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West Africa Report

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

March 16 - 29, 2015



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 - Due diligence and investigations.
- Project Management
 - Interim security
 - Training
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- Crisis Response
 - Crisis management
 - Business continuity management
 - Hostile operations support to commercial interests
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More information is found at www.msrisk.com

24 hr Contact Information:

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

Summary

March 16 - 29, 2015



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

Burkina Faso

- **24 March 2015** – Officials have disclosed that Burkina Faso has begun an investigation into the 1987 assassination of former president Thomas Sankara, whose family has long been calling for a probe into his death.
- **23 March 2015** – Transitional authorities disclosed Monday that the country's interim president Michel Kafando has recalled ten ambassadors who were appointed by former president Blaise Compaore and who are seen as having close ties to the old regime.

Guinea

On the Ground Reporting

- **28 March 2015** – Guinea has deployed security forces to the country's southwestern region in response to reports that Sierra Leoneans are crossing the border in a bid to flee a three-day nationwide Ebola lockdown.

- Guinea's President Alpha Conde declared a 45-day "health emergency" on Saturday that will affect five regions in the west and south-western areas of the country.
- **23 March 2015** – On Monday, the trial of people accused of killing eight Ebola health workers and journalists opened in a remote region of Guinea.
- **20 March 2015** – According to a World Health Organization (WHO) official, a recent spike in Ebola cases in Guinea could be a sign that aid teams are at last gaining access to hidden patients and is likely not attributed to a surge in new cases.
- **16 March 2015** – Guinean authorities who have been charged with eradicating Ebola are now putting the final touches to an interim plan aimed at ending the disease in the West African nation by 15 April 2015.

Domestic news

- **26 March 2015** – Guinea's government has urged dialogue after the West African country's three main opposition leaders called for renewed protests against President Alpha Conde over the upcoming elections. **24 March 2015** – The leaders of three main Guinean opposition parties met in Paris on Tuesday and called for renewed protests against President Alpha Conde, who they say has "lost all legitimacy."
- **18 March 2015** – In protest over the timetable for the upcoming presidential elections, Guinea's opposition withdrew its lawmakers from Parliament on Wednesday, stating that it would no longer recognize the election commission.

Guinea-Bissau

- **25 March 2015** – The European Union (EU) has restored political ties with Guinea-Bissau, nearly three years after a military coup.
- **18 March 2015** – Guinea-Bissau and Portugal announced Tuesday that they have resumed their military cooperation after a three-year suspension.

Ivory Coast

On the Ground Reporting

- **17 March 2015** – The Ivory Coast's former first lady is appealing her conviction and the 20-year-sentence she received for her role in the West African country's post-election violence.
 - On Tuesday, former leaders of self-defense militias in the Ivory Coast urged their former fighters to put down their weapons and to instead integrate themselves in the country's ongoing peace process.

Domestic News

- **22 March 2015** – On Sunday, the Ivory Coast's President Alassane Ouattara won his party's backing to run for re-election in this year's upcoming polls.

Liberia

- **28 March 2015** – A senior official confirmed Saturday that a Liberian woman, who last week became the country's first Ebola patient in more than a month, has died, adding that two new suspected cases have been identified.
- **25 March 2015** – After losing a request to be transferred to Rwanda, ex-Liberian president Charles Taylor has been ordered to serve out the rest of his prison term in the United Kingdom.
- **20 March 2015** – Liberia has confirmed its first new Ebola case in more than a month, resulting in a major setback as the country had hoped to be soon declared free of the deadly disease.
- **19 March 2015** – Liberia's government has begun to make payments to those families of health workers who died of Ebola during the world's worst outbreak to date.

Mali

- **26 March 2015** – On Thursday, hundreds of supporters of exiled former president Amadou Toumani Toure, who was overthrown in a military coup in 2012, called for his return in rallies that were held in a number of cities across the West African nation.
- **23 March 2015** – Residents and a security official have reported that two suspected bomb makers were killed in the northern Malian town of Gao on Monday when the explosives that they were handling detonated prematurely.
 - During a visit to neighboring Algiers, Malian President Boubacar Keita stated Monday that his government will do all it can to meet its commitments under a peace agreement with Tuareg-led rebels.
- **21 March 2015** – Security sources disclosed Saturday that militants from al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) decapitated a Malian earlier this week, after accusing the civilian of aiding France's anti-jihadist operation in the region.
- **19 March 2015** – Government sources in Mali disclosed Thursday that special agents are holding three people suspected of helping armed jihadists launch an attack on a nightclub in Mali's capital city, which killed five people.
- **18 March 2015** – The Dutch military confirmed Wednesday that two Dutch United Nations peacekeepers were killed when their Apache attack helicopter crashed in northern Mali.
 - The Malian government announced Wednesday that it will not participate in further talks with rebels seeking autonomy for northern Mali, effectively leaving the future of the UN-brokered peace process in question.
- **17 March 2015** - Mali's Tuareg-led rebels have called for a meeting with mediators just one day after they rejected the United Nations-brokered preliminary peace agreement.

Mauritania

- **18 March 2015** – President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz has denied that he is planning to amend the country's constitution in a bid to run for office for a third term.

Niger

- **26 March 2015** – Niger's Defense Minister disclosed Thursday that troops from Chad and Niger have recaptured the northeastern Nigerian town of Gachagar from Boko Haram.

Nigeria

Coverage of the Presidential Election ~ 28 March 2015

- **28 March 2015** – At least seven people were killed in separate attacks in the northeastern Nigerian state of Gombe on Saturday, with suspected Boko Haram militants opening fire on voters at polling stations.
 - Nigeria has extended voting to Sunday after problems occurred as millions turned out to vote in Saturday's presidential elections.
 - Police officials disclosed Saturday morning that an explosion struck a polling station at a primary school in the city of Awka.
 - Gunmen shot dead a Nigerian soldier in an ambush that occurred in the southern oil hub of Port Harcourt on Saturday.
 - On Saturday, a bomb exploded at a polling station in a primary school in the northeastern city of Enugu.
 - An official disclosed Saturday that suspected Boko Haram gunmen beheaded twenty-three people and set fire to homes in Buratai, northeastern Nigeria, on the eve of the country's general elections.
- **27 March 2015** – Nigeria's military announced Friday that troops have retaken the town of Gwoza from Boko Haram, a strategic win for the region as the town had been where the militant group had declared their caliphate last year.
- **26 March 2015** - Days before presidential elections are due to take place, Nigeria has ramped up security nationwide, shutting land and sea borders and vowing to crack down on any political unrest.

- **24 March 2015** – Nigeria's federal police chief on Tuesday ordered restrictions on movement on election day as the country this weekend will go to the polls to elect a new president and parliament.
- **18 March 2015** – On Wednesday, Nigeria's President Goodluck Jonathan swore in eight new ministers, just ten days before the presidential elections.

On the Ground Reporting

- **26 March 2015** – Nigeria's military has detained two al-Jazeera television journalists in the country's northeast.
- **24 March 2015** – Residents reported Tuesday that Boko Haram militants have kidnapped more than 400 women and children from the northern Nigerian town of Damasak, which was freed by Nigerian and Chadian troops earlier this month.
- **22 March 2015** – On Sunday, two Chadian army helicopters bombed Boko Haram positions in Nigeria, killing several dozen militants near a villages that lies on the border with Niger.
- **20 March 2015** – More than 100 bodies have been found in a mass grave in northeastern Nigeria after a town was recaptured from Boko Haram militants.
- **21 March 2015** – On the ground sources have reported that Chadian troops on Saturday returned to the Nigerian border town of Gamboru after Boko Haram militants killed 11 people.
- **19 March 2015** – Security sources disclosed Thursday that Boko Haram insurgents attacked the Nigerian border town of Gamboru on Wednesday afternoon, killing at least ten people.
 - Multiple witnesses have reported that dozens of Nigerian women, who were forced to marry Boko Haram fighters, have been reportedly killed by their "husbands" before Nigerian troops entered the northeastern town of Bama to re-capture it.
- **17 March 2015** – Nigeria's military has reported that troops have retaken the northeastern town of Bama from Boko Haram militants.
- **16 March 2015** – A police spokesman and a legislator disclosed Monday that at least forty-five villagers were killed in a dawn raid Sunday that was carried out by suspected herdsmen in the country's central Benue state.

Senegal

On the Ground Reporting

- **24 March 2015** - On Tuesday, Senegal's former president Abdoulaye Wade called for a rally to be held Friday over the sentencing of his son for graft.
- **23 March 2015** – A court in Senegal has sentenced Karim Wade, the son of former President Abdoulaye Wade, to six years in prison for corruption and has fined him US \$230 million (£150 million) for illegal enrichment during his father's 12-year rule.
- **21 March 2015** – According to a leading party member, Karim Wade, who is currently on trial for corruption, was chosen Saturday to be the former ruling party's candidate in the next presidential election.
- **17 March 2015** – Senegalese authorities have arrested a lawyer for Karim Wade, the son of a former president currently on trial on corruption charges.

Domestic News

- **17 March 2015** – Senegal's president wants to shorten his term in office in a bid to "set an example" for other African countries.

Sierra Leone

On the Ground Reporting

- **27 March 2015** – In a bid to end the Ebola outbreak, on Friday, Sierra Leone's 6 million people began a three-day quarantine period.
- **25 March 2015** – Sierra Leone has postponed the reopening of schools, which have been closed for almost eight months, in a bid to halt the spread of Ebola, by two weeks.
- **19 March 2015** – Sierra Leonean officials announced Thursday that they will confine around 2.5 million people to their homes across the capital city and in the northern region of the country in a three-day shutdown aimed at stemming the Ebola outbreak.

Domestic News

- **23 March 2015** – On Monday, Sierra Leone's army chief ordered soldiers to remain in their barracks, warning them to stay away from the political crisis that has erupted in the wake of the controversial dismissal of the country's vice president.
- **22 March 2015** – Officials have disclosed that the country's opposition party is considering launching impeachment proceedings against the president, adding that they will refuse all cooperation with the government over the way that the vice president was dismissed.
- **21 March 2015** – Sierra Leone's bar association has disclosed that the removal of the country's vice president was unconstitutional, adding that it has asked the president to reinstate him.
- **20 March 2015** – A relative of the ousted president has disclosed that the politician is "virtually under house arrest," adding that his movements and access to visitors have been heavily restricted.
- **19 March 2015** – Sierra Leone's dismissed vice president confirmed Wednesday that he will challenge his removal by the president in the country's supreme court, stating that his dismissal was unconstitutional.
 - Sierra Leone has sworn in a new vice president.
- **18 March 2015** – The president's office announced Wednesday that Sierra Leone's Vice President Samuel Sam Sumana has been dismissed for seeking political asylum in a foreign embassy, stating that he had shown a willingness to abandon the vice-presidency by seeking asylum.
- **17 March 2015** – Sierra Leone's vice president has appeared in public for the first time since his residence was stormed by soldiers over the weekend.

Togo

On the Ground Reporting

- **25 March 2015** - Clashes erupted Wednesday between security forces and hundreds of people who are protesting in support of a teacher's strike.
- **24 March 2015** – Government workers began their second consecutive strike day on Tuesday over pay, a move that has raised pressure on the government to resolve the issue ahead of next month's elections.

Domestic News

- **28 March 2015** – Officials in Togo have postponed the country's presidential elections by 10 days, to 25 April, after calls for a delay over claims that the voter register was flawed.
- **25 March 2015** – West Africa's ECOWAS bloc has proposed a 10-day delay to Togo's elections, which are set to take place on 15 April, in a bid to allow authorities additional time to complete a revision of the voter list, which the country's opposition parties have indicated is in favor of the incumbent.

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 and Sierra Leone. While Benin currently has no confirmed cases of the Ebola virus, MS Risk advises all travellers to remain cautious, including maintaining strict standards of hygiene and avoiding eating bush meat. There is a 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 11

The Gambia

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.

Ghana

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.

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Sahel Region

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

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



Security Summary

The current Ebola outbreak affects, Guinea, Liberia, 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.

Burkina Faso

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

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



Security Summary

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 Boulssa, 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

- **24 March 2015** – Officials have disclosed that Burkina Faso has begun an investigation into the 1987 assassination of former president Thomas Sankara, whose family has long been calling for a probe into his death. Sources revealed Tuesday that Sankara's relatives have been notified that an investigating magistrate was pursuing the case. Earlier this month, the interim government ordered that the former president's body be exhumed in an effort to identify the remains of the late leader, who was slain in a putsch that saw his former friend and protégé Blaise Compaore take power. Sankara was buried in a cemetery in the east of the capital Ouagadougou however many of his family members doubt if the corpse is indeed his. Since 1997, they have been requesting that an investigation be carried out.
- **23 March 2015** – Transitional authorities disclosed Monday that the country's interim president Michel Kafando has recalled ten ambassadors who were appointed by former president Blaise Compaore and who are seen as having close ties to the old regime. According to a statement, government officials have indicated that some of the recalled diplomats had engaged in "political activism" while others were due to retire or had reached the end of their term abroad. The statement further read, "from now on, the Burkinabe ambassador must keep in mind that he is representing his country and his government abroad. His role should primarily be of diplomatic nature," adding that the West African nation is seeing to project "a better image" and "a new face" to the outside world. Sources have revealed that most of the recalled diplomats, which includes Burkina Faso's envoy to the United Nations, had served as senior officials or ministers under former president Blaise Compaore. Burkina Faso, which has played an active role in regional diplomacy in recent years, has a total of 34 ambassadors who are stationed abroad.

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.

There is currently a low threat from terrorism. Areas of Guinea that border Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, the Ivory Coast, Liberia and Sierra Leone are often tense and have an increased military presence. Therefore, MS Risk advises against all travel to the regions bordering the countries listed above. There have been regular reports of robberies on the routes Mamou,

Faranah, Kissidougou, Guekedou, Macent and Nzerekore. MS Risk advises all travellers on these routes to remain vigilant and to avoid travel after dark. Official and unofficial checkpoints may be set up along these routes. Vehicles and passengers are submitted to checks on documentation and baggage. It is advised that you approach such checkpoints with caution, as corruption and extortion are common at roadblocks. Occasionally, checkpoints can be a pretext for armed robbery. Road travel is hazardous during the rainy season, which occurs from May to October. Torrential rains can cause floods and

landslides. MS Risk advises you to monitor the local weather reports and expect difficulties when travelling to affected areas during this season.

On the Ground Reporting

- **28 March 2015** – Guinea has deployed security forces to the country's southwestern region in response to reports that Sierra Leoneans are crossing the border in a bid to flee a three-day nationwide Ebola lockdown. The deployment, which is led by the head of the national gendarmerie, arrived in the town of Forecariah late Friday night, with gendarmerie spokesman Mamadou Alpha Barry disclosing that the area is "secure." Residents had reported tension in the region which resulted from a large influx of Sierra Leoneans in the days leading up to the lockdown, which went into effect on Friday and which ends Sunday.
 - Guinea's President Alpha Conde declared a 45-day "health emergency" on Saturday that will affect five regions in the west and south-western areas of the country. The restrictions, which are due to the Ebola outbreak, will include quarantines of hospitals and clinics where new cases are detected, as well as new rules on burials and possible lockdowns. In a statement published in national media, the president disclosed that he was declaring "a reinforced health emergency for a period of 45 days in the prefectures of Forecariah, Coyah, Dubreka, Boffa and Kindia," noting that the focus of the virus "has shifted to our country's coastal areas."
- **23 March 2015** – On Monday, the trial of people accused of killing eight Ebola health workers and journalists opened in a remote region of Guinea. According to Ministry of Justice spokesman Ibrahima Beavogui, around 78 suspects are being tried in the town of N'Zerekore, which is located 900 kilometres (560 miles) from the capital Conakry. The killings occurred when a delegation of health caseworkers, including top health officials from the nearby town, visited Womey last September in a bid to raise awareness about how to combat Ebola. Shortly after entering the town, they were attacked by a mob armed with stones and knives. Defense lawyers have maintained that their clients are not the real perpetrators of the attack, adding that they are ordinary residents who were picked up in military sweeps. Defense Lawyer Michel Sonomu stated at the opening of the trial, "soldiers just came to Womey and arrested the innocent while the guilty fled." Myths about the deadly disease have resulted in a number of attacks on health workers in Guinea as some villagers in remote regions have often reacted with fear and suspicion, believing that the virus had been brought in by outsiders. The trial is likely to highlight the ongoing challenges that health workers are facing in the current Ebola outbreak.
- **20 March 2015** – According to a World Health Organization (WHO) official, a recent spike in Ebola cases in Guinea could be a sign that aid teams are at last gaining access to hidden patients and is likely not attributed to a surge in new cases. According to the Guinea's health ministry, over the last month the number of suspected cases in Guinea has more than doubled, prompting fears that the epidemic in the West African nation could mushroom as it had in Liberia and Sierra Leone last September. However Jean-Marie Dangou, the WHO's Guinea country representative, has disclosed that the increase in cases was likely due to previously hostile communities finally opening up to Ebola teams, noting "unfortunately this has led to the discovery, not unexpected, of a large number of hidden cases and community deaths... It also explains why most new cases are not linked to contacts under follow-up." Resistance to anti-Ebola efforts has been a major concern for officials, particularly in Guinea, which continues to struggle to control the deadly outbreak. Last month, the Red Cross intensified its campaign to win over suspicious locals in the West African country. The move came after officials had reported that their Ebola teams were coming under increasingly violent attacks on a regular basis. According to incident mapping by the health ministry,

hostility toward Ebola aid workers has declined from 30 known areas of resistance in January to just a handful of areas in the capital city Conakry and the surrounding districts in March.

- **16 March 2015** – Guinean authorities who have been charged with eradicating Ebola are now putting the final touches to an interim plan aimed at ending the disease in the West African nation by 15 April 2015. This comes after the initial plan, dubbed “Zero Ebola in 60 days,” which failed to yield the desired results. According to Fode Tass Sylla, head of communication for the national body that has been charged with fighting Ebola, the interim plan aims to reinforce the intervention teams in the capital city Conakry as well as in the neighboring prefectures, including Coyah, Dubreka, Boffa, Kindia and Forecariah. He acknowledged that the targets, which were set by the national team coordinating the fight against Ebola with its partners, including the World Health Organization (WHO) and Doctors Without Borders (MSF), through the “Zero Ebola in 60 days” had not been met, indicating that one of the reasons given for this “failure” was the resistance and misinformation in some localities, particularly in Basse Guinea, in the capital city and in the prefectures of Dubreka, Boffa, Kindia and Forecariah. According to Sylla, in the mentioned regions, the programme to monitor those who had come into contact with an Ebola patient was not successful, adding that the local population has continued to transport infected bodies and has carried out unsafe burials.

Domestic News

- **26 March 2015** – Guinea's government has urged dialogue after the West African country's three main opposition leaders called for renewed protests against President Alpha Conde over the upcoming elections. Speaking at a press conference, government spokesman Albert Damantang Camara stated, “I would like to repeat the government's desire to find ways to restore confidence in the electoral process and to respect the constitution. But especially to preserve social peace.” He further stated, “the election schedule has been decided by an independent body. If part of the political class does not agree with the programme we can discuss it, to identify the real problems it poses and find real solutions,” adding “questioning the legitimacy of the president of the republic...is we think excessive in relation to the issues at stake... We call on the entire political class to enter into a dialogue. We are open to solutions, and we are listening. This dialogue must take place quickly and without conditions.” The call for dialogue comes a day after a joint statement, signed in Paris on Tuesday by former prime minister Cellou Dalein Diallo, Sidya Toure and Lansana Kouate, accused the president of repeated rights violations. Diallo, who is the president of the opposition Union of Democratic Forces of Guinea, stated that discussions with the authorities had been ineffective. He has appealed for international pressure while Toure has vowed to launch protests upon their return to Conakry on Thursday. Guinea's increasing political tensions comes as the country is trying to contain the Ebola outbreak.
- **24 March 2015** – The leaders of three main Guinean opposition parties met in Paris on Tuesday and called for renewed protests against President Alpha Conde, who they say has “lost all legitimacy.” Cellou Dalein Diallo, Sidya Toure and Lansana Kouyate are accusing the president of carrying out repeated rights violations. In a joint statement, the opponents stated, “Alpha Conde has lost all legitimacy to rule Guinea. If he stays in power, it will pose a serious threat to peace and unity in Guinea and to stability in the region.” They have called on demonstrators to support their demands, particularly a call to bring forward the local elections, which are due to be held in March next year. The opposition has accused the Guinean president of using the Ebola outbreak as an excuse to postpone the elections and of refusing to enter into a dialogue over the timetable. The call for protests comes nearly a week after Guinea's opposition boycotted parliament in protest over the timetable for the upcoming presidential elections.

- **18 March 2015** – In protest over the timetable for the upcoming presidential elections, Guinea's opposition withdrew its lawmakers from Parliament on Wednesday, stating that it would no longer recognize the election commission. The government coalition, which is led by President Alpha Conde's ruling Rally of the Guinean People (RPG) party, has denounced the boycott, stating that it is a "trap the opposition is setting that we will not fall into," adding that it will not impact the work of the National Assembly. According to opposition leader Cellou Dalein Diallo, "we decided yesterday...to suspend our participation in the work of the National Assembly and withdraw our 49 lawmakers until further notice and no longer recognize the national independent election commission." Following doubts over its timing, last week, the electoral commission announced that the elections would be held on 11 October. The opposition has accused President Alpha Conde of using the Ebola outbreak as an excuse to postpone the presidential elections and of refusing to enter into a dialogue over the timetable. The opposition had called for local elections, which were originally due to take place at the beginning of 2014, to be held before the presidential vote, however according to the electoral commission, they will now take place in March 2016. Diallo, who is a former prime minister and the current president of the Union of Democratic Forces of Guinea, has stated that the commission "does what the government asks it to do, it totally ignores the opposition," adding "we will take steps to ensure that such interference ceases for the good of all." The last election in Guinea was the September 2013 parliamentary vote, which was delayed by almost three years and which sparked deadly ethnic tensions. The election gave the ruling RPG and its junior partners an absolute majority in parliament however the polls came under heavy criticism from opposition parties who alleged "massive fraud," including ballot stuffing and voter intimidation. International observers also indicated at the time that there were serious flaws that had affected the credibility of the vote. Anti-government demonstrators later staged several protests in the capital city Conakry over a Supreme Court ruling that confirmed the results.

Guinea-Bissau

No Travel Restrictions



Security Summary

There are currently no travel restrictions for Guinea-Bissau. 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 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.

On the Ground Reporting

- **25 March 2015** – The European Union (EU) has restored political ties with Guinea-Bissau, nearly three years after a military coup. On Tuesday, the EU's foreign policy chief, Federica Mogherini, applauded the West African nation for "embarking on a new path of peace, reconciliation and development" after it held elections and restored its constitution last year. The foreign policy chief further indicated that a new aid package will be announced in the coming months, adding "today's decision allows us to support the efforts of the authorities to rebuild the country, entrench democratic institutions and lay the foundations for long-term stability." Sources have disclosed that on Wednesday, the EU will host a meeting to "mobilize support for the implementation of reforms in Guinea-Bissau and its development programme." Delegates from the EU, along with the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and Guinea-Bissau's government, are expected to attend. According to Guinea-Bissau's finance minister, Geraldo Martins, the West African country will, at the meeting, ask international donors for US \$1.8 billion in aid in order to fund its 10-year development plan, which aims to boost tourism and investment. Martin has disclosed that his country's political climate has finally calmed down, adding, "(our) government includes members of the opposition. This is a strong signal to the country and the international community. This is a sign of unity never before seen." **Update (26 March)** – On Wednesday, international donors pledged more than one billion euros (US \$1.10 billion) for Guinea-Bissau in order to support a 10-year development plan that is aimed at giving the country a new start after prolonged political instability, however the total fell short of the US \$1.8 billion that the West

African nation was seeking in order to finance the 115 projects in its 2015 – 2025 plan. The European Commission's development department confirmed that donors attending a Brussels conference that was hosted by the European Union (EU) endorsed Guinea-Bissau's development strategy and "pledged over one billion euros of financial support for achieving its goals." Speaking at the conference, Guinea-Bissau President Jose Mario Vaz stated, "every effort must be developed so that Guinea-Bissau will no longer be a burden on the international community but will instead become an example to be followed."

- **18 March 2015** – Guinea-Bissau and Portugal announced Tuesday that they have resumed their military cooperation after a three-year suspension. Portugal's Defense Minister Aguiar Branco made the announcement during a short visit to Bissau, where he signed a number of agreements with his Guinea-Bissau counterpart Cadi Seide. The agreements include the reopening of a military school, restructuring Guinea-Bissau's army and the donation of two small boats to the national navy. During the meeting, Defense Minister Branco disclosed, "these agreements will come into effect soon," with Seide stating that the "signing of the military agreements was a sign of restoration of normal relations between the two countries." Lisbon suspended its military cooperation with the West African country after the 12 April 2012 coup, which overthrew the country's former regime.

Ivory Coast

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



Security Summary

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

- **17 March 2015** – The Ivory Coast’s former first lady is appealing her conviction and the 20-year-sentence she received for her role in the West African country’s post-election violence. Lawyer Rodrigue Dadje confirmed Monday that the defense team is appealing last week’s verdict and sentence. The prosecution has also announced that it is appealing the sentence, noting that it only asked for a prison sentence of ten years. Simone Gbagbo had pleaded not guilty.
 - On Tuesday, former leaders of self-defense militias in the Ivory Coast urged their former fighters to put down their weapons and to instead integrate themselves in the country’s ongoing peace process. Speaking at a meeting organized by the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Authority (ADDR) and held in Abidjan, Claude Kanegon, the former leader of a militia group called “Patriotic Battalion” stated “it was time for former militia groups to embrace the concept of peace after the war.” Mao Glofiehi, the former leader of the Grand West Liberation Front, another militia group that was active during the crisis, indicated that it was necessary for former fighters to submit under the country’s authorities, stating, “we are ready for a peace mission. Our former fighters should understand the need for disarmament and reintegration. If an ex-combatant is not reintegrated, it’s very dangerous for the country.” Other former leaders of militia groups, including Lazare Mahi, Tohoue Bi Bouikalo and Mathurin Yoro also promised to relay the peace and reconciliation message to their members. According to the ADDR, some 18,000 ex-combatants out of a total of 74,000 are yet to be identified and reintegrated.

Domestic News

- **22 March 2015** – On Sunday, the Ivory Coast’s President Alassane Ouattara won his party’s backing to run for re-election in this year’s upcoming polls. The 73-year-old incumbent leader faced no challengers as he was officially selected as the presidential candidate for the ruling Rally of Republicans (RDR) party during a special party congress held in the capital Abidjan. The widely expected decision was confirmed in a resolution that was adopted at the congress and read out by Anne-Desiree Ouloto, the minister for Solidarity, Family and Women. Speaking to the crowd at the Teichville sports palace, she confirmed that the party “has appointed Alassane Ouattara, economist, as the RDR candidate.” Ouattara is highly likely to win the upcoming election, which is due to take place this October. He first took office in 2011 after a post-election crisis that was sparked when former president Laurent Gbagbo refused to hand over power. Following a decade of political and military crisis, the Ivory Coast’s economy has been revitalized during Ouattara’s four years in power. Between 2012 and 2014, the economy expanded by nine percent, with many citing the strong investment in the public sector as being a major factor in the boost. While Ouattara has pledged to maintain similar levels of growth until 2020, critics have said that this development has not been well distributed amongst the population, which currently stands at around 20 million people.

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.

After three weeks without any new reported cases of Ebola, on 20 March, Liberian officials confirmed a new case. While officials are indicating that this case appears to be an isolated case, MS Risk advises all travellers to the country to remain vigilant. A nationwide curfew, including the overnight curfew, has been lifted. In late February 2015, the Liberian government announced the reopening of the country's main borders with Sierra Leone and Guinea.

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

- **28 March 2015** – A senior official confirmed Saturday that a Liberian woman, who last week became the country's first Ebola patient in more than a month, has died, adding that two new suspected cases have been identified. According to Francis Karteh, the head of the Ebola Incident Management Team in Liberia, "the last Ebola case died yesterday...Beside that, we have no confirmed case now in the country. Only two suspected cases for now. We are surveying 80 persons who were in the vicinity of the lady who died."
- **25 March 2015** – After losing a request to be transferred to Rwanda, ex-Liberian president Charles Taylor has been ordered to serve out the rest of his prison term in the United Kingdom. The ex-president had argued that he was being denied his rights to a family life, as his wife and children have not been granted UK visas, and further indicated that he was being held "effectively in isolation" because he was "too much of a target and too vulnerable" to be kept with other inmates of the Frankland prison in the northern English city of Durham. Court judges however rejected this argument, stating that they had not properly applied. The court noted that the rejection of his wife's visa was "due purely to his wife's failure to comply with the United Kingdom visa requirements and her ignoring the assistance offered to her (by the registrar's office) to re-apply," further stressing that prisoners did not have the right to choose their place of incarceration. A UN-backed court convicted him of war crimes over his support for rebels who committed atrocities in neighboring Sierra Leone. He was sentenced in 2012 and arrived in the UK last October after he unsuccessfully challenged the decision to be detained there. He was convicted on eleven charges including rape, terrorism, murder and the use of child soldiers by rebel groups in Sierra Leone during the 1991 – 2002 civil war.
- **20 March 2015** – Liberia has confirmed its first new Ebola case in more than a month, resulting in a major setback as the country had hoped to be soon declared free of the deadly disease. On Friday, government spokesman Lewis Brown disclosed, "a woman has been confirmed as an Ebola patient... This is a new case after we have gone more than 27 days without a single case. It is a setback." The woman has been transferred to the ELWA Ebola treatment unit in the capital Monrovia. Dr Francis Kateh, acting head of the Liberia Ebola Case Management team, has disclosed that the patient does not seem to be linked to any of the people on an Ebola contact list and that she has stated that she did not travel recently to any of the neighbouring infected countries. Authorities are now considering the possibility that she had a visitor from outside Liberia who infected her or that "...she may have contracted the virus through sexual intercourse with a survivor." Officials are now compiling a list of people who came into contact with the patient who will be monitored for symptoms. While Liberia had not reported any new cases for several weeks, health officials warned that even after areas are declared free of the deadly disease, new cases were still possible due to sexual transmission. Earlier this month, the World Health Organization (WHO) had announced that Liberia had registered no new case of the deadly virus since 19 February. On 5 March, Liberia discharged its last confirmed Ebola patient, Beatrice Yordoldo. In the week leading up to 15 March, surveillance and early warning systems had detected 125 suspected cases of Ebola however none of them tested positive for the deadly virus. Liberia had started its 42-day countdown towards being considered Ebola-free on 4

March and would have been cleared by 15 April. At the height of the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, Liberia was the hardest hit country and has seen more than 4,000 deaths. According to the latest figures released by the WHO, since the outbreak began in December 2013, 24,753 people in nine countries have been infected with the virus, and 10,236 have died. All but fifteen of those deaths occurred in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. **Update (25 March)** - Officials in Liberia have disclosed that a Liberian woman, who last week became the country's first Ebola patient in more than a month, has not passed the infection to anyone else. Francis Karteh, the head of Liberia's Ebola Incident Management Team, stated Wednesday "the patient is in stable condition. She is responding to treatment," adding "she had contact with more than 50 people. We have been following these people and they are all home with no sign of Ebola yet."

- **19 March 2015** – Liberia's government has begun to make payments to those families of health workers who died of Ebola during the world's worst outbreak to date. On Thursday, Tolbert Nyenswah, who leads the government's Ebola response, disclosed that so far eleven families have received US \$5,000 each. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), Ebola has killed 180 health workers in Liberia. The deadly disease has decimated the ranks of doctors and nurses in the three countries hardest hit by the outbreak: Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. In the early days of the outbreak, many health workers fell ill, with some dying, because they either did not know how to protect themselves or lacked the equipment to do so.

Mali

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

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



Security Summary

Summary

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

- **26 March 2015** – On Thursday, hundreds of supporters of exiled former president Amadou Toumani Toure, who was overthrown in a military coup in 2012, called for his return in rallies that were held in a number of cities across the West African nation. On the ground sources have disclosed that a gathering in Bamako drew more than a thousand people, with smaller crowds also gathering in the central city of Mopti and in the northern city of Gao. Ex-president Toure came to power in 2002. He fled to Senegal after a military junta overthrew him in 2012, just as he was preparing to end his final term in office. At the time, soldiers accused him of failing to tackle an Islamist insurgency in northern Mali.
- **23 March 2015** – Residents and a security official have reported that two suspected bomb makers were killed in the northern Malian town of Gao on Monday when the explosives that they were handling detonated prematurely. On the ground sources have reported that the explosion occurred in the late afternoon in the Chateau neighborhood of the northeastern town. According to a senior official with Mali's gendarmes, "there were two dead. They were jihadists who'd come from the village of Kadji. They were in a house working on a bomb when it exploded." Kadji is a village located across the Niger River from Gao. Local residents suspect that the town serves as a hide-out for remaining Islamists, with one source disclosing that the building where the explosion occurred had housed fighters during the Islamist occupation of Gao.
 - During a visit to neighboring Algiers, Malian President Boubacar Keita stated Monday that his government will do all it can to meet its commitments under a peace agreement with Tuareg-led rebels. Speaking shortly after being received by his Algerian counterpart President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, President Keita stated "we will do everything to keep our commitments in the document signed in Algiers on March 1 with our brothers." The Algiers Agreement, which was produced after eight months of negotiations, aims to bring a lasting peace to the northern region of Mali. The Malian government has signed it along with smaller armed groups, however the Tuareg-led rebels, under the banner of the Coordination for the Movements of Azawad (CMA) have sought more talks. While the rebels have been calling for "recognition and compensation by the state of Mali" and "recognition of Azawad as a political, legal and territory entity," the Malian president, who began a three-day visit to Algiers on Monday, described the agreement already in place as "a new beginning," stating, "its an agreement that opens up new avenues for the country, for its reconstruction and for Mali in peace, soothed and reconcile." He further indicated that the intention of the accord was to "rebuild and develop the country for each party to feel proud of belonging to" Mali, adding that he was "optimistic" that the rebels would sign the peace agreement.
- **21 March 2015** – Security sources disclosed Saturday that militants from al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) decapitated a Malian earlier this week, after accusing the civilian of aiding France's anti-jihadist operation in the region. A military source with the United Nations MINUSMA mission in Mali confirmed, "a Malian civilian accused of collaborating with French forces in the Barkhane operation was executed and decapitated by AQIM..." This incident occurred Thursday at a marketplace in Tichift, which is located 120 kilometres (75 miles) north of Timbuktu. An official with a regional security service also reported that AQIM militants distributed a pamphlet to people in the market, threatening the same treatment to "all other traitors working against Islam for foreign forces in the Muslim land of northern Mali." AQIM has in the past executed a number of civilians in northern Mali, accusing them of working with the French military and its allies in their two-year offensive against the militants.
- **19 March 2015** – Government sources in Mali disclosed Thursday that special agents are holding three people suspected of helping armed jihadists launch an attack on a nightclub in Mali's capital city, which killed five people. The arrests come twelve days after assailants armed with grenades and automatic rifles

targeted the La Terrasse nightclub in Bamako, killing three Malians along with a Frenchman and a Belgian. Eight people, including two Swiss nationals, were wounded in the attack, which marked the first time that armed militants had targeted Westerners in the city. According to a source, “two major links in the organization of the deadly attack on the restaurant-bar La Terrasse were arrested on Wednesday and during the night by the special forces of Mali’s intelligence agency.” The source further disclosed that the suspects were identified as Boubacar Adama Traore and “Maouloud,” adding that a woman named Salia Maiga was also detained. The source revealed that Traore, who works for a private transport company, was the “principal liaison agent” in the capital with the jihadists based in Mali’s northern desert region. A second government source has revealed that an investigation confirmed the arrests, which came less than a week after security agents shot dead a man suspected of playing a role in the raid and found an arsenal they linked to the attack. Al-Murabitoun, a jihadist group led by Algerian militant Mokhtar Belmokhtar, who is wanted for terrorist activities in several countries, claimed responsibility for the attack. His movement later indicated that it had targeted the nightclub in response to recent cartoons of the Muslim prophet Mohammed, “whom the miscreant West insulted and mocked.”

- **18 March 2015** – The Dutch military confirmed Wednesday that two Dutch United Nations peacekeepers were killed when their Apache attack helicopter crashed in northern Mali. Officials have stated that the incident, which occurred Tuesday, was an accident. The helicopter, from the UN’s MINUSMA mission, crashed about 20 kilometres (12 miles) from Gao. Top Dutch defence commander General Tom Middendorp confirmed the crash, stating “this afternoon around 1300 GMT a Dutch Apache attack helicopter crashed in Mali... A 30-year-old captain and 26-year-old first lieutenant died in the accident. Both men were members of 301 Squadron based in Gilze-Rijen airbase in southern Netherlands. Gen Middendorp disclosed that Dutch investigators are probing the crash. MINUSMA has some 11,000 personnel on the ground in Mali, in which around 670 are from the Netherlands. Since deploying to Mali in 2013, the MINUSMA mission has seen more than forty peacekeepers killed, effectively making it the most dangerous UN mission in the world. The Chadian contingent has sustained a large proportion of the casualties. In a statement released by the UN Security Council, the Council called Tuesday’s incident a “tragic accident,” and has sent condolences to the families of the deceased and the Dutch government.
 - The Malian government announced Wednesday that it will not participate in further talks with rebels seeking autonomy for northern Mali, effectively leaving the future of the UN-brokered peace process in question. Government spokesman Choguel Kokala Maiga told reporters “there is no question for us to resume negotiations again, otherwise it will never end.” The government’s refusal to reopen discussions comes a day after the rebel coalition, known as the Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA), agreed to another round of talks. In a statement released Wednesday, the United Nations indicated that the CMA had submitted a document during the meeting on Tuesday with a list of “observations it would like the mediators to consider in order to proceed with a signature.” While the statement did not provide any details on the demands, it did note that “certain of these observations formulated by the CMA could be validly taken into account in the framework of the implementation of the agreement.” A collapse in peace talks could leave the question of northern Mali’s political status open indefinitely, which will likely cause serious issues and may be exploited by Islamist militants who remain active in the region.
- **17 March 2015** - Mali’s Tuareg-led rebels have called for a meeting with mediators just one day after they rejected the United Nations-brokered preliminary peace agreement. On Monday, the Tuareg-led rebels called for a meeting with Algerian mediators in a bid to “improve” a proposed peace agreement signed with the government in the capital city Bamako. After meeting for days in order to discuss the agreement, the

Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA), which represents five rebel groups, had initially rejected the accord, stating that it was “fundamentally flawed.” They later released a “final statement,” which has called for further talks, stating that the document was a good basis for further discussions, however noting that it did not reflect the aspirations of their people and that it must now be improved in the interests of peace. The statement indicated that “according to the views expressed by the various communities of Azawad, it appears that the draft agreement did not take into account essential elements of the legitimate aspirations of the people of Azawad,” adding that the CMA “reiterates its firm commitment to pursue the aegis of international mediation.” The statement went on to say that “the CMA believes that the document produced by the mediation constitutes a good basis for work that needs to be improved in the best interests of peace... Therefore, it requests a meeting with the mediation and international partners in order discuss the progress of the process.” The Algiers Agreement, which is the product of over eight months of negotiations, aims to bring a lasting peace to the northern desert region, which the rebels refer to as “Azawad.” The agreement was signed by the Malian government and several smaller groups however the Tuareg-led rebels had requested additional time in order to consider the offer. Mali’s desert northern region has struggled for stability since the West African nation gained independence in 1960. Since 1962, the Tuareg movement has launched four uprisings in a bid to fight Mali’s army over the territory, which they claim is their homeland. Ministers and various rebel groups, composed of Arab organizations and the Tuaregs, are now seeking to resolve the decades-old conflict. A coup in Bamako in March 2012 enabled the Tuaregs to seize Mali’s vast northern region however the separatist uprising was later taken over by al-Qaeda-linked militants who took over the region. In early 2013, French troops forced the militants out of their strongholds and into the desert and mountains however recent attacks on bases and the targeting of convoys has raised fears that the militants are once again gaining strength. While the UN has urged the rebels to sign the proposed deal protests have broken out in Kidal, which is the rebel stronghold in northern Mali, against the agreement.

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.

Domestic News

- **18 March 2015** – President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz has denied that he is planning to amend the country's constitution in a bid to run for office for a third term. Speaking Wednesday during a visit to the interior of the country, President Abdel Aziz stated, "there was no any existing plan to change the Constitution." Mauritania's Constitution outlines that the democratically elected president may serve for two terms of five years each, effectively meaning that President Abdel Aziz, who was elected in 2008 and re-elected in June 2014, will be barred from running in the next presidential polls. However Mauritania's opposition parties, operating under the National Forum for Democracy and Unity umbrella, have accused the president of touring the eastern region of the country in a bid "to advance his plans to change the constitution so that he can continue governing the country after his second term." Both the government and the president have denied these claims.

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 15-day state of emergency in the region of Diffa, beginning at midnight on Tuesday 10 February. On 26 February, the government extended the state of emergency however officials have not stated how long the measure will be in place. 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 Tillabéri 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 the Ground Reporting

- **26 March 2015** – Niger's Defense Minister disclosed Thursday that troops from Chad and Niger have recaptured the northeastern Nigerian town of Gachagar from Boko Haram. According to Defense Minister Mahamadou Karidjo, the operation in Gachagar, a town located near Nigeria's border with Niger, was carried out over the past few days and involved "air and ground bombardments," adding that there were "a few skirmishes" with the militants. Officials have not provided any details of any casualties however the defense minister did note that troops are now redeploying to Malam Fatori, which is another key border town. Over the past few days, there has been some contradictory information that has been released about the town. Niger's army has disclosed that Boko Haram insurgents had regrouped near Malam Fatori while the Nigerian army has indicated that the situation in the town was under their control.

Nigeria

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

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



Security Summary

Summary

There will be restrictions on travel between 8am and 5pm on 28 March and 11 April. Only vehicles accredited to observe and manage the elections as well as emergency vehicles will be allowed on public roads. Further restrictions on vehicle or other movements may be imposed with minimal notice, especially on the election days. The Nigerian government has also closed all land and sea borders, with the exception of airports, from midnight on 25 March until midnight on 28 March. A similar

closure may occur for the 11 April elections. 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. MS Risk advises all travellers to monitor the local media for details of rallies or travel issues.



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

- **28 March 2015** – At least seven people were killed in separate attacks in the northeastern Nigerian state of Gombe on Saturday, with suspected Boko Haram militants opening fire on voters at polling stations. The first attacks took place in the neighboring villages of Birin Bolawa and Birin Fulani in the Nafada district of Gombe, which has been repeatedly targeted by the militant group. According to an election official, "we could hear the gunmen shouting, 'Didn't we warn you about staying away from (the) election?'" The election official disclosed that the masked gunmen arrived in Birin Bolawa in a pickup truck at around 8:30 AM (0730 GMT), shortly after accreditation for Saturday's presidential elections had begun. One voter was shot dead while many civilians fled in panic. On the ground sources have disclosed that the gunmen had set fire to all the election materials. The second attack occurred at about 9:15AM. At about 11:30 AM, gunmen stormed the town of Dukku, 80 kilometres (50 miles) from the state capital Gombe. Residents

reported that the gunmen shot randomly as voters queued up at polling stations. At least three people, including a state assembly lawmaker, were killed in the attack. Last month, Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau warned in a video message that the militants would disrupt Saturday's general elections, which they have called "un-Islamic." Officials have disclosed that there were twenty-eight Boko Haram attacks in the three weeks after the delay was announced, compared with eighteen that occurred in the three weeks beforehand, effectively representing an increase of 56 percent.

- Nigeria has extended voting to Sunday after problems occurred as millions turned out to vote in Saturday's presidential elections. The country's electoral commission announced mid-Saturday that polling in the country's presidential and parliamentary elections had been suspended in some areas, as there were some technical issues with the new voter ID card readers. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) disclosed that there had been "challenges" with the technology in "many" places effectively forcing accreditation to be suspended. Information Commissioner Chris Yimogo told reports in Abuja that "in polling units where accreditation was suspended to the following day in accordance with the existing guidelines, arrangement will be made for voters to vote tomorrow (Sunday)." On the ground sources have disclosed that voters reported long delays with the new handheld devices that "read" biometric data, including fingerprints on the cards in order to authenticate a voter's identity in a bid to cut electoral fraud. The most profile individual affected by the issue was President Goodluck Jonathan, who was forced to abandon his accreditation in his hometown of Otuoke when the device failed to recognize his details. While the president's ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) had on a number of occasions expressed concern about the level of distribution of new voter ID cards and the use of the "untested" readers during the election campaign, the main opposition All Progressives Congress (APC) party backed the system.
- Police officials disclosed Saturday morning that an explosion struck a polling station at a primary school in the city of Awka. The attack, which occurred Saturday morning, claimed no casualties. According to Uche Eze, police spokesman for Anambra state, of which Awka is the capital, "no lives were lost and none injured. The police bomb squad has moved in." The state of Anambra has often been affected by political thuggery around election time.
- Gunmen shot dead a Nigerian soldier in an ambush that occurred in the southern oil hub of Port Harcourt on Saturday. According to Brigadier-General K.A. Essien confirmed the attack however military officials have not released any further details pertaining to the incident.
- On Saturday, a bomb exploded at a polling station in a primary school in the northeastern city of Enugu. The attack occurred hours before the polling station opened. Enugu police spokesman Stephen Lar confirmed that attack, disclosing, "no life was lost but there were blood stains on the vehicle that conveyed the bomb showing the occupant may have been injured."
- An official disclosed Saturday that suspected Boko Haram gunmen beheaded twenty-three people and set fire to homes in Buratai, northeastern Nigeria, on the eve of the country's general elections. According to Mohammed Adamu, who represents the town, which is located 200 kilometres (125 miles) from Borno's capital Maiduguri, "there was an attack on Buratai late Friday by gunmen suspected to be insurgents...They beheaded 23 people and set homes on fire," adding "at least half the village has been burnt." At least thirty-two people were injured in the attack. While further details pertaining to the incident were not immediately available, the attack is consistent with Boko Haram's past strikes in the area.
- **27 March 2015** – Nigeria's military announced Friday that troops have retaken the town of Gwoza from Boko Haram, a strategic win for the region as the town had been where the militant group had declared

their caliphate last year. Defense Headquarters in Abuja confirmed, “troops this morning captured Gwoza destroying the Headquarters of the Terrorists self-styled Caliphate...Several terrorists died while many are captured. Mopping up of entire Gwoza and her suburbs is ongoing.” Earlier this month, resident, who had fled the town, reported that Boko Haram militants had been massing in Gwoza, adding that many local people who had attempted to flee were killed. This led to speculations that the militant group was preparing for a final assault. The insurgents have now been driven from virtually all the territory they had previously held. On the ground sources have reported that some militants are now fleeing towards the border areas.

- **26 March 2015** - Days before presidential elections are due to take place, Nigeria has ramped up security nationwide, shutting land and sea borders and vowing to crack down on any political unrest. On 25 March, the Nigerian Ministry of Interior confirmed that all land and maritime borders, with the exclusion of airports, will be closed between 0000 LT 25 March 2015 until 0000 LT 28 March 2015. In a statement released Wednesday, the ministry disclosed that the move, which was ordered by President Goodluck Jonathan, was designed “to allow for peaceful conduct of the forthcoming national elections,” which will take place on 28 March. In past elections in Nigeria, security has been a major issue, with politically linked violence often occurring between supporters of rival parties. The move comes just a day after Nigeria’s federal police chief ordered the “total restriction” of vehicles between 8:00 am and 5:00 pm on election day, which excludes emergency services and others on “essential duties.” Fears that these elections could spark unrest have resulted in the president on Wednesday warning that the government will “not tolerate any form of violence during or after the polls.” He further disclosed that he is “...giving my total commitment to peaceful elections in the country, not because I am persuaded to do so but because I believe in it.” During the last presidential elections, which were held in 2011, some 1,000 people were killed after clashes erupted when opposition candidate Muhammadu Buhari lost to Goodluck Jonathan. The two men are again contesting this year’s elections, with many predicting that the elections will be tightly contested. In a bid to prevent any violence in the wake of Saturday’s election, the two main presidential candidates have signed a peace accord. Sources have disclosed that ex-military ruler Abdussalami Abubaker brokered the deal in talks that were held between Jonathan and Buhari. The peace agreement comes days after Nigeria’s Peace Committee raised concerns that campaigning had been marred by hate speech. However doubts remain as to whether or not such an agreement will last as Nigeria’s human rights commission has reported that nearly sixty people have been killed already in election-linked violence despite all the candidates agreeing for a peaceful poll. Security has been the major concern ahead of the presidential and parliamentary elections, which were postponed from the initial February 14 date because of military operations targeting Boko Haram. While over the past several weeks, a coalition, composed of Nigerian, Chadian, Cameroonian and Nigerien forces have claimed a series of success, forcing the militants out of captured territory in the northeastern region of the country, fears that the insurgents may carry out a bombing campaign against voters and polling stations remain high as over the past few weeks, Boko Haram fighters have returned back to carrying out suicide attacks targeting what the military has called “soft” targets, mainly markets and bus stations in the north. On Wednesday, Nigeria’s Department of State Services (DSS), called for vigilance in crowded places before, during and after Saturday’s election, noting that the threat remains high. Marily Ogar, spokeswoman for the DSS, told reporters, “voters are advised to be wary of persons in loose or bulky midriff clothing, which are inappropriate for the weather... Look out for unattended bags, luggage, dustbins, strange containers and other suspicious items,” adding that any “suspicious persons, activities and movements should be promptly reported to security agents.” The DSS has also urged that cars, motorbikes and three-wheel motorized taxis should be parked away from polling

stations and that shops and markets remain closed. The heightened security measures will remain in place until after gubernatorial and state assembly polls, which will take place on 11 April.

- **24 March 2015** – Nigeria’s federal police chief on Tuesday ordered restrictions on movement on election day as the country this weekend will go to the polls to elect a new president and parliament. A statement released by Inspector General of Police, Suleiman Abba, indicated that there will be a “total restriction” of vehicles between 8 am (0700 GMT), when polling stations open, and 5 pm, adding that ambulances, fire service trucks and others on “essential duties” will be exempt from these restrictions. The Inspector General further disclosed that the measures are designed to “ensure adequate security” in Saturday’s vote. Identical restrictions will also be put in place on 11 April for the gubernatorial and state assembly polls. In Nigeria, travel restrictions are routinely put in place for elections, as politically linked violence has been common. The decision comes shortly after Nigeria’s national security advisor disclosed that Nigerian troops deployed on operations to fight Boko Haram would be unable to provide security if required.
- **18 March 2015** – On Wednesday, Nigeria’s President Goodluck Jonathan swore in eight new ministers, just ten days before the presidential elections. Amongst those sworn in are Patricia Akwashiki, a senator from central Nasarawa state, who was made information minister. Nicholas Ada, a lawyer from the central majority ruling party in Benue state was made minister of state for foreign affairs. Musiliu Obanikoro, from the Yoruba southwest who contested for governor of the commercial hub Lagos, was made the second minister of state for foreign affairs. He was moved from minister of state for defence, which went to Augustine Akobundu, a retired colonel from the eastern Abia state. Fidelis Nwankwo, from eastern Ebonyi state, was made minister of state for health; Kenneth Kobani, from Rivers state in the Niger Delta, became the minister of state for trade and industry; Hauwa Lawan, from northern Jigawa state, was made the minister of state Niger Delta Affairs; while Joel Ikenya, from the easterly Taraba state, was appointed as minister for labour.

On the Ground Reporting

Boko Haram Offensive

- **26 March 2015** – Nigeria’s military has detained two al-Jazeera television journalists in the country’s northeast. Defence spokesman Chris Olukolade confirmed the reports, stating that the two journalists were “found to have been loitering around areas where military operations are ongoing in the northeast and have been restrained in Maiduguri.” A statement released by the Nigerian military has identified the journalists as Ahmed Idris and Mustafa Andy, with the statement indicating that the two were “noted to have been moving around various locations including restricted areas in Yobe and Borno state (and) were also operating without any protection, accreditation or due clearance.” On its website, al-Jazeera stated that Idris, a reporter, and Andy, a producer, have been “officially detained until further notice” since Tuesday, with the broadcaster calling for their immediate release and adding that both have “...all the relevant paperwork to report on the Nigerian elections (this Saturday) and stories related to the election... Both men had just finished filming a story on the military with their cooperation... They were not ‘loitering’ but were in the hotel room and had only passed through the restricted areas of Yobe and Borno state to get to Maiduguri.” Al-Jazeera officials have also indicated that camera equipment belonging to the men, who are both Nigerian nationals, was confiscated.

- **24 March 2015** – Residents reported Tuesday that Boko Haram militants have kidnapped more than 400 women and children from the northern Nigerian town of Damasak, which was freed by Nigerian and Chadian troops earlier this month. According to a local trader, “they took 506 young women and children (in Damasak). They killed about 50 of them before leaving... We don’t know if they killed others after leaving, but they took the rest with them.” Another resident reported that the militants had rounded up captives in the main mosque before taking them out of town. Officials have not released a confirmation of the exact figure however Boko Haram has previously carried out mass kidnappings. **Update (25 March)** - A top Nigerian official confirmed Wednesday that hundreds of civilians, including many children, have been kidnapped by Boko Haram militants and are being used as human shields. Mike Omeri has disclosed that the militants abducted several hundred people as they retreated from the northeastern Nigerian town of Damasak earlier this month. While he did not specify how many were kidnapped, local reports suggest that as many as 500 people were taken captive. Omeri did reveal that the militants had gone to the town’s primary schools, where they rounded up students and teachers before retreating. Troops from Chad and Niger recaptured Damasak, which lies near the border with Niger, from Boko Haram on 16 March. The mass kidnapping occurred as the militants were fleeing the advancing troops, with the information about the abduction only now being confirmed. Boko Haram, who used the trading town as an administrative center, had held Damasak for months. The soldiers who recaptured Damasak reported that the town had largely been deserted.
- **22 March 2015** – On Sunday, two Chadian army helicopters bombed Boko Haram positions in Nigeria, killing several dozen militants near a village that lies on the border with Niger. A Nigerian official has confirmed that the helicopters destroyed several vehicles and motorcycles carrying fighters in the village of Djaboullam, which is located east across the border from the Nigerian town of Diffa. According to the official, “Niger and Chad had received intelligence that a group of Boko Haram fighters had gathered in the border village,” further disclosing that Boko Haram fighters had moved to the village after they were forced out of other towns in the vicinity. Another source has disclosed that the militants were also gathering in other border towns, from where they routinely launch mortar rounds into Niger, adding “we know they are massing in Malam Fatori, waiting for us to come,” referring to another northeastern Nigerian town that is located three kilometres (2 miles) from Bosso.
- **20 March 2015** – More than 100 bodies have been found in a mass grave in northeastern Nigeria after a town was recaptured from Boko Haram militants. Sources have disclosed that the bodies, many with their throats slit and heads cut off, were found underneath a bridge in the town of Damasak, which was retaken by Chadian and Nigerian troops earlier this month. Due to the fact that the bodies were severely decomposed, officials believe that the victims may have been killed more than two months ago.
- **21 March 2015** – On the ground sources have reported that Chadian troops on Saturday returned to the Nigerian border town of Gamboru after Boko Haram militants killed 11 people. Sources have disclosed “hundreds of Chadian troops moved into Gamboru this morning from Fotokol.” While Chadian forces have been credited for liberating Gamboru in Borno state, which was recaptured last month, the troops’ withdrawal from the town appears to have exposed it to Boko Haram and resulted in the militants taking advantage of the lack of military presence. Sources have disclosed that the militants returned on Wednesday, killing eight people, while another three were killed Thursday.
- **19 March 2015** – Security sources disclosed Thursday that Boko Haram insurgents attacked the Nigerian border town of Gamboru on Wednesday afternoon, killing at least ten people. The town, which is located on the border with Cameroon, near Lake Chad, was liberated from the militants control by Chadian troops last month.

- Multiple witnesses have reported that dozens of Nigerian women, who were forced to marry Boko Haram fighters, have been reportedly killed by their “husbands” before Nigerian troops entered the northeastern town of Bama to re-capture it. Five witnesses have revealed that the militants had feared that they would either be killed by the advancing troops or that they would be separated from their wives when they fled the town and that they killed the women in a bid to prevent them from marrying soldiers or other so-called non-believers. On the ground sources have reported that the fighters received word of a military assault on Bama and decided to flee to the nearby town of Gwoza before the troops’ arrival. The women were reportedly killed ten days before Bama was liberated. In September, Boko Haram militants forcibly married scores of women after they seized the town.
- **17 March 2015** – Nigeria’s military has reported that troops have retaken the northeastern town of Bama from Boko Haram militants. A statement released by the Nigerian military disclosed that a large number of militants were killed and that a “mopping up” operation was continuing in the second largest town in Borno state. The capture of Bama, which was attacked several times before jihadists captured it six months ago, is significant as it is located close to the state capital Maiduguri. Military officials have disclosed that those militants who fled Bama headed for the border with Chad, adding that officials have requested that the Chadian army pursue them. In a separate development Nigerian military spokesman General Chris Olukolade disclosed that Boko Haram militants have also been ousted from the town of Goniri, its last base in neighboring Yobe state. Officials are now reporting that Boko Haram no longer controls any urban centers in the states of Yobe and Adamawa.
- **16 March 2015** – A police spokesman and a legislator disclosed Monday that at least forty-five villagers were killed in a dawn raid Sunday that was carried out by suspected herdsmen in the country’s central Benue state. State police spokesman Austin Ezeani, confirmed the incident, stating, “I can confirm that 45 people, including women and children, were killed this morning in an attack on Egba village...of Benue state by suspected herdsmen,” adding “several others were injured in the gun and machete attack.” An investigation into the attack, which occurred around 6:00 AM (0500 GMT), has been launched. In recent years, hundreds of people have been killed in attacks and reprisal attacks that have occurred between farmers and ethnic Fulani herdsmen in Benue state. Herdsmen and farmers in the state and in neighboring states have often engaged in bitter disputes over grazing rights, which have often resulted in deadly clashes. **Update (17 March)** – Officials have disclosed that the death toll from the attack has increased to 82. No arrests have been made following the violence, which occurred Sunday and which saw large numbers of gunmen, armed with AK47 assault rifles, storm the village.



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

- **24 March 2015** - On Tuesday, Senegal's former president Abdoulaye Wade called for a rally to be held Friday over the sentencing of his son for graft. Karim Wade received a six-year jail term on Monday after judges ruled that he was guilty of "illegal enrichment." While he was cleared of the main corruption charge, the special anti-corruption court in the capital Dakar fined him the equivalent of more than US \$230 million. The senior Wade, who was in court for the verdict, has called on supporters of his Democratic Party of Senegal (PDS) to gather on Friday in Obelisque, which is a working-class district of the capital city, where he said he would react to the verdict. Meanwhile Karim Wade's lawyer, Mohamed Seydou Diagne, confirmed Tuesday that "we launched an appeal in the Supreme Court yesterday."

- **23 March 2015** – A court in Senegal has sentenced Karim Wade, the son of former President Abdoulaye Wade, to six years in prison for corruption and has fined him US \$230 million (£150 million) for illegal enrichment during his father's 12-year rule. Karim Wade was accused of illegally amassing about US \$1.4 billion, however the special anti-corruption court in the capital, Dakar, cleared him of some of the charges. During the court hearing, Judge Henri Gregoire Diop stated that Wade had hidden away funds in offshore companies in the British Virgin Islands and Panama, adding, "the facts before us constitute illicit enrichment by Karim Wade." Opposition supporters inside the courtroom shouted in protest as the verdict was announced. Wade's lawyer Mohamed Seydou Diagne has confirmed that his legal team will appeal the verdict, stating that the anti-corruption court did not have jurisdiction over the case and that it was politically motivated. Last week, Senegalese President Macky Sall warned that his government would not tolerate any attempt to destabilize the West African Country after the court gave its verdict.
- **21 March 2015** – According to a leading party member, Karim Wade, who is currently on trial for corruption, was chosen Saturday to be the former ruling party's candidate in the next presidential election. According to former lawmaker Tafsir Thioye, "Karim Wade was chosen by 257 of the 268 delegates" to be the Democratic Party of Senegal's presidential candidate. Sources have disclosed that Karim Wade beat at least seven other candidates to become the PDS's residential hopeful. The decision was made during a party congress that was attended by 88-year-old Abdoulaye Wade, who is the secretary general of the democratic Party of Senegal (PDS). The announcement comes as Senegal's anti-corruption court is due to announce its verdict in the case against Wade on Monday. A date for the upcoming elections has not been set.
- **17 March 2015** – Senegalese authorities have arrested a lawyer for Karim Wade, the son of a former president currently on trial on corruption charges. On Monday, Karim Wade's lawyer, Amadou Sall, who has no relation to the president, was arrested. Police have not commented on the arrest however sources have revealed that it is thought that the lawyer was detained for remarks he made during a political event on Sunday, where he stated that if Karim Wade was imprisoned, President Macky Sall wouldn't last one more night in the presidential palace. The verdict in Karim Wade's trial is expected next week. Amadou Sall and the rest of Karim's legal team have boycotted the trial and it remains unclear if they are planning to appear at the announcement of the verdict, which is due next Monday.

Domestic News

- **17 March 2015** – Senegal's president wants to shorten his term in office in a bid to "set an example" for other African countries. On Tuesday, President Macky Sall told reporters that he would hold a referendum next year on whether to shorten the presidential term from seven to five years. If it passes, the president indicated that he will apply the new limit to his current term. The seven-year term was set under the previous president, Abdoulaye Wade. Tuesday's announcement to hold a referendum on shortening the presidential term is in stark contrast to those African leaders who have pushed to eliminate terms limits or flouted them all together. Late last year, Burkina Faso's president, Blaise Compaore, was forced from power when he tried to change the constitution in a bid to extend his 27-year rule.

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. The President of Sierra Leone has announced a national “Zero Ebola” campaign aimed at ending the outbreak in the West African nation. As part of this campaign, residents of Sierra Leone are required to stay home from 6AM on 27 March until 6PM on 29 March. Similar arrangements will also be implemented on the following three Sundays: 4, 11 and 18 April. Resident however will be allowed to attend services on Palm Sunday (29 March) between 7am and 2pm. There will be no trading activities across the country during these periods.



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

- **27 March 2015** – In a bid to end the Ebola outbreak, on Friday, Sierra Leone's 6 million people began a three-day quarantine period. Beginning Friday at 6 am, Sierra Leoneans were asked to stay in their homes until Sunday evening. Markets, shops, restaurants and bars will remain close. Officials have indicated that Muslims will be allowed to attend prayers on Friday and that Christians will be able to attend services on Sunday. As with a similar operation which occurred last year, thousands of teams will deploy across the country in order to remind people how Ebola is spread and how to prevent it. Teams will specifically be focusing on the capital city and the northern region of the country, where flare-ups of Ebola persist.
- **25 March 2015** – Sierra Leone has postponed the reopening of schools, which have been closed for almost eight months, in a bid to halt the spread of Ebola, by two weeks. As the rate of new infection slowed, officials had set the reopening of schools for 30 March, however a recent spike in new cases has prompted officials to push back the date to 14 April. Education Minister Minkailu Bah confirmed the postponement, stating that authorities were taking adequate measures "to ensure that our schools are safe and disinfected so that our children can return to school" without any risk, noting however that schools in quarantined areas would not be reopened on that day. School department official Prince Cole has indicated that work is currently underway to disinfect some 9,000 schools across the country, "particularly at those that were used as holding and treatment centers."
- **19 March 2015** – Sierra Leonean officials announced Thursday that they will confine around 2.5 million people to their homes across the capital city and in the northern region of the country in a three-day shutdown aimed at stemming the Ebola outbreak. According to Palo Conteh, head of the country's National Ebola Response Centre, "the lockdown will be conducted from March 27 to March 29 and will be like the one we conducted in September last year," adding "the government and partners are hopeful that latent cases that are now not being reported or recorded will come out." Authorities will use the 72-hour period to search for any Ebola patients in the Western Area, which includes the capital Freetown, as well as in the northern districts of Bombali and Port Loko. Teams of experts will go door-to-door reminding households of the dangers of traditional burials and will investigate deaths that have not been reported to the government. The lockdown is aimed at controlling a recent increase of Ebola cases in the three districts, which has threatened to undermine the country's recovery. Authorities are hoping that this upcoming lockdown will set the country back on course for a 15 April deadline for eradicating Ebola, which was announced by the leaders of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. The latest lockdown, which follows a nationwide lockdown that was imposed in September, was announced just a day after the World Health Organization (WHO) disclosed that the death toll from Ebola since December 2013 stood at almost 10,200.



Domestic News

- **23 March 2015** – On Monday, Sierra Leone's army chief ordered soldiers to remain in their barracks, warning them to stay away from the political crisis that has erupted in the wake of the controversial dismissal of the country's vice president. A statement released by the country's army has disclosed that the confinement of soldiers to barracks will not apply to those troops who are involved in efforts to combat the Ebola outbreak or other specific military tasks. Major General Samuel Omar Williams told more than 2,000 troops, gathered at a military barracks in the capital Freetown, that "politics is not for a soldier," adding that "no soldier has got this right to discuss politics or partake in it. Our focus should be on the fight against Ebola, and let us leave politics for the politicians." General Williams has stated that any military personnel found to be intervening in the country's latest political crisis would be punished and that visits by civilian personnel to military installations would also be restricted and political discussions within barracks would be banned. The dismissal of Samuel Sam Sumana has sparked political tensions in Sierra Leone, with the opposition on Sunday stating that it would embark on a nationwide campaign of peaceful demonstrations, civil disobedience and strikes from 30 March if the vice president is not reinstated. The dismissal of the vice president is expected to be challenged in the courts, however this has not stopped President Koroma from appointing a new vice president.
- **22 March 2015** – Officials have disclosed that the country's opposition party is considering launching impeachment proceedings against the president, adding that they will refuse all cooperation with the government over the way that the vice president was dismissed. After holding an emergency meeting on Saturday, the Sierra Leone's People's Party also indicated that it will ask the Supreme Court to review Vice President Samuel Sam Sumana's removal from office. In a statement released late Sunday, the opposition party disclosed that "SLPP members of parliament walk out from all functions and proceedings where President Koroma or the purported Vice-President is in attendance or presiding." Such a move is likely to disrupt government operations as the party has a significant number of seats in parliament and also controls local councils. In a growing sign of concern, the UN's Special Representative, Mohamed Ibn Chambas, who heads the UN office in West Africa, met with President Koroma on Saturday in order to discuss the situation. According to the UN, Chambas urged the president to keep the country's focus on eradicating Ebola and reminded him that all political decisions should follow the country's constitution.
- **21 March 2015** – Sierra Leone's bar association has disclosed that the removal of the country's vice president was unconstitutional, adding that it has asked the president to reinstate him. On Friday, the bar association stated that if the president thinks that the vice president had acted improperly, then the president should have started impeachment proceedings against him or asked the country's courts to decide on his removal instead of directly dismissing him. The bar association also stated that in the meantime, the president should withdraw the appointment of a new vice president, Victor Forh, and reinstate Samuel Sam Sumana. The call by the Sierra Leone Bar Association adds to the increasing concern over President Ernest Bai Koroma's dismissal of Sam Sumana. A group of good governance organizations, along with the opposition party, have also stated that the dismissal was unconstitutional.
- **20 March 2015** – A relative of the ousted president has disclosed that the politician is "virtually under house arrest," adding that his movements and access to visitors have been heavily restricted. On Friday, Saa Matthias Bendu, a relative of former vice president Samuel Sam Sumana, disclosed that the ousted politician was not allowed to attend Muslim prayers on Friday, adding that security personnel stationed at the gate to his home have been searching all cars and people entering the residence, including the former

vice president's lawyers. Alpha Kanu, the Minister of Information, told a radio station late Friday that he was not aware of any restrictions placed on the former politician.

- **19 March 2015** – Sierra Leone's dismissed vice president confirmed Wednesday that he will challenge his removal by the president in the country's supreme court, stating that his dismissal was unconstitutional. In a statement that was released late Wednesday, Samuel Sam Sumana stated that his legal team told him that the president has no power to relieve him of his duties. He signed the statement as the "elected vice president of Sierra Leone." On Wednesday, President Ernest Bai Koroma dismissed the vice president, citing his recent expulsion from the ruling political party. In his announcement, the president noted a constitutional requirement that anyone running for vice president must be a member of a political party.
 - Sierra Leone has sworn in a new vice president. In a ceremony shown on state television, President Ernest Bai Koroma swore in Victor Foh, who was, until recently, the West African country's ambassador to China. Foh, 68, was also once a senior official in the Finance Ministry and is also a former secretary general of the ruling All People's Congress party.
- **18 March 2015** – The president's office announced Wednesday that Sierra Leone's Vice President Samuel Sam Sumana has been dismissed for seeking political asylum in a foreign embassy, stating that he had shown a willingness to abandon the vice-presidency by seeking asylum. On Saturday, Mr Sam Sumana requested asylum at the US, stating that his life was in danger. He had earlier been expelled from the governing party after he was accused of fuelling violence, which he has denied. On Saturday, government troops surrounded Mr Sam Sumana's home in the capital city Freetown. On Monday, he came out of hiding, telling journalists at his home that he was "safe." Sources have indicated that the president's decision to fire the vice president could be challenged, as many people believe the constitution does not give him the power to fire the vice president. However President Koroma stated Monday that he had "constitutional authority" to dismiss Mr Sam Sumana. The dispute between President Ernest Bai Koroma and Mr Sam Sumana has raised fears about the future stability of Sierra Leone, which has already been badly affected by the Ebola outbreak. The West African country is also still recovering from a civil war that ended in 2002. On Sunday, the US State Department disclosed that it was in contact with Sierra Leonean officials in a bid to attempt to resolve the crisis.
- **17 March 2015** – Sierra Leone's vice president has appeared in public for the first time since his residence was stormed by soldiers over the weekend. He has insisted that he is not in danger and has suggested that he was not in hiding. Samuel Sam Sumana had claimed he feared for his life and had applied to the United States for asylum after he was expelled from the governing party. On Saturday, eyewitnesses described how heavily armed men entered his home in the capital city Freetown while he was away. While the vice president was not seen in public since, he appeared briefly to address journalists at his home late Monday, stating, "I am safe. We are all safe." Earlier this month, the ruling All People's Congress party expelled Mr Sam Sumana for fomenting violence in his home district of Kono, deceit, fraud and threatening key party officials.

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

- **25 March 2015** - Clashes erupted Wednesday between security forces and hundreds of people who are protesting in support of a teacher's strike. In a statement read out on state television, the government disclosed that twenty security forces and twenty-three civilians were injured after clashes erupted along a major highway. According to the statement, the protesters, many of whom are students, gathered near the town of Gleï, which is located 200 kilometres (125 miles) from the capital city, Lomé. They set up barricades, which cause major traffic on the main highway that leads from the city to the northern region of the country. In the statement, the government blamed Tuesday's unrest on teachers, stating that they had recruited their students to protest. The statement further disclosed that the protesters began throwing rocks at police as soon as they arrived on the scene, however on the ground sources have reported that police first fired tear gas in an attempt to disperse the crowd, which resulted in the demonstrators responded with rocks. Soldiers later arrived to provide backup, firing warning shots and chasing protesters in running battles.
- **24 March 2015** – Government workers began their second consecutive strike day on Tuesday over pay, a move that has raised pressure on the government to resolve the issue ahead of next month's elections. On Monday, Dr Gilbert Tsolegnanou, spokesman for union STT disclosed that "the movement will continue until Friday and we will see what happens next as the election campaign is due to begin on Monday." The STT is seeking a raise of 30,000 CFA Francs (US \$50) per month for government workers. On the ground sources have disclosed that services in the education and health sectors in Togo were reduced on Tuesday however commerce continued as normal.

Domestic News

- **28 March 2015** – Officials in Togo have postponed the country's presidential elections by 10 days, to 25 April, after calls for a delay over claims that the voter register was flawed. Togo's Communications Minister

Germaine Koumealo Anate read out a presidential decree on state television, confirmed, “the presidential election will be held on April 25, 2015 and not April 15, the initial date.” Earlier in the week, the chairman of regional bloc ECOWAS, Ghanaian President John Dramani Mahama, had suggested the postponement during a visit to Togo on Tuesday, citing the need to update the electoral roll. The opposition also claimed that the electoral roll is plagued by “serious anomalies,” stating that it must be checked before a transparent election can be held. President Faure Gnassingbe is running for a third five-year term in office. Attempts to introduce term limits were blocked in parliament, where the president’s ruling party holds a majority.

- **25 March 2015** – West Africa’s ECOWAS bloc has proposed a 10-day delay to Togo’s elections, which are set to take place on 15 April, in a bid to allow authorities additional time to complete a revision of the voter list, which the country’s opposition parties have indicated is in favor of the incumbent. The proposal was put forth by Ghanaian President John Dramani Mahama, who currently chairs ECOWAS, while visiting Togo on Tuesday. At the end of his short visit, Mahama stated, “given the work that is being done to the election list, it is not clear that the election due on April 15 will be able to take place as planned...As a result, ECOWAS proposes that the election is delayed by 10 days to allow the election list to be revised so everyone is satisfied.” Togolese authorities have not yet responded to the proposal. Opposition parties have on a number of occasions demanded that the election list be audited, maintaining that the list contains thousands of people who have registered twice and are likely to vote for President Faure Gnassingbe.



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