougher fight with Nigeria’s neighbors.
- **4 February 2015** – Chadian officials disclosed Wednesday that they have inflicted heavy losses on Nigeria’s Boko Haram, killing “over 200” militants in a border town after gaining control from the rebels in a ground offensive.
- **3 February 2015** – On Tuesday, Chad deployed ground troops into Nigeria for the first time to fight Boko Haram militants in what is a sign of increasing regional pressure on the Islamist group after weeks of increasing violence.
- **2 February 2015** - Nigeria on Monday claimed to have retaken the town of Gamboru, along with four other towns held by Boko Haram, following a joint weekend offensive carried out by it’s military, civilian vigilantes and forces from neighboring Chad and Cameroon.
 - Suicide bombers targeted a presidential campaign rally in northeastern Nigeria on Monday.

Regional Reporting

- **13 February 2015** – Officials disclosed Friday that Nigeria-based Boko Haram militants carried out an attack on Chad overnight, the first such assault to take place on Chadian soil.
- **9 February 2015** - Suspected Boko Haram militants have hijacked a bus in northern Cameroon, abducting 20 people and executing 12 of them.
 - Several Boko Haram militants were killed and around 10 Cameroonian soldiers injured as the militants attacked Kerawa.
- **7 February 2015** – Regional and African Union (AU) officials met in Cameroon’s capital city, Yaoundé, on Saturday where they unveiled a proposal for a force of as many as 8,750 members to combat Boko Haram, with manpower coming from Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria.
- **5 February 2015** - On Thursday, Boko Haram militants reportedly killed at least seventy people in an attack on the town of Fotokol in Cameroon.
- **4 February 2015** – According to security sources, Cameroonian soldiers clashed with Boko Haram fighters in the border town of Fotokol on Wednesday as the militants fled an offensive by Chad’s army.

Senegal

- **9 February 2015** – Peace and security will be the focus of a conference, which opened in Senegal on Monday and which brought together top American military brass and the heads of 35 African armies.

Sierra Leone

- **13 February 2015** – Sierra Leonean officials have placed hundreds of homes in the capital city under quarantine, in what is likely to be a huge blow to the country’s recover from the Ebola outbreak less than a month after the president lifted all travel restrictions.
- **10 February 2015** – On Tuesday, Sierra Leonean officials announced the launch of an infectious disease prevention agency, stating that it would convert its Ebola clinics into treatment and research units for some of the world’s deadliest viruses.
- **5 February 2015** – President Ernest Bai Koroma announced Thursday that schools across the country will reopen on 30 March, seven months after they were closed due to the Ebola outbreak.
- **3 February 2015** – Despite new Ebola cases on the decline, Sierra Leonean officials are worried that the president’s decision to lift travel restrictions may re-ignite the spread of the deadly disease.

Togo

- **2 February 2015** – Togo’s constitutional court announced Monday that presidential elections have to be held by 5 March “at the latest.”

Security Summaries for West African States

Sahel Region – Page 10

Benin

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. 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.

Burkina Faso – Page 12

The Gambia – Page 15

Ghana – Page 17

Guinea – Page 19

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 22

Liberia – Page 23

Mali – Page 26

Mauritania – Page 31

Niger – Page 33

Nigeria – Page 38

Senegal – Page 49

Sierra Leone – Page 51

Togo – Page 54

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

- **12 February 2015** – World Health Organization (WHO) officials reported Wednesday that the number of new Ebola cases in West Africa rose for the second week after a previous decline, including a “sharp increase” in Guinea. In the week leading up to 8 February, a total of 144 new cases were reported, compared to 124 that were reported the previous week. In its report, the WHO disclosed “Guinea reported a sharp increase in incidence, with 65 new confirmed cases compared with 39 the week before.” The report further indicated that transmission also remains “widespread” in Sierra Leone, which reported 75 new confirmed cases during the reporting period. Liberia again reported a low number of new confirmed cases, with just three over the reporting period. A decline in new cases in recent weeks had resulted in optimism that the worst was over, however last week, the WHO reported the first rise in the weekly number of cases in all three countries in 2015. In its latest report, the WHO stated “the spike in cases in Guinea and continued widespread transmission in Sierra Leone underline the considerable challenges that must still be overcome to get to zero cases,” adding “the infrastructure, systems and people needed to end the epidemic are now in place; response measures must now be fully implemented.” Nearly 9,000 people have died from the epidemic, however the WHO has admitted that it is impossible to provide a precise number as the outcomes of some cases remained unknown.

- **11 February 2015** – The Pentagon announced Wednesday that the US military is planning to pull out troops from West Africa that were deployed to help stem the Ebola outbreak, effectively ending the five-month mission. A statement released by Pentagon spokesman Rear Admiral John Kirby disclosed that the force, which at one point reached 2,800 troops, has been scaled back to about 1,300 troops and “nearly all will return by April 30.” A small team of about 100 US troops will remain in the region in order to strengthen “disease preparedness and surveillance capacity” of local governments. The announcement comes as the epidemic has begun to recede. The White House has announced that President Barack Obama will on Wednesday declare a next phase in fighting the disease. In September 2014, at the height of the Ebola outbreak, President Obama had approved plans for more than 3,000 troops to head to Liberia and Senegal however the full contingent never had to be ordered as ongoing efforts to contain the virus had resulted in a decrease in new reported cases. The US forces that were deployed, most of whom were stationed in Liberia, constructed Ebola treatment units, trained health workers, provided logistical support for aid agencies and set up labs to test blood samples. Despite US troops in Liberia and Senegal having no contact with Ebola patients, the Pentagon placed all military personnel returning from West Africa in temporary quarantine as a precaution. Officials so far have not detected the virus in any US soldier that worked in West Africa.
- **5 February 2015** – According to new data released by the World Health Organization (WHO), the number of Ebola cases in West Africa has gone up for the first time this year, with officials warning that the coming rainy season could complicate efforts to contain the disease. In an update published on Wednesday, the WHO indicated that there were 124 confirmed cases last week, up from 99 that were recorded the week before. The WHO further indicated that there are continuing problems in tracking the spread of the virus. In Sierra Leone, WHO officials noted that only 21 percent of new cases in the country were known contacts, effectively meaning that health officials have no idea how the majority of new patients are being infected. In Guinea, about half of new patients were from contacts of other cases and 10 of 34 prefectures in the country reported at least one security problem or refusal to cooperate with international aid efforts in the last week. WHO officials noted that Ebola is continuing to spread to new areas in Guinea, particularly in regions located close to the border with Mali. WHO officials noted that a single unsafe burial in Guinea in early January sparked nearly a dozen confirmed cases.
 - The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has announced that it will provide close to US \$100 million in debt relief to the three West African countries that have been the hardest hit by the Ebola outbreak. Christine Lagarde, who heads the Washington-based lending institution, made the announcement on Thursday, stating that the funds, while will be given to Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, will make loans amounting to US \$160 million available to the countries on top of the US \$130 million that was provided last September. Lagarde indicated that she will also press other lenders to grant debt relief to the three countries.

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 and Sierra Leone. While there currently have been no confirmed



cases of the Ebola virus in Burkina Faso, MS Risk advises all travellers to remain cautious, including maintaining strict standards of hygiene. As a precautionary measure, Burkina Faso's environmental ministry has banned all special hunting for bats, which is the main carrier of the deadly virus.

Threats and Concerns

There is a general threat from terrorism throughout the Sahel region. Although there are currently no known Islamist operatives in Burkina Faso, the

country's shared border with Mali may enable such elements to gain access. 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 Sources

- **7 February 2015** – Hundreds of people protested on Saturday, calling for the dissolution of the presidential guard, which is a power unit within the military that earlier this week called for the prime minister's resignation. The military's interference in Burkina Faso's politics has exposed divisions within the transitional authorities tasked to guide the country to presidential elections later this year after President Blaise Compaore was forced to step down late last year. After several days of crisis talks, the presidential guard, which is known locally as the RSP, pledged late Friday not to interfere in the transition, however hundreds gathered in the capital Ouagadougou on Saturday, demanding that the unit, which under the former president enjoyed special privileges and was better armed and trained than other military units, to be dissolved. Some in the crowds held banners reading "Threat to the public" and "No to an army within the army. No to intimidation and threats." On Wednesday, the RSP called for Prime Minister Isaac Zida, who is a former member of the RSP, to resign and abandon plans to reduce the unit's size and pay. The incident prevented a cabinet meeting from taking place and sparked warnings by both United Nations and African Union officials against any interference in the country's transitional period. In the wake of Saturday's protests, transitional President Michel Kafando has called for calm, stating that he will create a commission that will outline the future role of the unit, which was at the heart of Compaore's power.
- **4 February 2015** – Burkina Faso's elite presidential guard has called for interim Prime Minister Isaac Zida to stop down. According to a source, members of the army's presidential security regiment (RSP) "are calling for the resignation of the prime minister," who has been in the job for a little more than two months. A planned meeting of the council of ministers on Wednesday morning was cancelled as the prime minister was called into talks with members of the RSP. A diplomatic source disclosed Wednesday that tensions had been simmering for weeks, adding that officials "...were expecting something like this." Ties between the RSP and military-ruler-turned-prime-minister Zida have been strained after he publically called for the dissolution of the presidential guard in the wake of President Blaise Compaore's resignation late last year. The RSP was widely criticized for its role in a heavy-handed crackdown by security forces on the mass protests that ousted the president in late October. According to an official inquiry, at least twenty-four people were killed in the demonstrations and more than 600 were injured. In a report released last week, the International Crisis Group noted that any dissolution of the presidential guard "must be done with great care," adding "unless RSP members are offered continued salary payment, pension rights and career progression, they could resort to violence and threaten the transition." **Update (5 February)** – Burkina Faso's presidential guard has abandoned its call for interim Prime Minister Isaac Zida to resign, after the premier promised Thursday not to dismantle the elite unit. According to several officers, during talks in the capital Ouagadougou, the prime minister promised to maintain the RSP after having called for its dissolution in December. Senior military sources have disclosed that there was "no question of dissolving the RSP," which would instead be reformed so that it no longer only served the head of state. In return, the RSP has abandoned the call it issued Wednesday for Zida's resignation. The compromise will likely avert further possible unrest in Burkina Faso, less than four months after longtime President Blaise Compaore was forced from power.

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

- **9 February 2015** – Rights activists have demanded the release of a former government minister and a top army officer who they say are being held without charge by Gambian secret police. Sources have indicated that the detention of ex-finance minister Mamboury Njie and presidential guard commander Solo Bojang is part of a wider pattern of dissidents being arbitrarily re-arrested despite being acquitted by the courts. Mr Njie was initially detained in December 2012 on charges of "economic crime," however he was cleared when his case was tried in June 2014. His family has since disclosed that Mr Njie was re-arrested at his home on October 9 by agents from the country's NIA spy agency. His family further indicated that Mr Njie went missing for three weeks before being detained at the agency's headquarters in Banjul. Since November 28, he has been under police guard in hospital and has not been charged with any crime. Mr Bojang, a commander of the State Guards, which is the president's personal bodyguard, was freed in May last year after being acquitted on a number of charges, including theft and abuse of office. However NIA

operatives arrested him almost immediately after his release. According to a relative, “we have not set our eyes on him since May 12 2014. We do not know where he is kept and have not heard from him either.” Omar Jallow, the leader of the opposition People’s Progressive party, has called for the release of both men, stating that their continued detention showed “total contempt for the constitution and the judiciary,” adding “since 1994 we have been witnessing systematic and continuous violations of our constitution and a total disregard for the decisions of our courts.” Outrage over the two cases comes as rights campaigners condemned unlawful detentions and a string of other alleged abuses that have taken place in The Gambia over recent weeks.

Ghana

No Travel Restrictions

Security Summary

An outbreak of the Ebola virus disease has been confirmed in Guinea, Sierra Leone 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.

On the Ground Reporting

- **5 February 2015** – At least one person has been killed and four others injured after clashes erupted when inmates attempted to escape after a fire broke out at a prison in Kumasi city. According to officials, the prisoners tried to escape as they were being evacuated from their cells shortly after the fire broke out. Security officers clashed with the prisoners, leaving one inmate dead and four policemen wounded. Officials have reported that the fire was caused by lightning. On the ground sources have disclosed that some inmates stole the clothes of prison officers and attempted to escape by climbing a wall. Police reinforcements were brought in to help restore order as the situation threatened to deteriorate. Prisoners threw bricks, chairs and other objects at police, with officers retaliating by firing tear gas and shooting dead one inmate when he attempted to snatch a gun. According to Kumasi prison spokesman James Annan, none of the prisoners managed to escape and calm has since been restored at the prison.



- The chief executive of Ghana's Chamber of Mines, Sulemanu Koney, has indicated that the country's power crisis, which has seen long electric cuts on a nearly daily basis, will hurt gold production if it continues. Speaking on Thursday, Koney disclosed, "it is...a major constraint and the net effect is that your costs go up and your margins are squeezed," adding that power from the national grid constitutes 25 – 30 percent of mining production costs. He further indicated, "for companies which are already marginal, it'll mean they are just being pushed out of business. Survival becomes the name of the game." Many consumers face near daily power cuts that last 24-hours or longer. Koney has indicated that the government has asked the mines to provide a third of their power needs from diesel generators. The Chamber is currently in talks with the government on concessions including tax relief on diesel.
- **2 February 2015** – Government officials disclosed Monday that they have ordered a small fleet of emergency barges, with the capacity to generate up to a total of 1,000 megawatts of electricity, in a bid to address the country's worsening power crisis. Speaking at a news conference, Minister of Power Kwabena Donkor disclosed that inadequate water level at the country's three hydro power facilities, coupled with the frequent breakdown of equipment at power plants, has resulted in demand outstripping supply. According to the minister, the barges with onboard power-generation capacity will float off the capital Accra. They were ordered from General Electric and other suppliers, and are expected to begin arriving in April, with all in place by the middle of this year. According to the minister, power supplies are expected to improve significantly by the end of this year as more projects come online. Overall the government is hoping to lift generation capacity from 2,300 megawatts now to 5,000 megawatts by 2017 by facilitating private investments in thermal power generation. Ghana's power crisis has led to long outages for consumers, including industrial users such as manufacturing firms and mines.

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, Macenta 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

- **11 February 2015** – On Wednesday, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement denounced a series of violent attack on its volunteers who are fighting the deadly Ebola epidemic in Guinea. The latest violence occurred Sunday and involved two burial workers who were beaten up by a mob in the western town of Forecariah, which is located 60 kilometres (40 miles) southeast of Conakry. The two Red Cross volunteers were beaten while they were trying to conduct a safe burial. The organization has launched an “urgent appeal” to Guineans to “refrain from attacking the volunteers of the Red Cross, and allow them to do their job and save lives safely.” Mobs in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, have on a number of occasions attacked health workers over a several conspiracy theories, some of which have questioned the existence of the deadly disease. According to the officials, Red Cross teams operating in Guinea have been attacked on average ten times a month over the past year, with officials warning that the violence has hampered efforts to contain the disease.
 - Panic spread through schools in the capital city Conakry on Wednesday over false rumors that a Red Cross team was coming to take Ebola infected students. According to on the ground sources, schools in the central Kaloum neighborhood emptied as parents arrived to collect their children, with many of the students crying and calling for help. One teacher confirmed, “the rumor is that a team of the Red Cross are coming to our school to find an Ebola patient – that’s why all the children ran out.” The panic followed similar incidents that occurred in other parts of the capital city on Tuesday. An education official has indicated that students wanting time off are behind the scare, stating that they have created alarm by “blowing whistles in the vicinity of schools,” – which is a common code amongst students that a disinfection team is on its way in order to spray the school. There is widespread misapprehension amongst Guinean students and parents that humanitarian workers who spray schools with disinfectant are instead spreading the virus.
- **9 February 2015** – At least a dozen people were wounded Monday after clashes erupted with police in the wake of the arrest of an imam who led funeral prayers for a suspected Ebola victim. On the ground sources reported that demonstrators had put up barricades, burned tires and overturned rubbish bins in the capital city Conakry before using sticks and stones to attack officers who responded with tear gas. The demonstrators also broke the windshields of at least two dozen private vehicles and burned two buses, one belonging to a hotel and another to a utility company.” According to one protester, “they came for the third imam of our mosque because yesterday he led the funeral prayers in the mosque here for a relative who died a natural death,” adding “for the Guinean authorities, no one can now die a natural death. All those who died have inevitably died of Ebola.” A policeman however has disclosed that the officers wanted to simply question the imam on the cause of death and the conditions at the burial, adding “it is especially important to know that he didn’t have Ebola to ensure the safety of his family and neighbors, including potential contacts.” According to the World Health Organization (WHO), burial rites involving contact with bodies are amongst the main factors in the spread of Ebola. Last week, WHO officials reported that 11 people had been infected at a funeral in January in eastern Guinea.
- **6 February 2015** – A judicial source reported Friday that Guinea has put fifty-eight people on trial over an attack on Ebola outreach workers. The defendants are accused of wounding several government workers and staff from the global medical aid agency Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) with knives as well as

assaulting them with sticks and stones. On 10 January, a police officer and his driver were killed and their bodies burned in the Offici region by villagers who accused them of spreading the deadly disease. According to the judicial source, “the 58 people were referred to court for assault and battery, destruction of public buildings, public insults and threats, and rebellion.” The group, who have been on trial since Monday in the western town of Forecariah, were arrested shortly after the attack, which occurred in early January on the nearby island of Kaback. A judicial source in Forecariah has disclosed that the defendants face six months each in jail if convicted. The verdicts are expected next week. Mobs have sporadically attacked health workers in the three Ebola-affected West African countries, over a number of conspiracy theories, often characterizing the outbreak as a plot by the West to murder Africans and harvest their organs. Guinea however has seen the worst of the bloodshed, with the situation particularly tense in the country’s densely forested southern region, where the outbreak began in December 2013. In September last year, eight members of an outreach team were killed by protesters in the southeastern town of Womey, who denied the existence of the disease.

- According to a Guinean health official, the number of Ebola patients in the West African country has doubled over the past week following the discovery of cases previously unknown to health authorities. Fode Tass Sylla, a spokesman for Guinea’s anti-Ebola task force, has disclosed that about two dozen new suspected and confirmed Ebola cases have been recorded over the past two weeks, bringing the total number to 53 as of Friday. According to Sylla, the increase was expected as health authorities were only now gaining access to faraway villages where inhabitants had previously prevented them from entering. According to sources, some 36 villages in the southern and western forest region of Guinea, where the first case of Ebola was recorded, had previously been inaccessible to health officials because villagers sometimes used violence to prevent healthcare workers from entering the area. Sylla further indicated “even in Conakry, there are some neighborhoods such as Ratoma where we had the same kind of situation.” The new cases highlight the difficulties that authorities in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone face in trying to curb the spread of the deadly disease, which has killed nearly 9,000 people.
- **4 February 2015** – Government officials disclosed Wednesday that around fifty people were injured in riots that erupted in the northern town of Labé after people protesting a shake-up in the civil service clashed with security forces. A statement released by government spokesman Damantang Albert Camara indicated that around 24 members of the security forces and 25 civilians were hurt in the riots, which began Monday. There was also some damage sustained to public and private property. The riots were apparently triggered by a government move to shift civil servants in the city to other parts of the country. According to the statement “the Government believes that the violence, which included the destruction of private and public property in Labé, was out of proportion with the stated demands of the protesters.” Witnesses reported that youths burned tires and that the police deployed reinforcements in order to restore calm. Labé is a stronghold of opposition to President Alpha Condé.

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 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. There is an outbreak of cholera in the Abidjan area. As of December 2014, the epidemic has infected 264 people and resulted in 19 deaths. The most affected areas are: Attecoue, Koumassi, Port Bouet and Yapougon.

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

- **4 February 2015** – Six United Nations peacekeepers in the Ivory Coast died in a road accident that occurred along the road linked the North to the capital Abidjan. According to a UN source, the vehicle that was carrying the peacekeepers veered off the road and plunged in a gully, killing all six occupants on board. The victims were all from the Egyptian contingent that is based in the central town of Yamoussoukro.

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 February 2015** – Liberia’s education minister on Wednesday announced a further postponement of the reopening of the country’s schools, which were closed six months ago in a bid to limit the spread of Ebola. Classes were due to resume this Monday, after a delay of two weeks, however in a statement dated Tuesday, the country’s education ministry disclosed that schools and parents had requested more time to prepare for the new school year. In the statement, the education ministry stated “the public is hereby informed that due to numerous appeals from school administrators, parents and other stakeholders, the commencement of class (has) now been scheduled for Monday, March 2.” The education ministry has urged schools to complete “Ebola training workshops” for teachers and students ahead of the reopening date. Due to the Ebola outbreak, schools in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone were forced to close. Guinea re-opened schools on 19 January while Sierra Leone is due to restart classes on 30 March. **Update (12 February)** – On Thursday, Liberia’s education chiefs apologized for wrongly announcing a postponement of the reopening of schools, blaming the mix-up on “problems at the ministry.” Deputy education minister Ramsey Fomoyan told the state-run ELBC radio station “we has some problems at the ministry. I ask all schools to disregard yesterday’s release. We are sorry about that.” The reopening of Liberia’s school has been delayed numerous times, with the initial date of 2 February extended to 16 February and then 2 March, before the latest delay was withdrawn. Fomoyan has apologized for the timetable being changed several times.
- **3 February 2015** – The trial of a potential Ebola drug in Liberia has been stopped as case numbers in the West African countries are now so low that officials believe the study will likely not provide a clear result. Chimerix, the US manufacturer of the drug, announced that it was pulling out of the trial, with Wellcome Trust, which funded the trial, announcing Tuesday that it had ended. Last week, Liberia reported four new cases of Ebola. Without large numbers, it is impossible to assess whether fewer people die after treatment with the daily pill than were dying before the trial began. New trials are likely to focus on Sierra Leone, which has the highest case numbers, however new case reporting is also rapidly falling. On Monday, large-scale trials of two Ebola vaccines were launched.
- **2 February** – Officials have disclosed that the first large-scale trials of two Ebola vaccines are due to begin in Liberia on Monday. According to officials from the Partnership for Research on Ebola Vaccines in Liberia

(PREVAIL), which is conducting the research, the vaccines contain harmless fragments of the virus that trigger an immune response. A statement released by the firm indicated, “the study will begin at Redemption Hospital in Monrovia. Subsequent sites will be added at other hospitals in and near Monrovia after the first 600 participants join the study.” PREVAIL has indicated that researchers, who are led by the US National Institutes of Health, are aiming to enlist around 27,000 healthy men and women aged 18 and over. The candidate vaccines – GlaxoSmithKline’s Chad3-EBO-Z and rVSV-ZEBOV, which are manufactured by Merck and Newlink – have been determined as safe for humans in smaller trials that have occurred in several countries. PREVAIL has indicated that while the vaccines could cause pain, redness or swelling in the injected arm, as well as fever, headaches and tiredness, it did not that the side-effects “typically have been mild to moderate and have gone away on their own.” There currently is no vaccine to protect against Ebola that is available on the world market and there is no specific drug approved to treat it despite the virus being around since the 1970’s. Furthermore, researchers have indicated that it remains unknown what level of immune response is required in order to protect humans from Ebola.

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.

On 15 January 2015, the Malian Ministry for Health, in co-operation with the World Health Organization (WHO), declared Mali free from Ebola.

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

- **4 February 2015** – Fresh violence erupted Wednesday between rebels and pro-government fighters in the restive northern region of Mali. According to a source from MINUSMA, the United Nations' peacekeeping force in Mali, the two sides exchanged fire near Tabankort, stating, "pro-government armed groups took control of the town of Tabricha, 15 kilometres (9 miles) from Tabankort." Officials have not disclosed a toll of deaths and injuries. Both sides confirmed Wednesday's clashes, with each claiming to have "taken the upper hand." Tabankort is part of a large area of desert where the Tuareg separatist movement wants independence for its homeland. The town, which is located between the cities of Gao and Kidal, is controlled by pro-government militias, which have clashed over the last month with armed rebels. This fighting has led to the deaths of several fighters and civilians. Last week, around a dozen people were killed when a pro-government armed group, including suicide bombers, launched an attack on rebel fighters in Tabankort.
 - According to a MINUSMA source, a Malian army vehicle hit a landmine near the city of Timbuktu. The source reported "the terrorists crossed the Niger river by canoe. They arrived in the area of Didi village and then rode a few kilometres by motorbike before placing the mine on which a Malian army vehicle drove." The Malian army confirmed that one of its trucks had exploded on a mine, without providing further details. Officials have not disclosed the injury and death tolls.
- **2 February 2015** – France's defense ministry disclosed Monday that French forces operating in northern Mali have killed around a dozen Islamist militants in the region of the Adrar des Ifoghas mountains. A statement released by the ministry indicated that no French soldiers were killed in the attack, which took place on Saturday night. Malian military sources have disclosed that the French operation took place between Abeissa and Boureissa, some 120 kilometres (75 miles) from the northern desert town of Kidal. One Malian source reported that the Islamist group was spotted by aerial surveillance and engaged by French ground forces. A military source has reported that military police repelled an attack Monday by unidentified "terrorists" on their station in the western town of Dogofiry, on the border with Mauritania.

Regional Reporting

- **10 February 2015** – The Algerian army has disclosed that late Tuesday, its troops killed two militants on the border with Mali. According to officials, the two slain militants are believed to be members of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). The militants were killed as they attempted to enter Algeria from Mali in order to steal a car from an Algerian automobile company before driving it back to Mali. According to a source, the Algerian army seized a car from the militants, along with a pair of machineguns and a large amount of ammunition. Algeria has deployed thousands of troops to monitor the porous borders with Mali and Libya.
 - Visiting Malian Prime Minister Modibo Keita has held talks with Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, where the two discussed bilateral cooperation and the Malian peace dialogue as well as the security situation in the Sahel region. Speaking to reporters shortly after the meeting, the Malian prime minister disclosed that he had given the Algerian president a written message from Malian President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, stating that "the message concerns cooperation between Mali and

Algeria and the inclusive inter-Malian talks with a view to achieve a peace agreement.” In this regard, the Malian prime minister disclosed that “the peace process is progressing in the right direction.... A new round of talks, which begin Tuesday, aim to discuss in depth the peace process aiming to reach a final agreement,” adding “we are running out of time, and the longer we drag on, the more complicated the northern Mali situation becomes.” The Malian prime minister’s visit to Algeria is part of the Algerian-Malian consultation and political dialogue.

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 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

- **12 February 2015** – On Thursday, hundreds of Mauritians staged a protest in the capital city Nouakchott, demanding the release of three anti-slavery activists who are facing riot and vandalism charges. On the ground sources reported that protesters gathered outside a court complex, where the three activists appeared before judges. Protesters chanted slogans against slavery and demanded justice for those affected by it. Last November, Brahim Bilal, Djiby Sow and Biram Ould Dah Ould Abeid, the later of whom is a former presidential candidate, were arrested during an anti-slavery demonstration that was marred when clashes erupted between protesters and security forces. The three were later charged with “unauthorized assembly” and incitement.”
- **5 February 2015** – Mauritania has postponed its senatorial elections in order to focus on persuading the opposition to stop its plans to boycott the vote. Speaking to reporters late Wednesday, Interior Minister Mohamed Ould Ahmed Rare disclosed “the postponement of elections for two-thirds of the Senate to an unspecified date aims to promote dialogue between the majority and the opposition.” A first round of polls had been planned for 15 March however last month, the opposition National Forum for Democracy and Unity (FNDU) coalition announced that it would not take part. According to sources, the two sides have made contact with a view of negotiating an acceptable timetable and conditions for the vote. Elections for the 58-member senate, which is dominated by the country's ruling Union for the Republic party, were last held in 2010.

Niger

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

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



Security Summary

On 6 February 2015, Nigerien and Chadian military forces were attacked by Boko Haram militants in the towns of Bosso and Diffa, which are located along the border with Nigeria. On 8 February 2015, there was an explosion in the town of Diffa, which resulted in several deaths and injuries. The Nigerien government has declared a 150day state of emergency in the region of Diffa, beginning at midnight on Tuesday 10 February. The curfew will force residents to stay indoors between 20:00 and 06:00 local time (19:00 and 05:00 GMT). Officials have banned the use of motorcycles, which is a common mode of transport, in order to prevent infiltration by Boko Haram militants.

Niger’s ruling coalition has called for a national day of protest against Boko Haram. The protest is set to take place on 17 February. MS Risk advises all travellers to the country to take the necessary precautions and to avoid the demonstrations, and large gatherings as they may turn violent with little notice.

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.

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

- **15 February 2015** – Local officials have reported that several dozen people suspected of having links to Boko Haram have been arrested in Niger's Zinder region. According to on the ground sources, the suspects were detained for "checking" and have been sent to an anti-terrorist unit in the capital Niamey. Local governor Kalla Moutari confirmed the arrests, stating that the suspects were arrested at checkpoints on access roads into Zinder, which is Niger's second largest city and which is located some 400 kilometres (250 miles) west of Diffa, which has been attacked by Boko Haram militants a number of times in the past week.
- **12 February 2015** – On Thursday, Niger's ruling coalition called for a national day of protest against Boko Haram in the wake of several attacks staged on its soil. A statement released from President Mahamadou Issoufou's coalition stated "we call on all citizens to come out in numbers on Tuesday February 17 across the country to organize protest marches against" the militant insurgents and in support of security forces. The ruling coalition has urged the country to "close ranks" and to "show their unity in order to face the terrorists of Boko Haram." Officials have also asked demonstrators to pay homage to the people of Chad for "their solidarity through the remarkable support from their army in the struggle against Boko Haram." Since 6 February, Boko Haram militants have struck the border town of Diffa in Niger five times. On Tuesday, Nigerien officials declared a state of emergency in the region of Diffa, a move, which effectively allows security forces to carry out searches day and night in a bid to crackdown on Boko Haram "sleeper cells" in Niger.
 - Two female suicide bombers attacked the town of Diffa on Wednesday. According to a local police source, "there were two suicide attacks carried out on Wednesday by women.... The two women died and I think they were the only victims." Officials have not disclosed whether there were any other casualties.
 - Nigerien security sources disclosed Thursday that they have killed 260 Boko Haram militants since the terrorist group began cross-border attacks on Niger's southeastern Diffa region on 6 February. According to Colonel Moustapha Michel Ledru, the spokesman for Niger's armed forces, a number of fighters have been arrested and some weapons have been seized however officials have not provided any details. While Boko Haram launched a series of attacks last Friday, Colonel Ledru has disclosed

that the situation in the region is now under control, stating “we have taken the steps necessary to guarantee the peace and security of the population. We call on people not to panic.”

- **11 February 2015** – Canadian Special Forces are due to take part in a multi-country military training exercise that will take place in a region of West Africa that is being targeted by Boko Haram’s insurgency. Canada’s Department of National Defense (DND) confirmed that Canadian soldiers will not fight Boko Haram however it remains unclear what would happen should they encounter the militants during training exercises, which are due to begin Monday in Diffa, Niger. A number of Western states are set to participate in a series of “US-sponsored, African-led” military training exercises, known as Flintlock, with this year’s exercises based in Chad and Niger. More than 1,200 personnel will be involved in the Flintlock exercise, with participants from Burkina Faso, Denmark, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Mauritania, the Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden, Norway, Senegal, Spain, the United Kingdom, Mali, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania and the United States. Diffa, a Nigerien region that borders Nigeria and Chad, has been targeted by a string of attacks carried out by Boko Haram militants. The region is now under a 15-day state of emergency.
- **10 February 2015** - On Tuesday, Niger declared a 15-day state of emergency in the border region of Diffa after several attacks carried out by Nigerian-based militant group Boko Haram. The declaration of a state of emergency effectively provides troops operating in the region new powers to search homes without a warrant and to impose a curfew. In the wake of Boko Haram attacks on the border town of Diffa over the weekend, officials have also imposed an overnight curfew and have banned the use of motorcycles, a common mode of transport, in order to prevent infiltration by Boko Haram militants. The curfew will force residents to stay indoors between 20:00 and 06:00 local time (19:00 and 05:00 GMT). On the ground sources have reported that thousands of residents are fleeing the town of Diffa over fears that the militants will launch further attacks. Some have travelled 500 km (310 miles) to Zinder city, with one eyewitness reporting that about 200 refugees arrived in Zinder on Tuesday in a single convoy. The nearby border town of Bosso was attacked on Friday.
 - The UN food agency has voiced concern for the 125,000 Nigerian refugees who have fled to southeastern Nigeria, where Boko Haram militants have launched a string of attacks in recent days. According to World Food Programme (WFP) spokeswoman Elizabeth Brys, “the World Food Programme is particularly concerned by the attacks in the north of Nigeria which are spreading to Niger, forcing thousands of people to flee.” Ms Brys stressed “the appalling situation” in which refugees live in the Diffa region, where the population has almost doubled resulting in food stocks to decline. Since Friday, Boko Haram has launched three large-scale attacks in the Diffa region. Ms Brys disclosed that following the attacks, “the World Food Programme temporarily interrupted food distribution in the area,” noting “distribution will resume when the situation allows.” She further indicated that she does not know whether the refugees have left the camps in the region. The majority of the 125,000 refugees are sheltered in the Diffa region, which has three camps, however some refugees are dispersed in 140 sites and villages.
- **9 February 2015** – Boko Haram militants continued their escalation of attacks on neighboring countries Monday as a car bomb exploded in a Niger town that has in recent days been repeatedly targeted by the militants. On the ground sources reported that a huge explosion was heard around 3 pm local time in the town of Diffa. Officials have not indicated the death toll from the attack.
 - According to humanitarian sources, Islamist fighters from Nigeria’s Boko Haram launched a new attack in neighboring Niger on Monday, raiding a prison in the southeastern border town of Diffa. On the ground sources have reported that the attack was repelled by soldiers from Chad and Niger after

a heavy exchange of fire. No casualty toll was released. On the ground sources have reported that some Boko Haram fighters sought to hide out in the town, adding “the soldiers are looking from them....The army has encircled Diffa.” Reports have emerged that the militants had targeted the prison as some of their fighters were being held there.

- **8 February 2015** – In what appears to be a sign that Boko Haram’s offensive against Niger is intensifying, Boko Haram militants staged an overnight assault on a border town in Niger, with on the ground sources reporting that a shell struck a market in the same town a few hours later. According to a resident, the attack on the town of Diffa began Saturday night, with fighting between Boko Haram and Niger’s army lasting until 5 AM towards the town’s southern entrance before the militants were forced to flee and calm was restored. It was the second time the town had come under attack by Boko Haram since Friday. A few hours after the attack was repelled, a shell fired by Boko Haram militants struck Diffa’s pepper market, which attracts traders and customers from Nigeria and other countries in the region. Reports of this attack have been disputed by locals, who indicated earlier in the day that the explosion was caused by a suicide bomber, a tack that is often employed by Boko Haram at crowded markets and bus stations across northeastern Nigeria. Niger’s Defense Minister Mahamadou Karijo told state media Sunday night that one person was killed and at least six people were injured in the explosion. Officials have not released any casualty figures for the earlier attack on the town.
- **6 February 2015** - Witnesses reported Friday that Nigeria’s Boko Haram militant group has attacked a town in neighboring Niger for the first time. The attack targeted the Nigerien border town of Bosso, which is located just across the border from Nigeria. Fighting broke out around 9:00 AM (0800 GMT). According to one resident, locals “...can hear the sound of weapons all around the town...” adding “there is the noise of heavy weapons and of light arms, making our houses shake.” Yacouba Soumana Gaoh, governor of the regional capital of Diffa confirmed the attack, stating that troops pushed back the attack by the end of the morning, adding that by noon, order was restored. On the ground sources have reported that Niger’s army, alongside troops from Chad who have been stationed in Bosso since Monday, took on the Nigerian armed militants, adding that Boko Haram “took the municipality” for a time before being “driven back to Nigeria.” The attack comes as Niger’s parliament in the capital city Niamey is due to vote on 9 February on a proposal to send troops to Nigeria to fight Boko Haram.
- **5 February 2015** – France has sent military advisers to Niger’s southern border with Nigeria to help coordinate military action by regional powers fighting Boko Haram. A French army official has disclosed that a detachment of about ten military personnel had been stationed in Diffa at the request of Niger, which is a former French colony. According to the official, the personnel are “...there to coordinate the armies on the ground in the fight against Boko Haram.” Speaking at a news conference on Thursday, French President Francois Hollande disclosed that Paris was also providing logistical and operation support, including delivering fuel and munitions to countries that are fighting Boko Haram. Nearly two years after a French-led military operation pushed al-Qaeda-linked militants out of northern Mali, France has headquartered a 3,200-strong Sahel counter-insurgency force, named Barkhane, in the Chadian capital N’Djamena, which is located 50 kilometres (30 miles) from the Nigerian border. It has also been operating reconnaissance missions near the Nigerian borer and sharing intelligence with countries in the region however French officials have, for now, ruled out direct military involvement.
- **3 February 2015** – On Tuesday workers at Niger’s oil refinery launched a four-day strike - the third work stoppage to occur in less than two weeks at the facility, which is a joint venture between the Nigerien government and China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC). According to sources, some 400 workers at the Soraz plant, which produces some 20,000 barrels per day, are protesting what they say is an unfair

discrepancy in salaries between local employees and their Chinese colleagues. An initial two-day strike was launched on 22 January, with the workers striking again for three days last week. According to Elemi Boukar, spokesman for the Soraz union members, “we’re determined to maintain the pressure on the Chinese of CNPC. Improving our salaries remains a fair and legitimate demand.” The plant, which is located in the town of Zinder, 800 kilometres (500 miles) east of the capital Niamey, processes oil from the CNPC-operated Agadem blocks.

Domestic News

- **9 February 2015** – Niger’s parliament has voted to deploy troops to Nigeria to join the fight against Boko Haram. According to lawmaker Mohamed Ben Omar, “the resolution was passed unanimously. All 102 lawmakers present voted favorably.” Another MP indicated that parliament has authorized the deployment of 750 soldiers with a regional force battling the militant group. Niger, which houses thousands of refugees who have escaped the insurgency, has been mainly spared from the violence until last week, when a number of attacks were carried out on its territory in the run up to Monday’s vote. There is rising concern in the capital city Niamey, as many people fear the growing threat posed by the militant group.

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 and Liberia. 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.

Nigerian authorities have announced that the Presidential and national Assembly elections, previously scheduled for 14 February 2015, as well as the Gubernatorial and State Assembly elections, previously scheduled for 28 February, will take place on 28 March 2015 and 11 April 2015 respectively.

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.

Coverage of the Presidential Elections ~ 28 March 2015

- **13 February 2015** – Nigeria's human rights commission (NHRC) disclosed Friday that political violence in the run-up to the country's presidential elections has killed 58 people, with rising "hate speech" between rival camps threatening to spark further unrest in the coming weeks. In its new report, the commission disclosed "if urgent steps are not taken to arrest further escalation, Nigeria's 2015 general elections would confront a high risk of significant violence," warning that such violence "could pose a clear and present danger to the stability of the country and its neighbors." While the NHRC, which began tracking political violence in December 2014, noted the country's long history of violence following elections, particularly in the religiously divided central states, officials noted that "the pattern and intensity of pre-election violence is atypical of Nigeria's recent electoral history" and amounted to a worrying new development. During the 50-day reporting period, isolated incidents of deadly unrest were recorded across the country as rival factions, sometimes within the same party, clashed through the nomination process and the first half of the general campaign. According to the NHRC, three states, Lagos (southwest), Rivers (south) and Kaduna (north) are at greatest risk of "significant violence during the 2015 elections." Officials have indicated that this finding is based on information provided to field officials as well as factors specific to each states. Both Lagos and Rivers are seen as crucial to President Goodluck Jonathan's re-election bid as while both states are controlled by opposition governors, most voted for the president in the 2011 election. In the wake of the 2011 elections, Kaduna, which is a majority Muslim state with a large Christian community in the south, suffered the worst violence, with officials warning that tensions may escalate again.
- **11 February 2015** – On Wednesday, Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan rejected claims that his political interests motivated the six-week delay in national elections, stating that he was "not consulted" on

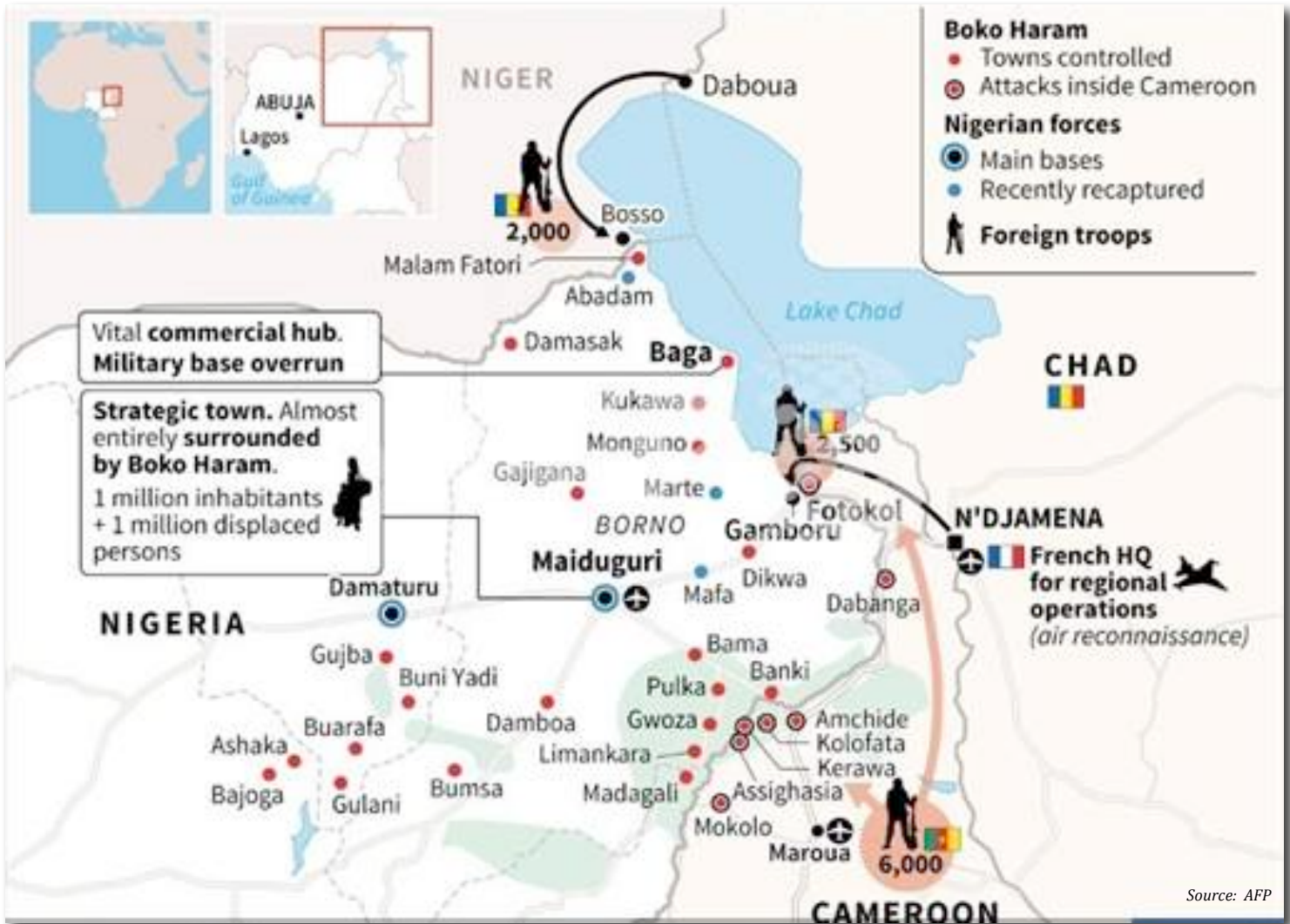
the widely-criticized decision and vowing that the vote would take place with an elected government sworn in on 29 May. In a nationally broadcast interview, the president stated he "...was not consulted and I don't want to be consulted." He insisted during the interview that election officials made an independent decision after receiving guidance from the security agencies. In the wake of the election postponement, some officials have accused the president's ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) of secretly lobbying for the six-week delay out of fears that the party would be defeated. The postponement came after the National Security Agency (NSA) and military top brass last week urged election officials to push back the vote, stating that most available troops had been deployed to the northeast of the country to fight Boko Haram and that they would not be able to provide nationwide security on the polling day. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has also indicated that it has struggled to distribute voter cards, which the NSA listed as another reason in support of a postponement. The opposition All Progressives Congress (APC) along with many observers have claimed that the NSA was attempting to gain more time in order to save the president's struggling re-election campaign, however the president has insisted that election officials made an independent decision and has dismissed claims that he wants to extend his time in office. Nigerian law calls for the vote to be completed 30 days before the 29 May inauguration deadline, meaning that the new election date of 28 March falls within the law. During the interview, President Jonathan vowed that "serious advances will be made" over the next six weeks, warning that while Boko Haram may not be completely wiped out by then, security will be improved by the new election day, March 28.

- On Wednesday, Nigeria's military pledged not to get involved in party politics amidst growing concerns pertaining to its role in pushing for the country's presidential elections to be delayed by six weeks. The military faced accusations of interference when the chairman of the electoral commission, Attahiru Jega, revealed that the office of the National Security Advisor had written to him saying that unless he delayed the 14 February polls, it could not guarantee security. The NSA urged a six-week delay in order to enable the military to contain Boko Haram's insurgency in the northeast. In a statement released Wednesday, defense spokesman Major General Chris Olukolade stated "the palpable tension being generated...with regards to the roles of the Nigerian military in the ongoing political activities and recent developments, especially in relation to the electioneering," adding "it is important to reassure Nigerians that the military will remain professional, apolitical and non-partisan in all operations...related to "elections." Fears that Nigeria's military may have played a part in the election delay has sparked concerns in investors which in turn has affected the ailing naira currency. There have also been reports in the local press that the military had colluded with the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) in order to influence last year's governorship election in Ekiti state, a claim which the military has not directly commented on.
- **9 February 2015** – National Security Advisor Sambo Dasuki announced Monday that Nigeria's general elections will not be postponed past 28 March. When asked if the polls, which were initially scheduled for 14 February, could be pushed back further, Dasuki said "those dates will not be shifted again." Last month, Dasuki had urged election officials to postpone the vote on the grounds that the military was not able to provide nationwide election security because all available resources were being deployed to the northeastern region of the country to fight Boko Haram. His justification for the delay however was widely criticized in part because the country's military is not primarily responsible for election security; instead, troops have only been called in when police and civil defense units have needed reinforcements. The opposition and some observers have indicated that the delay to the elections was made in order to allow more time for President Goodluck Jonathan to revive his campaign, which has been faced with a tough

challenge from ex-military ruler Muhammadu Buhari. Dasuki however has insisted that there was no political motive underlying his call for a delay, stating that the postponement could easily help the opposition All Progressives Congress (APC) party as improved security could boost turnout in the northeast, which is an APC stronghold.

- **7 February 2015** – In a move that is likely to infuriate the opposition, on Saturday Nigeria’s electoral commission announced that it has postponed presidential elections until 28 March, stating that security forces fighting Boko Haram militants cannot ensure voters’ safety across the country. Gubernatorial and state assembly elections will be held on 11 April. Over the past several weeks, officials in President Goodluck Jonathan’s government have been calling for the postponement, stating that the commission is not ready to hold what promises to be the most tightly contested presidential vote in the history of the country. Speaking at a news conference Saturday night, Independent National Electoral Commission Chairman Attahiru Jega stated “many people will be very angry and annoyed,” adding “I want to assure all Nigerians, no one is forcing us to make this decision, this is a very weighty decision.” He disclosed that the commission had considered holding elections outside of the three northeastern states that are most affected by Boko Haram’s uprising however officials decided that the likelihood of an inconclusive presidential election would be “very, very high.” A statement released by the president’s party commended the postponement however it blamed the decision on the commission, stating it is suffering “numerous logistical problems and numerous internal challenges.” President Jonathan’s main opponent Muhammadu Buhari disclosed that the opposition coalition was holding an emergency meeting in order to discuss the implications of “this major setback for Nigerian democracy.” The opposition has appealed to all Nigerians “to remain calm and desist from violence.” Jega told reporters Saturday that national security advisers and intelligence officers indicated that security forces need six weeks in order to conduct “a major operation” against Boko Haram and are unable to safeguard the elections. He further indicated that it would be “highly irresponsible” to ignore that advice and endanger the lives and security of electoral personnel and materials, voters and observers as well as the prospects for free, fair and credible elections.
- **2 February 2015** – On Monday, the International Criminal Court’s (ICC) prosecutor urged all parties in Nigeria’s upcoming presidential elections to refrain from violence before, during and after the vote. In a written statement, Fatou Bensouda stated that she would send a team to Nigeria before the 14 February election to “further engage with the authorities and encourage the prevention of crimes,” adding “experience has shown that electoral competition, when gone astray, can give rise to violence and in the worst-case scenarios, even trigger the commission of mass crimes that ‘shock the conscience of humanity.’” Last week, youths angry at the Nigerian government’s failure to fight Boko Haram threw stones at President Goodluck Jonathan’s convoy in the eastern town of Jaling, breaking windshields and windows on several vehicles. Police used tear gas in order to disperse the crowds. Prosecutors at the ICC are already conducting a preliminary probe into alleged war crimes committed by Boko Haram and by Nigerian security forces that could lead to a full-blown investigation.

On the Ground Reporting

Boko Haram Offensive

- 15 February 2015** – A female suicide bomber has killed at least seven people in northeastern Nigeria. The suicide attack, which occurred at a bus station in the Nigerian city of Damaturu, came shortly after authorities in neighboring Niger's Zinder region detained dozens of suspected militants. According to police officials in Damaturu, capital of Yobe state, a woman with explosives packed on her body entered the city's main bus station shortly after midday. Multiple witness accounts indicated that the woman got out of a vehicle and walked towards a grocery store at the back of the terminal, then positioned herself in a crowd. She then blew herself up, killing at least seven people and injuring 32 others, some of them serious. While there was no immediate claim of responsibility, suspicions has fallen on Boko Haram as the militant group has increasing been blamed for using woman and girls as human bombs across the northeastern region of the country, with bus stations being amongst the groups preferred targets.

- **14 February 2015** – Boko Haram militants invaded the northeastern city of Gombe on Saturday, warning residents against voting in next month's presidential elections. According to local residents, the attackers left the city and stormed the town of Dakin-Kowa some 40 kilometres (25 miles) away, where they burned a number of homes. The violence prompted the state governor to impose an around-the-clock curfew. Witnesses reported that the militants stormed the city at around 9:00 AM (0800 GMT) and advanced without being met by any resistance from security forces. They arrived in around 30 vans and on several motorcycles and were dressed in military uniforms. It remains unclear if there were casualties. Unconfirmed reports have indicated that the militants have taken over the military barracks. Boko Haram fighters also called on residents to boycott the upcoming elections. Boko Haram leaflets spread throughout the town read "whoever professes Islam should distance himself from polling stations because we are going to attack polling booths."
- **12 February 2015** – A suicide attack carried out by a female bomber killed at least seven people at a market in northeastern Nigeria on Thursday. The blast occurred at about 3:15 pm (1415 GMT) in Biu, which is located 180 kilometres (110 miles) south of Borno' state capital Maiduguri, and targeted a market that was filled with hundreds of buyers and traders. According to an eyewitness, the suspected bomber appeared to have been riding in a van that was delivering goods to the market. Four witnesses identified the bomber as a woman. While there was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack, it resembled a spate of similar bombings that have been blamed on Boko Haram. Biu is the largest town in southern Borno and Boko Haram fighters have made repeated attempts to bomb the market, which is open on Monday and Thursdays. Last month, scores of insurgents attempted to raid Biu but were pushed back by the military.
 - Reports emerged Thursday that Boko Haram militants stormed a police station in Kanamma in Yobe state late Monday. Details of the attack were slow to emerge due to poor communications in the remote area. According to one senior officer, "the terrorists overpowered our men and set the police station on fire before kidnapping the DPO (district police officer), whose body was later found in the bush." The senior officer further added that several policemen were killed in the attack. Kanamma has significant importance to the militant group as although Boko Haram was formed in Maiduguri, the state capital of neighboring Borno state in 2002, a hardline faction relocated to Kanamma in 2004 in an attempt to form an extremist enclave in the town. In January 2004, they clashed with the military in Kanamma, in what is the first known case of unrest involving the group.
 - Militants on Thursday continued their insurgency in northeastern Nigeria, killing at least 21 people in two separate attacks in Borno state. According to community leader Mustapha Abbagini, militants killed twelve people in the village of Akida and nine in the village of Mbuta.
 - Meanwhile in Yobe's economic capital Potiskum, multiple witnesses have reported that an attempted suicide bombing was thwarted outside the campaign office of Governor Ibrahim Geidam. According to several eyewitnesses, the suspect reportedly raised suspicion by loitering outside the office. A crowd later confronted him however he ran into an abandoned building where he blew himself up. A similar incident occurred on February 1 in Potiskum outside a political office. That attack killed seven people.
- **11 February 2015** - During the early morning hours Wednesday, Boko Haram militants attacked Chadian troops stationed in a Nigerian border town. According to a Chadian military source, "the Boko Haram elements wanted to surprise us by attacking at about 4 am (0300 GMT). We were aware about it from the day before and were prepared." The attack occurred in the town of Gamboru, which is located on Nigeria's border with Cameroon, where Chadian troops, who are deployed to help in the complex regional battle

against Boko Haram, have taken up positions. According to the source, Boko Haram militants "...arrived with 14 vehicles and two armored vehicles. We repulsed them and they retreated," adding "a helicopter was brought in to join the pursuit and destroy them."

- **10 February 2015** – Nigeria will investigate reports of rapes, child trafficking and other abuses in camps for people fleeing Boko Haram's violence. The investigation is a response to a report published by Nigeria's Calabar-based International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR), which alleges that hundreds of young girls have been trafficked from internally displaced persons (IDP) camps. According to the report, many of the victims were from unregistered, makeshift camps established when official camps could no longer cope. The report quotes an unnamed nurse as stating that many children were brought to her hospital after being raped in the IDP camps and alleges that refugees are being sold as unpaid domestic workers, with some raped repeatedly and in some cases sustaining injuries, including burns and knife wounds. The country's National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) has formed a panel that will investigate the abuses. A spokesperson for NEMA has disclosed that investigators will visit every camp for displaced people, adding that the allegations are "very grievous." According to Ezikial Manzo, the report is the first time that NEMA has heard of abuses at the camps, adding that the panel will "do everything in their power" in order to investigate the reports. Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commission estimates that 3.2 million Nigerians have fled their homes in order to escape Boko Haram's insurgency, with 1.6 million internally displaced and 1.6 million displaced in neighboring Cameroon, Chad and Niger.
- **9 February 2015** – Boko Haram's leader Abubakar Shekau has vowed that the group will defeat a regional force fighting the extremists in Nigeria's far northeastern, Niger and Cameroon. In a new 28-minute video released Monday, one of three that was posted by the Islamists on YouTube, Shekau stated, "your alliance will not achieve anything. Amass all your weapons and face us. We welcome you." In the second video, images of the leader of the Islamic State group, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, are shown along with archive footage and a voiceover recalling a battle between British colonial soldiers and fighters from the Sokoto Caliphate in northern Nigeria. While Boko Haram's leader has previously namechecked al-Baghdadi, he appears to be positioning Boko Haram in a wider jihadi context by showing the Sokoto Caliphate, which was dismantled by the British in the early 20th century. In the second video, Shekau states, "we never rose up to fight Africa. We rose up to fight the world," adding "we are going to fight the world on the principle that whoever doesn't obey Allah and the Prophet to either obey or die or become a slave." Shekau has also dismissed the size of the regional force deployed in recent weeks, stating, "you send 7,000 troops? Why don't you send 70 million? This is small. Only 7,000? By Allah, it is small. We can seize them one-by-one. We can seize them one-by-one." Shekau also directly threatened Chad's President Idriss Deby, whose forces have attacked Boko Haram in the northeastern Nigerian towns of Gamboru and Malam Fatori in recent days. In the newly released video, he has declared "war" on Chad.
- **6 February 2015** - According to US intelligence officials, while after a string of battlefield advances, Boko Haram is "flush with cash and weapons," the militant group could face a tougher fight with Nigeria's neighbors. Intelligence officials have disclosed that the militant group is "financially secure" after carrying out bank robberies, kidnappings and garnering finances from other sources, noting that the militants are able to go "toe-to-toe" with the Nigerian military after they captured an arsenal of weapons. However officials have indicated that the group could soon face an unprecedented test on the battlefield against more capable forces from neighboring Cameroon, Chad and Niger, with one intelligence official disclosing that the military intervention of neighboring powers could potentially be a "game changer in a positive way." The comments come as Boko Haram suffered heavy losses after launching its first attack on Niger. Over the past year, Boko Haram has steadily gained strength, seizing some thirty towns and villages in the

northeastern region of the country. This advance effectively enabled the militant group to carve out a safe have from which they were able to stage more sophisticated operations and attacks over a larger area, including in neighboring Cameroon. Washington estimates that Boko Haram has a core of between 4,000 and 6,000 fighters but is well equipped after raiding Nigerian army positions. This includes capturing armored vehicles, which have enabled the militants to advance on towns and villages more rapidly. While its leader, Abubakar Shekau, heavily shapes the group's operations, there is no clear heir apparent if Shekau is killed in battle. Furthermore, while the militant group has taken control of a large part of northeastern Nigeria, there are no signs that the group has the capabilities of carrying out terror attacks in the west. While in propaganda videos, Boko Haram has expressed "an affinity to ISIL (the Islamic State group)," US officials have indicated that "there are still a lot of questions out there as to how ISIL views Boko Haram," with one official noting that jihadists operating in the Middle East may not view militants in Nigeria as "fellow warriors with an equal status."

- **4 February 2015** – Chadian officials disclosed Wednesday that they have inflicted heavy losses on Nigeria's Boko Haram, killing "over 200" militants in a border town after gaining control from the rebels in a ground offensive. The Chadian army also disclosed that nine Chadian soldiers were killed Tuesday and 21 injured in Gamboru, noting that "this toll is provisional" as troops were still combing the town on Nigeria's border with Cameroon for remaining rebel elements. The sound of automatic gunfire was heard on Wednesday in Gamboru, which has been abandoned by residents after a string of airstrikes carried out by Chad in the run-up to its offensive.
- **3 February 2015** – On Tuesday, Chad deployed ground troops into Nigeria for the first time to fight Boko Haram militants in what is a sign of increasing regional pressure on the Islamist group after weeks of increasing violence. After days of airstrikes by Chadian warplanes on Gamboru, on Tuesday, Chadian armored vehicles entered the town by crossing a bridge from the Cameroonian town of Fotokol. They were followed by a contingent of around 2,000 troops. According to a source in Fotokol, no shots were fired as they crossed the frontier after another set of airstrikes lasting about an hour. Chadian forces have also taken up positions close to Boko Haram strongholds along Nigeria's border with Niger. According to Niger's private radio Anfni, "a contingent of about 400 vehicles and tanks is stationed between Mamori and Bosso." It is believed that the massing of troops in Niger is seen as a sign of an imminent attack on Malam Fatori, which is a town held by the militants on the Nigerian side of a river that separates the two countries. Defense officials in Paris also disclosed that France is supporting the operation by carrying out reconnaissance flights over border areas of Cameroon and Chad. In a speech in the French capital, President Francois Hollande suggested that the flights also encompassed Nigeria however French defense officials have insisted that the missions only went as far as the border. Nigerian Defense spokesman Chris Olukolade has denied that the presence of foreign troops on Nigerian soil compromised the country's sovereignty, stating "Nigeria's territorial integrity remains intact," claiming that national forces had "planned and are driving the present onslaught against terrorists from all fronts in Nigeria, not the Chadian forces." Chad's ground intervention reflects the growing nervousness amongst Nigeria's neighbors that Boko Haram was achieving its stated aim of carving out an Islamic caliphate. Over the past week, the rebels have tried to capture the strategic northeastern Nigerian town of Maiduguri however they have been repelled by troops. **Update (4 February)** – Chadian forces on Tuesday won a key victory over Nigeria's Boko Haram, gaining control of the border town of Gamboru just hours after it launched a ground offensive against the militant group. According to on the ground sources, around 2,000 Chadian troops, backed by armored vehicles, crossed the border into Gamboru from the Cameroonian town of Fotokol after days of clashes with the insurgents. By Tuesday evening, the troops had taken control of the town. While no official death toll

from the fighting has been released, a Chadian military source disclosed that eight Chadian soldiers were killed and around twenty were injured.

- **2 February 2015** - Nigeria on Monday claimed to have retaken the town of Gamboru, along with four other towns held by Boko Haram, following a joint weekend offensive carried out by its military, civilian vigilantes and forces from neighboring Chad and Cameroon. Tensions however remain high as the country braces for more attacks ahead of the 14 February presidential elections. On Monday, national security spokesman Mike Omeri announced “our troops are in control after operations which had the active support of volunteers and our friendly neighbors.” In a separate statement, he indicated that the towns that have been retaken are: Mafa, Mallam Fatori, Abadam, Marte and Gamboru, where Chad has carried out three days of airstrikes. All of the towns are located in the northeastern state of Borno. The statement also indicated that eleven towns in Adamawa state to the south of Borno had been liberated, with the militants still occupying six areas. Boko Haram has also been chased out of Guba and Gulani, located in neighboring Yobe state. On the ground sources in Fotokol, a town in Cameroon located less than one kilometer from Gamboru, confirmed that aerial bombings in the area were on-going early Monday but that the situation appeared quiet by the evening.
 - Suicide bombers targeted a presidential campaign rally in northeastern Nigeria on Monday. President Goodluck Jonathan, who had been addressing supporters of his ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Gombe city, had just left the venue when the blast happened in a car park outside. Rescue workers and health officials indicated that two women were killed and eighteen people were wounded. According to a source, the two women are believed to be the suicide bombers behind the attack.

Regional Reporting

- **13 February 2015** – Officials disclosed Friday that Nigeria-based Boko Haram militants carried out an attack on Chad overnight, the first such assault to take place on Chadian soil. On the ground sources have reported that fighters crossed Lake Chad in four motorboats and attacked the village of Ngouboua. The militants killed several people but were pushed back by Chadian troops. Chadian military aircraft carried out air strikes against the militants, destroying their vessels. Colonel Azem Bermandoua Agouna of the Chadian military confirmed that the militants killed one soldier and wounded a further four. Two Boko Haram militants were killed and five injured. Mr Agouna did not disclose the civilian casualty number. Residents reported that around 30 militants attacked the village, torching two-thirds of its homes. Chad recently joined neighboring Cameroon, Niger and Nigeria in a military coalition against Boko Haram. Chad, which is seen as having the region’s most effective military, has deployed troops to Nigeria and has conducted airstrikes against the militant group in both Nigeria and Niger. Chad has also stationed its troops in the border areas around Lake Chad. The attack on Chad comes just days after Boko Haram’s leader, Abubakar Shekau, denounced the country’s president, Idriss Deby. In a newly released video, the militant leader also declared “war” on Chad.
- **9 February 2015** - Suspected Boko Haram militants have hijacked a bus in northern Cameroon, abducting 20 people and executing 12 of them. According to sources, the kidnapping occurred Sunday. Residents reported Monday that the militants reportedly seized a bus carrying market-goers and drove it towards the border with Nigeria. The bus was seized near the border area of Koza and driven towards the Nigerian border 18 kilometres (11 miles) away.
 - Several Boko Haram militants were killed and around 10 Cameroonian soldiers injured as the militants attacked Kerawa. A separate group of fighters reportedly attacked the nearby town of Kolofata,

looting food and livestock. The attacks in Cameroon follow a series of assaults on the border towns of Bosso and Diffa in neighboring Niger.

- **7 February 2015** – Regional and African Union (AU) officials met in Cameroon’s capital city, Yaoundé, on Saturday where they unveiled a proposal for a force of as many as 8,750 members to combat Boko Haram, with manpower coming from Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria. Details of the proposed deployment were revealed at the conclusion of a three-day meeting in a statement that was read out by officials, including Issaka Souare, the AU adviser for Mali and the Sahel. The plans call for Chad and Nigeria to contribute 3,500 troops each while Cameroon and Niger would contribute 750 each and Benin would contribute 250 troops. The force would be headquartered in Chad’s capital city, N’Djamena. Officials indicated that they envisioned deploying the force as early as next month, however funding issues could delay the timeline. According to Saturday’s statement, US \$4 million is urgently needed for the deployment however it remains unclear where this and other funding would come from. Jacqueline Seck Diouf, who represented the UN at the talks in Cameroon, indicated that the US has promised logistical support for now, adding that the AU was requesting funding. Further assistance would need to be approved by the UN Security Council and Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. Earlier this month, AU heads of state announced plans for a 7,500-member force to fight Boko Haram. On Saturday, officials disclosed that the number was increased to 8,750 in order to allow the inclusion of police and humanitarian officials. The meeting came as thousands of young people marched through the streets of Yaoundé as part of a demonstration organized by Cameroon’s National Youth Council, which aims to discourage collaboration with Boko Haram and which voices support for the military.
- **5 February 2015** - On Thursday, Boko Haram militants reportedly killed at least seventy people in an attack on the town of Fotokol in Cameroon. According to local officials, the militants attacked civilians in their homes and in the town’s mosque, setting many buildings on fire, including the mosque. Residents of Fotokol have reported that the militants had killed many people by slitting their throats. The militants were eventually driven back by Cameroonian troops, backed by Chadian forces, who had been deployed to the nearby Nigerian town of Gamboru as part of a regional force. The attack came a day after a regional force indicated that it had driven the militants from a Nigerian town located near Fotokol.
- **4 February 2015** – According to security sources, Cameroonian soldiers clashed with Boko Haram fighters in the border town of Fotokol on Wednesday as the militants fled an offensive by Chad’s army. According to a Cameroonian security source, the militants “entered this morning,” after Chadian troops recaptured the Nigerian town of Gamboru just across the border, adding, “fighting between them and our soldiers is really intense.” By mid-morning, Cameroonian troops had managed to repel the attack after Chadian soldiers cross back from Nigeria to help defend the town. Cameroon’s army has indicated that at least 70 Boko Haram insurgents were killed, adding that it lost six of its own soldiers.

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 and Liberia. 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

- **9 February 2015** – Peace and security will be the focus of a conference, which opened in Senegal on Monday and which brought together top American military brass and the heads of 35 African armies. The meeting comes amidst heightened concerns over conflicts across the continent, including the upsurge of Boko Haram violence in Nigeria, which has delayed the country's presidential elections, along with ethnic violence raging in South Sudan and the Central African Republic's struggle to recover. James Peter Zumwalt, the US ambassador to Senegal, told delegates at the opening of the four-day African Land Forces Summit in Dakar, "soldiers and diplomats are partners, just as Africans and Americans are partners," adding "this week we will focus discussions on peace and security (because) we all understand that enduring peace and stability are essential prerequisites for economic growth." The summit is being co-

hosted by the Senegalese military and the United States Army Africa (USARAF), which has been promoting security across the continent since 1955 and provides crisis response, disaster relief and humanitarian assistance.

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.



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

- **13 February 2015** – Sierra Leonean officials have placed hundreds of homes in the capital city under quarantine, in what is likely to be a huge blow to the country's recover from the Ebola outbreak less than a month after the president lifted all travel restrictions. Obi Sesay, of the government's National Ebola Response Centre, announced Friday "some 700 homes have been quarantined for 21 days in the tourism and fishing community of Aberdeen in the west of the capital Freetown, after the death of a fisherman who was later diagnosed Ebola positive." Speaking to reporters, Sesay stated "twenty or more confirmed cases have been discovered in the last few days and we have opened a control center to deal with the crisis," adding that officials "...are on top of the situation and people should not panic." The Aberdeen area, which includes the popular Lumley Beach tourist resort, has been "flooded" with surveillance officers and contact tracers in a bid to ensure that the death does not turn into a serious outbreak. This new quarantine comes less than a month after President Ernest Bai Koroma revealed a "steady downward trend" in new Ebola cases, which resulted in him lifting country-wide quarantines and travel bans. When ending the measures on 23 January, which impacted half the country's population, the president stated, "victory is in sight." However officials on Wednesday reported that Sierra Leone has experienced a rise in new Ebola cases for the second week running. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), transmission remains "widespread" in Sierra Leone, which reported 76 new confirmed cases in the week leading up to 8 February.
- **10 February 2015** – On Tuesday, Sierra Leonean officials announced the launch of an infectious disease prevention agency, stating that it would convert its Ebola clinics into treatment and research units for some of the world's deadliest viruses. According to sources, the organization will follow the model of the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. While some of the Ebola units set up over the past several months are temporary, Sierra Leone, along with its neighbors Guinea and Liberia, have been looking for ways to continue using some of the facilities that were launched at great expense at the height of the epidemic. Speaking at a news conference Tuesday, government spokesman Abdulai Bayraytay disclosed "we are now on the verge of constructing a permanent Centers for Disease Control in Sierra Leone, and also the introduction of an ambulance service in the country." He indicated that the country had "around ten" clinics, set up and run by the British and Chinese governments as well as the International Medical Corps and Doctors Without Borders (MSF), adding "they will be there as part of our Centers for Disease Control so that, as part of any outbreak, which we don't hope for, at least we will have the capacity to responds to that." While some medical charities have indicated that many of the units are large and would be expensive to maintain, others have warned that people may be afraid to go to a former Ebola treatment unit. Bayraytay however has stated that these centers could become an essential part of Sierra Leone's post-Ebola recovery plan where they could isolate, treat and research other hemorrhagic diseases, such as Lassa fever, as well as malaria. Sierra Leone, which is one of the world's poorest countries, has lost US \$900 million in expected revenue since the reporting of its first Ebola case in May 2014.
- **5 February 2015** – President Ernest Bai Koroma announced Thursday that schools across the country will reopen on 30 March, seven months after they were closed due to the Ebola outbreak. Government spokesman Abdulai Bayraytay has indicated that the president has also ordered that water and sanitation be made available at all schools as well as Ebola screenings and psychosocial support ahead of the reopening. Bayraytay has indicated that modalities are being put in place across the country, including the provision of thermometers in all schools, a clean water supply and also the decontamination of all the schools that were being used as treatment and holding centers during the Ebola outbreak. He further disclosed that the government will train teachers in some schools to carry out Ebola screening and

diagnosis. Officials in both Liberia and Sierra Leone have admitted that there is now a need to reopen schools in a bid to perhaps reduce the rise in teenage pregnancy prevalent since the closure of schools.

- **3 February 2015** – Despite new Ebola cases on the decline, Sierra Leonean officials are worried that the president's decision to lift travel restrictions may re-ignite the spread of the deadly disease. Concerns come just two weeks after President Ernest Bai Koroma announced a relaxation of travel restrictions aimed at supporting economic activity. While some officials have agreed that the closure of roads has impacted the country's economy, others feel that the move is too soon. Freetown Mayor Frankly Bode Gibson stated Tuesday that the move "...was slightly too early," adding "we do not know who is safe and who is not," and a second outbreak of the disease could be disastrous. The mayor further disclosed that he will call for a meeting this week with the national Ebola Response Centre to register his disappointment about the re-opening of district roads. His comments have been echoed by the chairman of the eastern Kenema District, Dr. Senesie Mansaray, who has stated that the move is "a serious blunder at this point in time," noting that the president should have waited until the end of February or March, while observing the trend of the spread of the virus, in order to put more mechanisms in place before lifting the bans. In the latest figures issued by the government, the district of Kenema has recorded no new cases. While opposition party publicity secretary Tamba Samaba did note that fears of another outbreak are "legitimate" he did add that the closure of the roads had affected the economy. The president has set a goal of zero cases by the end of March.

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

- **2 February 2015** – Togo’s constitutional court announced Monday that presidential elections have to be held by 5 March “at the latest.” In a statement read on national television, the court disclosed that voting in Togo had to take place at least sixty days before the end of President Faure Gnassingbe’s second term, which official ends on 3 May. The announcement comes as lawmakers debate a constitutional reform bill that would limit the number of presidential mandates to two five-year terms, a move that would effectively prevent the president from seeking re-election. A first draft of the bill was rejected in June last year by Parliament, which is dominated by the president’s ruling Rally of the Togolese People party. The president has been in power since the 2005 death of his father, General Gnassingbe Eyademan. While he won elections in 2005 and 2010, the opposition disputed the results. Last year, several thousand protesters took to the streets of the capital Lomé in a bid to demand that the president be barred from seeking a third term in office. President Gnassingbe has not yet declared his candidacy. **Update (3 February)** - According to a minister, Togo’s presidential elections will be held in mid-April, an announcement that clarifies a constitutional court ruling on the date of the vote. According to the minister for territorial administration, Gilbert Balawa, the cabinet is expected to set the date based on proposals from the national election commission. A statement released by the country’s constitutional court on Monday was interpreted to mean that voting had to take place no later than 5 March, a timeline that opposition leader Jean-Pierre Fabre stated was “materially impossible to respect.” However on Tuesday, the court issued a second statement, clarifying that in fact only the date of the election had to be set by 5 March. President Faure Gnassingbe’s government then announced that the vote would be held by mid-April.



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