



**MS | RISK**

## **West Africa Report**

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

**March 30 – April 12, 2015**



## About MS Risk

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

References are always available.  
More information is found at [www.msrisk.com](http://www.msrisk.com)

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## Summary

March 30 – April 12, 2015



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### Sahel Region

- **5 April 2015** – On Sunday, West African bloc ECOWAS withdrew a statement it had released earlier that day, which announced that a regional summit on 8 April would discuss the Boko Haram threat.

### Burkina Faso

#### *On the Ground Reporting*

- **7 April 2015** – The United States and French militaries are assisting in the search for a Romanian mineworker who was kidnapped over the weekend and believed to have been taken across the border into Mali.
- **5 April 2015** – A Burkinabe government minister disclosed Sunday that Burkinabe authorities are planning to cross into Mali and Niger in search for the kidnappers of a Romanian mineworker who was seized in the far north region of the country on Saturday.

- **4 April 2015** – On Saturday afternoon, unidentified gunmen kidnapped a Romanian security officer from a manganese mining project in northern Burkina Faso, near the border with Mali's northern desert region.
- **2 April 2015** – Hundreds of Burkina Faso truck drivers and public transport drivers held a protest on Tuesday in the capital city, demanding better working and living conditions from their employers.
  - Burkina Faso's prime minister has accused groups involved in labor strikes of creating "a climate of anarchy."
- **1 April 2015** – Burkina Faso's government confirmed Wednesday an outbreak of the H5N1 avian flu, with officials disclosing that the disease was responsible for the deaths of large numbers of chickens in two regions of the country in recent weeks.
  - According to a civil society source, senior officials in the regime of deposed president Blaise Compaore are facing charges over the assassinations, attempted assassinations and complicity in assassinations during last year's protests which ousted Compaore.

### Domestic News

- **7 April 2015** – On Tuesday, just hours after several of ex-president Blaise Compaore's allies were arrested, the interim parliament voted to bar figures linked to the deposed leader from running for office.
  - In a statement released Tuesday, seven of Compaore's political allies, including three former ministers, were arrested for "alleged embezzlement," adding that an eighth person linked to former foreign minister Djibrill Bassole was also held for "illegal political activities" and for "incitement to public disorder."

### Gambia

- **1 April 2015** – Six soldiers have been convicted for their role in a failed attempted coup aimed at ousting President Yahya Jammeh.

### Guinea

- **30 March 2015** – As part of new efforts to end the Ebola outbreak, on Monday Guinea closed its border with Sierra Leone.

### Ivory Coast

- **2 April 2015** – The Ivory Coast is banning the import of poultry from avian flu-hit Burkina Faso in a bid to prevent the disease from spreading.

### Liberia

- **8 April 2015** – Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has named new ministers for health and education as her government seeks to end the Ebola outbreak and begins to focus on reconstruction.

### Mali

- **12 April 2015** – Two Malian soldiers were killed and several others wounded on Sunday when their vehicle struck a landmine in the center of Mali.
- **9 April 2015** – On Thursday, Mali's foreign minister asked the United Nations Security Council to increase pressure on one of the rebel groups, which has not yet signed a landmark peace agreement aimed at ending ongoing violence in northern Mali.
- **6 April 2015** – French Special Forces have rescued a Dutch civilian kidnapped nearly four years ago in Mali by al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) militants.
- **5 April 2015** – Militants on Sunday shelled the largest city in northern Mali, killing a civilian and wounding three relatives as they slept.

- **3 April 2015** – Detectives have uncovered plans for a “major attack” after investigating an explosion at a house in the capital city that killed a security guard on Friday.
  - On Friday, unidentified men on motorcycles opened fire on the village of Boni, which is located some four hours by road southwest of Gao. On the ground sources have reported that the assailants fired shots at the police station and town hall. According to security forces in the area, two civilians were killed in the attack.
- **2 April 2015** – The United Nations disclosed Thursday that UN police peacekeepers “used unauthorized and excessive force” that killed three people and injured four others during a protest that was held in the town of Gao in January.
  - The United Nations peacekeeping force MINUSMA disclosed Wednesday that a child was killed and another person was injured when an improvised explosive device (IED) exploded in the town of Ansongo, which is located 100 kilometres (60 miles) southeast of Gao.
  - Tuareg-led rebels reported Thursday that they are meeting with Algerian mediators in Algiers in order to discuss the terms of the preliminary peace agreement that they rejected last month.
- **1 April 2015** – Unknown assailants fired shells at a United Nations based located on the outskirts of a town in northern Mali early on Wednesday.
  - Three attackers were killed in a firefight and two others captured after they carried out an assault on a Malian army base in Boulkessi on Wednesday.
- **31 March 2015** – An aide of exiled former Malian leader Amadou Toumani Toure disclosed Tuesday that the ex-president has given evidence in a probe into alleged Libyan funding for Nicolas Sarkozy’s 2007 French presidential election campaign.
- **30 March 2015** – Gunmen killed a driver with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on Monday after they attacked his aid truck as it was heading from the northern Malian town of Gao toward Niger.

## Niger

- **9 April 2015** – Niger has identified a suspected outbreak of H5N1 bird flu on a chicken farm in the southern town of Maradi, which is located near the border with Nigeria, which has also confirmed cases of the virus in several northern states.
- **7 April 2015** – Workers at French nuclear group Areva’s Somair mine in Niger have launched a three-day strike over what they say is the company’s failure to pay bonuses.
- **4 April 2015** – Niger’s health minister reported Saturday that a meningitis epidemic, which broke out in Niger in January, has killed 45 people.
- **31 March 2015** – Nigerien officials disclosed Tuesday that soldiers fended off an attack on a border town in Niger by Boko Haram just days after they destroyed a base that was being used by the militants inside neighboring Nigeria.

## Nigeria

### *Coverage of the Presidential Election ~ 28 March 2015*

- **12 April 2015** – Voting in Nigeria’s key regional elections has been extended into Sunday in Rivers state after irregularities were reported at some polling stations.
  - According to Nigeria’s election agency, the INEC, sixty-six violent incidents marred the country’s regional polls, with the restive oil-producing Rivers state the worst affected.
- **11 April 2015** – On Saturday, Nigerians began voting to choose new state governors and local assemblies.
  - There was a heavy police presence on the streets of the city of Port Harcourt on Saturday as the country went to the polls to elect state governors and assembly members.
- **1 April 2015** - Challenger General Muhammadu Buhari has won Nigeria’s presidential election by 2.57 million votes, defeating incumbent Goodluck Jonathan.
- **31 March 2015** - General Muhammadu Buhari has won the presidential elections.

- **30 March 2015** – Officials have imposed an overnight curfew in the southern Rivers state as tensions escalated over local results in the country's general elections.
  - According to on the ground sources, some 2,000 women protesting against the conduct of elections in Nigeria's Rivers state were teargassed Monday as they attempted to register their complaints with electoral officials.
  - US Secretary of State John Kerry and his British counterpart Phillip Hammond have voiced concerns over possible political interference in Nigeria's vote count, allegations which Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has rejected.

### *On the Ground Reporting*

- **9 April 2015** – The United Nations on Thursday launched an appeal for US \$174 million in what it called "life-saving aid" for almost 200,000 Nigerians who have fled the country due to Boko Haram's ongoing insurgency.
- **6 April 2015** – Witnesses disclosed Monday that suspected Boko Haram gunmen opened fire on villagers and torched a number of buildings in northeastern Nigeria.
- **5 April 2015** – At least four people have been killed after suspected Boko Haram fighters raided a local market in a village near the city of Maiduguri on Saturday.
  - Two al-Jazeera television journalists, who had been detained by the Nigerian military since 24 March, have been freed.
- **4 April 2015** – Police officials disclosed Saturday that gunmen have stormed two communities in Nigeria's southern oil state of Rivers, killing at least nine people and injuring two others a week ahead of the gubernatorial election.
  - Militants of the Urhobo minority ethnic group blew up a natural gas pipeline in Nigeria's Delta state early on Friday.
- **3 April 2015** – An explosion near a bus station in the northeastern city of Gombe has killed at least five people and injured 15 others.
  - The electoral commissioner for Kano state has died in a house fire along with his wife and two children.
- **2 April 2015** – The Chadian army disclosed Thursday that nine Chadian soldiers were killed and sixteen wounded after Boko Haram fighters in northeastern Nigeria ambushed them.
  - A curfew in the southern Rivers state, which was put in place in a bid to contain unrest after the opposition disputed results from the weekend's general elections, has been lifted.
- **31 March 2015** - Military officials disclosed Tuesday that troops from Chad and Niger attacked Boko Haram militants on islands on Lake Chad, which the insurgents have been using as a safe haven in the wake of ongoing military operations to force them out of captured territory in northeastern Nigeria.
  - Soldiers from Chad and Niger have recaptured a border town from Boko Haram.
- **30 March 2015** - In the wake of troops fighting Boko Haram fighters outside of Bauchi city, the state capital of Bauchi, authorities have imposed an indefinite lockdown on three areas.
  - Eight suspected Boko Haram fighters were killed Monday in fighting that erupted in the states of Bauchi and Gombe, in northeastern Nigeria.

### **Sierra Leone**

- **7 April 2015** – Police in Sierra Leone raided a funeral on Tuesday and arrested thirteen people suspected of organizing an unsafe burial and risking the spread of the disease.
- **4 April 2015** – Sierra Leone's eastern district of Kailahun has recorded its first case in nearly four months.
- **1 April 2015** – According to an official, Sierra Leone has recorded ten new Ebola cases during a three-day nationwide shutdown, declaring that the West African nation is now at the "tail end" of the deadly epidemic.
- **30 March 2015** – Sierra Leonean officials ended the West African nations three-day lockdown Sunday evening.
  - On Saturday, police fired tear gas at an angry crowd fighting over food supplies while other residents defied a three-day nationwide lockdown imposed by the government in a bid to accelerate the end of the Ebola outbreak.

# 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 – Page 16

### 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.

## Guinea – Page 17

## Guinea-Bissau

There are currently no travel restrictions for Guinea-Bissau. An outbreak of the Ebola virus disease has been confirmed in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia. While there currently are no confirmed Ebola cases in Guinea-Bissau, the country has taken preventative measures, including closing all land borders with Guinea. MS Risk advises all travellers to Guinea-Bissau to take the necessary precautions, including maintaining strict standards of hygiene and avoiding eating bush meat.

Although the security situation is currently calm, the current political situation remains uncertain throughout the country and the possibility of civil or military unrest in Guinea-Bissau remains high. While political tensions in Guinea-Bissau remain calm, this could change at any moment. All travellers to the country are advised to monitor the political situation and remain vigilant at all times. MS Risk advises against all travel to the northwestern regions of the country, specifically those which border the Casamance region of Senegal, including the Sao Domingos/Mpack road.

## Ivory Coast – Page 19

## Liberia – Page 21

## Mali – Page 23

## Mauritania – Page 29

## Niger – Page 31

## Nigeria – Page 33

## Senegal

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.

## Sierra Leone – Page 41

## Togo

Presidential and legislative elections will be held on 25 April. There is currently no travel advisory for Togo. Crime is on the rise in the capital city Lome. 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 Lome city limits, especially after dark.

## 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.

### On the Ground Reporting

- **5 April 2015** – On Sunday, West African bloc ECOWAS withdrew a statement it had released earlier that day, which announced that a regional summit on 8 April would discuss the Boko Haram threat. In the new statement, organizers indicated that they considered the earlier announcement “void.” ECOWAS did not specify whether the summit had been cancelled or postponed. Earlier on Sunday, ECOWAS had disclosed that leaders of Central and West African states will hold a summit on 8 April in a bid to draw up a joint strategy against the threat posed by Boko Haram militants. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) were jointly organizing the meeting, which was due to be held in Malabo, the capital of Equatorial Guinea.

# 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 Boulsa, which is 25 km north of the capital of Ouagadougou. We particularly advise against all travel to the regions that border Mali and Niger. Since 2008, over 25 Westerners have been kidnapped in the Sahel region, and a number of these hostages continue to be held. AQIM operates directly or through criminal gangs who carry out kidnappings on their behalf or pass on their kidnap victims in return for payment.

### *Crime*

There is a high risk of armed groups stopping vehicles, including public buses, in order to rob them. Such incidents have occurred in various parts of the country, particularly at night. Therefore, all travel between towns by road at night is to be avoided, especially from Ouagadougou to Po where there is a heightened risk. This is especially severe on market days when bandits often target merchants with stock or cash en route to and from the urban areas.

### *MS RISK Guidance to Organizations in Burkina Faso:*

Although the biggest concern at this time remains in the northern areas of the country, specifically along the porous Mali border and at the junction of the Niger border, the attack and kidnapping in Algeria has demonstrated that such attacks can occur at any place and at any time. In addition, the attack on BP in Algeria came just days after Islamists announced that they would retaliate against French interests in the region. Consequently, it is highly likely that more attacks will take place over the coming months.

There is an increased Burkinabe military presence in the north of the country and companies should review their respective security situations and consider the following:

- Location and safety of personnel
- Security controls, communications and contingency plans at static locations
- Work tempo implications
- Journey management systems in place and working
- Liaison with the military - use of military escorts, coordination between multiple assets, confirmation that military escorts are coordinated and competent for the task.
- Reviewing all crisis management contingencies including but not limited to the following:
- Kidnap (for ransom or ideological purposes)
- Medical emergency and evacuation cycle for northern area
- Interdiction of road moves for personnel and any convoys
- Loss of communications with remote locations - enhanced comms options, access to stores if replenishment is restricted or cut off.
- Media and public affairs contingency

Companies relying on police escorts in the northern region of the country should ensure that travel patterns do not become predictable. Varying routes is difficult due to the limited road networks; therefore, it is even more important to vary the types of vehicles used as well as the times of the journeys and to avoid travel patterns becoming widely known. This is especially critical given the current tensions along the Mali border and the impending ECOWAS operations. All companies linked to the World Bank/International Finance Cooperation should familiarize themselves with the IFC Voluntary Principles on the Use of Security Forces. This applies to military, police or private security services.

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## On the Ground Reporting

- **7 April 2015** – The United States and French militaries are assisting in the search for a Romanian mineworker who was kidnapped over the weekend and believed to have been taken across the border into Mali. Speaking to reporters on Tuesday, Burkinabe security minister Auguste Denise Barry stated, “investigations are continuing...with our strategic partners, the French and the Americans, who have in-depth surveillance capabilities.” Both France and the US have drones based in neighboring Niger as part of efforts to combat Islamist militants operating in the region. Barry further indicated that officials are in regular contact with the authorities in Mali and Niger in regards to the search, noting that while there had been speculation that the kidnapers had taken the security officer from the mine into Mali before moving into Niger, the site of the abduction was “much closer to the Niger border.”
- **5 April 2015** – A Burkinabe government minister disclosed Sunday that Burkinabe authorities are planning to cross into Mali and Niger in search for the kidnapers of a Romanian mineworker who was seized in the far north region of the country on Saturday. On Saturday, five armed men kidnapped the security officer after they attacked the manganese mine in Tambao. According to security officials in both Burkina Faso and Mali, the unidentified gunmen took off in the direction of the nearby border with Mali. The Burkinabe minister disclosed Sunday “search operations are continuing. We are talking to our neighbors Mali and Niger to obtain rights to their territory in order to get our hands on the kidnapers... This is an area which borders the two countries, so the sweep will roll out in both directions.” Burkina Faso’s Regiment of Presidential Security, which is an elite secret service that specializes in anti-terrorism, has been deployed to Tambao in a bid to strengthen an army detachment, which arrived in the town on Saturday. Residents in Tambao have disclosed that security forces have begun “intensive searches” of vehicles in towns across the north, adding, “police are systematically searching vehicles.”
- **4 April 2015** – On Saturday afternoon, unidentified gunmen kidnapped a Romanian security officer from a manganese mining project in northern Burkina Faso, near the border with Mali’s northern desert region. According to security officials, the kidnapping took place at the Tambao project. Souleymane Mihin, Burkina Faso managing director for Pan African Minerals, confirmed the incident, stating, “there was an attack on one our patrols... They kidnapped the Romanian leading the patrol. The driver was wounded in the foot. A gendarme was seriously injured.” The Romanian foreign ministry later issued a statement also confirming the kidnapping of a Romanian national and disclosing that a crisis cell had been set up in order to handle the case. A Burkinabe security source has revealed that five gunmen were involved in the attack and that they were heading towards the nearby border with northern Mali with the hostage. Reports have suggested that the kidnapped man may also have French citizenship however the French foreign ministry has indicated that they have no information to suggest that any French national was involved. No one has claimed responsibility for the kidnapping. The Tambao mine is located some 350 kilometres (220 miles) from Mali’s main northern city of Gao, where on Monday, a Red cross worker was killed in a jihadist attack.
- **2 April 2015** – Hundreds of Burkina Faso truck drivers and public transport drivers held a protest on Tuesday in the capital city, demanding better working and living conditions from their employers. Operating under the auspices of Union of Truck Drivers in Burkina Faso (UCRB) the protesters are demanding an increase in salary as well as subscription to the National Social Security Fund in conformity with their global bargaining agreement. UCRB president Brahim Rabo has indicated that the union is seeking an increase of members’ salaries to 74,800 CFA Francs (about US \$150) as had been agreed between the two parties in 2011. According to Rabo, “majority of the drivers earn between 80 to 120 US dollars.” On Monday, the

drivers issued a 48 hours work stoppage across the national territory. The work stoppage severely affected the main highway, which links Ouagadougou to Bob-Dioulasso, the commercial capital.

- Burkina Faso's prime minister has accused groups involved in labor strikes of creating "a climate of anarchy." In a television interview that was broadcast late Wednesday, Isaac Zida, who became prime minister soon after the 2014 uprising that ousted president Blaise Compaore, branded the activists as "disorganized strike movements...(who) clearly want to stop the government from working and holding an election" in October, adding that the government was trying to attract foreign investment in a bid to boost the economy, while protesters "want to undermine those efforts by creating a climate of anarchy, openly defying the authority of the state." Over the past several months, strikes have been frequent in Burkina Faso. On Monday and Tuesday, truck drivers stopped oil supplies from reaching power stations, which caused outages across the country. The truck drivers are demanding better pay and work conditions. Burkina Faso's main union, the General Workers Confederation, has also called for a general strike on 8 April in order to demand the reduction of fuel prices.
- **1 April 2015** – Burkina Faso's government confirmed Wednesday an outbreak of the H5N1 avian flu, with officials disclosing that the disease was responsible for the deaths of large numbers of chickens in two regions of the country in recent weeks. Jean Paul Rouamba, minister for livestock, disclosed that United Nations experts had carried out tests after a wave of deaths that occurred in traditional and modern poultry farms in February and March in Kadiogo province in Centre region and Sanguie in Centre-West region. Rouamba further indicated that strict measures have since been put in place by the authorities in a bid to control further infections. Burkina Faso was last affected by an outbreak of avian flu in 2006, with the disease also detected in other countries in the region, including Benin, Cameroon, Ghana and Nigeria. Earlier this year, Nigeria confirmed an outbreak of H5N1 bird flu on poultry farms that has now reached 11 states nationwide. In Egypt, four people have died from bird flu this year.
  - According to a civil society source, senior officials in the regime of deposed president Blaise Compaore are facing charges over the assassinations, attempted assassinations and complicity in assassinations during last year's protests which ousted Compaore. The source has disclosed that Burkina Faso's Human and People's Rights (MBDHP) as well as the Association of Democratic Organizations and Political Parties have filed the cases against the former senior officials. Those facing charges include Blaise Compaore, his brother Francois Compaore, ex-prime minister Adolphe Tiao, ex-territorial administration minister Jerome Bougouma, former chief of staff at the president's officer Gilbert Diendere and head of the army Nabere Honore Traore.

## Domestic News

- **7 April 2015** – On Tuesday, just hours after several of ex-president Blaise Compaore's allies were arrested, the interim parliament voted to bar figures linked to the deposed leader from running for office. In effect, the new electoral bill makes those who had publicly backed the former leader's efforts to change the constitution in a bid to extend his 27-year rule ineligible to stand in the 11 October presidential and legislative elections. Compaore's party Congress for Democracy and Progress (CDP) has denounced the bill, saying that it is illegal and that it has to be validated by the Constitutional Council before it can become law. The party also warned that it will "vigorously" oppose the legislation while civil society groups on both sides of the divide have called for demonstrations over the law.

- In a statement released Tuesday, seven of Compaore's political allies, including three former ministers, were arrested for "alleged embezzlement," adding that an eighth person linked to former foreign minister Djibrill Bassole was also held for "illegal political activities" and for "incitement to public disorder." According to Leonce Kone, from the CDP party, former interior minister Jerome Bougouma, infrastructure minister Jean-Bertin Ouedraogo and mining minister Salif Kabore were taken into custody on Monday and Tuesday. Kone further indicated that two former mayors, including the current secretary-general of the CDP party, were arrested in Bobo Dioulasso. The head of a pro-Compaore association was arrested last Thursday, also over alleged embezzlement.

## Gambia

### No Travel Restrictions



### Security Summary

There is no travel advisory for Gambia, however MS Risk advises all travellers to avoid travel by road from The Gambia to the Casamance, in the southern region of Senegal. The Gambian government has reopened the country's border with those nations currently affected by the Ebola outbreak. Health officials will continue to screen people entering the country from Ebola affected countries. There are currently no confirmed Ebola cases in the Gambia.

The Casamance region of south-western Senegal remains affected by incidents involving presumed separatist groups and by incidents of banditry. An outbreak of the Ebola virus has been confirmed in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. While there have been no confirmed cases of the virus in The Gambia, as part of efforts to prevent the deadly virus from spreading into the country, Gambia's Ministry of Health and Social Welfare has set up a task force to control the border areas. MS Risk is currently advising all travellers to the country to maintain a high level of vigilance. There is an underlying threat from terrorism. Travellers to the country are warned to remain vigilant as attacks can take place at anytime and anywhere.

### On the Ground Reporting

- **1 April 2015** – Six soldiers have been convicted for their role in a failed attempted coup aimed at ousting President Yahya Jammeh. On 30 December 2014, several assailants mounted an early morning assault on the presidential palace in the capital Banjul. The attempt was put down by forces loyal to the president. Modou Njie, a former private in the Gambian army, was captured at the scene, while the others directly involved in the attack were either killed in the clashes or managed to flee. Njie, along with five military officers who were arrested in the wake of the failed coup, was put on trial before a closed-door military court. Relatives of the accused have disclosed that the charges include treason, mutiny and conspiracy. Njie, along with Lieutenant-Colonel Saikou Jarju and Lieutenant Buba Sanneh, were also charged with assisting the enemy. On Monday, they were sentenced to death. Captain Buba Bojang, Lieutenant Amadou Sowe and Captain Abdoulie Jobe have been sentenced to life in prison. A judicial source has disclosed that the men have the right to appeal the verdicts within one month. In January, United States federal prosecutors charged Texas businessman Cherno Njie with conspiring with former US Army sergeant Papa Faal and others to orchestrate the coup attempt.



# 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

- **30 March 2015** – As part of new efforts to end the Ebola outbreak, on Monday Guinea closed its border with Sierra Leone. According to Cmdr. Mamadou Alpha Barry, spokesman for the national gendarmerie, the decision to close the border was made in the context of new measures that were introduced by Guinea's president over the weekend. Previously, Guinean authorities had only monitored people crossing into the country for symptoms of the deadly disease. Theo Nicol, Sierra Leone's government spokesman, confirmed that the Guinean side of the border was closed, however he noted that Sierra Leonean officials had not been formally informed of the closure. The Sierra Leonean side of the border will remain open.

# 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

- **2 April 2015** – The Ivory Coast is banning the import of poultry from avian flu-hit Burkina Faso in a bid to prevent the disease from spreading. According to Kobenan Kouassi Adjoumani, Ivorian minister for animal and fishing resources, “the measure will be applied at our borders, and at all poultry shops. On Wednesday, Burkina Faso’s government announced that cases of H5N1 bird flu had been detected in poultry farms in two provinces, including Kadiogo, which includes the capital Ouagadougou and its suburbs. According to Bernard Vallat, director general of the World Health Organization for Animal Health (OIE), the outbreak in Burkina Faso “threatens” Ivory Coast given that the two countries are important trading partners, adding that the H5N1 virus “is not only spread via poultry but is also transmitted through wild birds that migrate,” noting that avian flu is also “communicable to humans and that warrants action on a large scale.” In January, Nigeria confirmed the spread of the virus in 11 states.

# 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.

## Domestic News

- **8 April 2015** – Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has named new ministers for health and education as her government seeks to end the Ebola outbreak and begins to focus on reconstruction. The president has promoted Bernice Dahn to be the new minister of health after she gained praise for her role in tackling Liberia's Ebola outbreak as chief medical officer. George Werner, the former head of the civil service agency, was appointed as minister of education. The president also dissolved the board of the Liberia Airport Authority, stating that it would shortly be reconstituted, as part of its efforts to modernize the country's airports. A statement released by the government late on Tuesday announced the changes and indicated that "President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf...asks for all Liberians' continued trust and confidence to help as the government tackles the next challenges and embarks on the difficult road for post-Ebola economic recovery." According to the World Bank, Liberia's economy is expected to grow by 3 percent this year. On 27 March, Liberia's last known case of Ebola died and the country is currently conducting the 42-day countdown to be officially declared free of the disease.

# 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

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## On the Ground Reporting

- **12 April 2015** – Two Malian soldiers were killed and several others wounded on Sunday when their vehicle struck a landmine in the center of Mali. According to defense ministry spokesman Diaran Kone, the incident occurred in the morning near the town of Diabaly, around 500 km (310 miles) northeast of the capital Bamako. No additional details pertaining to the incident have been released.
- **9 April 2015** – On Thursday, Mali's foreign minister asked the United Nations Security Council to increase pressure on one of the rebel groups, which has not yet signed a landmark peace agreement aimed at ending ongoing violence in northern Mali. Abdoulaye Diop urged the Council to endorse the Algerian-brokered draft peace accord and to threaten sanctions against those who block it. Last month, the Malian government signed the peace agreement along with several armed groups however the main Tuareg rebel alliance, known as the Coordination, has yet to sign on. While Algeria has scheduled a ceremony on 15 April, during which the Coordination's representatives are due to initial the accord, with a formal signing to follow soon after, Mali's foreign minister has warned caution about the prospects for that event. Diop has warned that failure to complete this peace agreement would have "enormous risks for peace in Mali, in the region and even beyond," adding that hopes for peace were being "held hostage by a group of radicals and extremists... Those who, despite everything, choose to block the path to peace will leave the international community with no other choice but to isolate them and treat them as such by imposing sanctions." Violence in Mali has continued, with attacks targeting UN peacekeepers deployed in the northern region of the country and a deadly attack on a Bamako nightclub last month that killed five civilians. The accord provides for greater regional autonomy for the northern region of the country, in line with long-standing demands by Tuaregs and other groups in the region. The peace agreement would in effect bring an end to a conflict that culminated with an Islamist takeover of northern Mali in 2012.
- **6 April 2015** – French Special Forces have rescued a Dutch civilian kidnapped nearly four years ago in Mali by al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) militants. France's defense ministry confirmed that Sjaad Rijke, who was kidnapped in Timbuktu in November 2011, was freed during "military action carried out by the French army's special forces," adding that "this combat action has also led to the capture of several individuals." Rijke has been reported "safe and sound." Sources have disclosed that the operation occurred near Tessalit, in Mali's far north region, near the border with Algeria, with a source in the UN military mission in Mali disclosing, "at least three jihadists died during the operation." Gunmen had stormed into Rijke's hotel in Timbuktu in 2011, capturing him along with a South African and a Swedish national, both of who are still being held. In November 2014, AQIM released a video of Rijke, making a statement on the 1000<sup>th</sup> day of his captivity. **Update (7 April)** – Dutch and Malian diplomatic sources have disclosed that Rijke is due to arrive in the capital Bamako on Tuesday. According to a source in the Malian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the former hostage will be travelling from Gao and "an official delegation will welcome him at the airport." While no timetable has been provided for Rijke's arrival, a presidential source has disclosed that President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita is due to receive the freed hostage when he reached Bamako. Dutch media have reported that Rijke is due to return to the Netherlands on Tuesday evening, however the ministry has not confirmed these reports.
- **5 April 2015** – Militants on Sunday shelled the largest city in northern Mali, killing a civilian and wounding three relatives as they slept. According to a police official in Gao, the rocket strike hit a household in the northern region of the city, while two more landed near a clinic in the city center and in a field to the south. A security source in MINUSMA confirmed the attack, which comes six days after a Red Cross worker was killed by jihadists in Gao. Security forces in the area have been on high alert after unidentified men on

motorcycles opened fire on the village of Boni, located some four hours by road from Gao. On Saturday, the Malian government announced that a “large-scale search operation is underway throughout the area to bring these terrorists out of harm’s way.” Boni and Gao are located near the border with northern Burkina Faso, where on Saturday, gunmen kidnapped a Romanian security officer at a mine. Reports have indicated that the gunmen, along with the hostage, were travelling towards Mali.

- **3 April 2015** – Detectives have uncovered plans for a “major attack” after investigating an explosion at a house in the capital city that killed a security guard on Friday. Sources have disclosed that security forces were alerted after a blast occurred at a private residence in Sirakoro Meguetana, on the southeastern outskirts of Bamako, around 8:00 AM. According to a police source, the Burkinabe owner of the house was arrested at the scene, adding that police officials found detonators in the wrecked property. Police have indicated that explosives at the house had been mishandled, however they were not able to indicate immediately what type of material was behind the explosion. Government spokesman Choguel Maiga confirmed the incident, stating “the intensity of the explosion also caused the injury of four people, the destruction of a part of the residence and considerable damage to neighboring houses,” adding that the owner was a “Burkinabe citizen engaging in the trade of chemical components used in gold mining activities who has a criminal record in Mali.” Nearby residents have disclosed that the house was situated opposite the property of a French national, who was unhurt in the incident. It remains unclear whether the expatriate was the intended target.
  - On Friday, unidentified men on motorcycles opened fire on the village of Boni, which is located some four hours by road southwest of Gao. On the ground sources have reported that the assailants fired shots at the police station and town hall. According to security forces in the area, two civilians were killed in the attack.
- **2 April 2015** – The United Nations disclosed Thursday that UN police peacekeepers “used unauthorized and excessive force” that killed three people and injured four others during a protest that was held in the town of Gao in January. Speaking shortly after briefing the UN Security Council, UN peacekeeping chief Herve Ladsous disclosed that a UN inquiry into the incident found that members of a police unit shot the protesters during a demonstration on 27 January. Ladsous indicated that four police were involved in the incident. While he did not identify their nationality, Gao residents have accused Rwandan police from the peacekeeping operation of firing on the protesters. The police unit commander and police officers involved in the incident will be returning home. Earlier on Thursday, UN spokesman Farhan Haq had indicated that the inquiry had “...also established that some protesters and organizers of the demonstration bear responsibility for the violence of the protest, which included Molotov cocktails, stone throwing and attempts to breach the perimeters (of the UN regional headquarters).” Five UN police officers were injured during the protest, with the inquiry finding that UN peacekeepers “were left to face the protesters on their own” after Malian security forces departed from their positions around the UN base. The late January protests were linked to attempts by the UN to broker a peace agreement between armed groups that operate in the region. At the time, the UN mission had indicated that only warning shots had been fired.
  - The United Nations peacekeeping force MINUSMA disclosed Wednesday that a child was killed and another person was injured when an improvised explosive device (IED) exploded in the town of Ansongo, which is located 100 kilometres (60 miles) southeast of Gao. According to spokeswoman Radhia Achouri, “an IED was detonated by a shepherd and his herd 5 km northeast of Ansongo, around 1.5 km from the MINUSMA camp.”
  - Tuareg-led rebels reported Thursday that they are meeting with Algerian mediators in Algiers in order to discuss the terms of the preliminary peace agreement that they rejected last month. Tuareg

sources familiar with this week's talks have indicated that they were initiated by the Algerian government and are aimed at finding an acceptable version of the original proposal. The proposal, which came after eight months of talks, aims to tackle decades of rebellion in Mali's northern region. While it was signed by the Malian government and a number of other armed groups in early March, after consulting with their supporters, the Tuareg rebels stated that the agreement did not go far enough towards granting autonomy for a desert region which they call Azawad. Diplomats have stated that unless mediators are able to break the current impasse in talks, the question of the north's political status may remain open indefinitely, with many fearing that Islamist militants who remain active in the region may exploit this status.

- **1 April 2015** – Unknown assailants fired shells at a United Nations base located on the outskirts of a town in northern Mali early on Wednesday. Residents of the town of Ansongo reported seeing helicopters flying over the town. The MINUSMA peacekeeping force has denied that there was shelling, with officials disclosing that the base had not been targeted.
  - Three attackers were killed in a firefight and two others captured after they carried out an assault on a Malian army base in Boulkessi on Wednesday. According to Malian officials, the dawn raid occurred in the Mopti region near the border with Burkina Faso. Souleymane Dembele, a military spokesman, disclosed, "our soldiers pushed them back, killing three and taking two prisoners." Officials have not identified which group the attackers came from.
- **31 March 2015** – An aide of exiled former Malian leader Amadou Toumani Toure disclosed Tuesday that the ex-president has given evidence in a probe into alleged Libyan funding for Nicolas Sarkozy's 2007 French presidential election campaign. According to the aide, following a formal request from France, Senegalese detectives summoned Toure, who has been in the Senegalese capital Dakar since he was overthrown in a March 2012 coup. The aide disclosed that Toure was "asked what he knows of Libyan financing," which was allegedly provided to Sarkozy by former dictator Moamer Kadhafi. Local media have reported that Toure spoke to investigators on March 24 however Senegal's criminal investigations division has not commented on these reports. Amadou Cheikh Bani Kante, former special adviser to Toure on Libyan investments in West Africa, has been implicated in the case as a possible "bag carrier" – or go-between – for Kadhafi's regime. In August last year, Kante "categorically" denied that he had any knowledge of Libyan funding of Sarkozy's successful 2007 campaign. Allegations that Kadhafi had funded Sarkozy's election campaign emerged after the first round of voting in the 2012 election. At the time, Mediapart website published a 2006 document, which set out an arrangement for 50 million euros to be paid to the campaign. Sarkozy has maintained that the document is forged, and has been backed by former Libyan intelligence chief Moussa Koussa whose signature was on it.
- **30 March 2015** – Gunmen killed a driver with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on Monday after they attacked his aid truck as it was heading from the northern Malian town of Gao toward Niger. Sources have disclosed that the attack took place around 40 kilometres (25 miles) outside of Gao, with the attackers setting the truck, which was clearly marked with the Red Cross emblem, on fire. Another staff member of the Mali Red Cross is in stable condition after sustaining injuries in the attack. The identity of the attackers remains unknown. **Update (31 March)** – The ICRC has ordered staff in northern Mali not to travel out of urban centers after militants killed an aid worker in the restive region. Valery Mbaoh Nana, spokesman for the ICRC disclosed Tuesday "we have decided to temporarily suspend all our movements in northern Mali, while we wait to understand this incident more clearly... We will take our time to analyze and understand why the ICRC was targeted by such a attack, and we will then determine the consequences." The extremist group Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) has claimed responsibility

for the attack. According to an military source with the UN mission MINUSMA, the attack had been “carefully planned,” and “...was carried out by at least six terrorists.”

# 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.

## 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.

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



MS Risk advises against all travel to the following parts of Niger: all areas of the country north of the city of Abalak, including the Air Massif region; the province of Agadez (including the road linking Assamakato Agadez and the city of Agadez); areas of Tahoua province north of the city of Tahoua, including the city itself; the area of Tillaberi province north of Niamey, including the road from Niamey to Gao and the road from Niamey to Menaka; areas within 40 km of the border with Nigeria in Diffa, Zinder and Maradi provinces.



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## On the Ground Reporting

- **9 April 2015** – Niger has identified a suspected outbreak of H5N1 bird flu on a chicken farm in the southern town of Maradi, which is located near the border with Nigeria, which has also confirmed cases of the virus in several northern states. Late Wednesday, Nigerien authorities disclosed that they had isolated the farm and banned the transport of all poultry out of the town as they waited for samples to be tested in Italy. Bangana Ibrahim, Niger's livestock minister, disclosed that authorities suspected bird flu on the Maradi farm after more than a half of the 2,440 chickens on it died. Ibrahim further indicated that all poultry imports from any nation that had confirmed bird flu had been banned as of 7 April.
- **7 April 2015** – Workers at French nuclear group Areva's Somair mine in Niger have launched a three-day strike over what they say is the company's failure to pay bonuses. According to Moussa Moutari, spokesperson for the SYNAMIN union, 90% of the roughly 1,000 workers at the mine, which is located near the northern town of Arlit, are observing the strike, which was launched Tuesday, noting "output is practically paralyzed...Somair does not want to pay out bonuses related to financial targets reached in 2014. They are saying they are recording losses, which isn't true." A spokesperson for the company has not commented on the strike. Last year, Areva agreed to a reduction in tax breaks and an increase in royalty rates at its uranium mines in Niger. **Update (9 April)** – Company and union officials disclosed Thursday that a court in Niger has declared a strike by workers at French nuclear group Areva's Somair uranium mine illegal and has cut short the planned 72-hour walk out half a day early. SYNAMIN spokesman Moussa Moutari confirmed that workers "...returned to work this Thursday 1 pm (1200 GMT)." Salifou Yaye, communications officer for Areva Niger, also confirmed the end of the strike, which had been due to continue until midnight. He also rejected the unions' claims that workers were owed bonuses, stating, "the union contested the company's 2014 financial result, which was established according to accounting standards in place and never before disputed. The court proved us right."
- **4 April 2015** – Niger's health minister reported Saturday that a meningitis epidemic, which broke out in Niger in January, has killed 45 people. According to minister Mano Aghali, "from January 1 to March 29, 2015, some 345 cases of meningitis, including 45 fatalities, have been reported, which is a fatality rate of 15.3 percent." The capital Niamey has been one of the hardest hit areas, with 18 deaths amongst 119 cases that have been reported. Neighboring Dosso has also recorded 18 deaths from 157 cases. All regions, except Diffa in the southwest, have reported cases however Minister Aghali has indicated, "the situation is under control." Niger has distributed 13,500 doses of the vaccine and medicines are being administered free of charge within zones affected by the epidemic.
- **31 March 2015** – Nigerien officials disclosed Tuesday that soldiers fended off an attack on a border town in Niger by Boko Haram just days after they destroyed a base that was being used by the militants inside neighboring Nigeria. According to a statement from Niger's Defense Ministry, on Monday the militants tried to attack the town of Bosso, Niger, which is located just over the border with Nigeria. Troops from Niger and Chad intervened, killing forty-seven militants and destroying several of the vehicles and mortars. The troops also captured a cache of weapons and ammunition. On Saturday, troops from Niger and Chad destroyed another Boko Haram base inside Nigeria, also close to the Niger border. According to the Defense Ministry statement, fifty-four militants were killed in the raid, which occurred near the town of Talagam. Three troops from Niger were also wounded.

# 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 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.

We advise against all travel to Adamawa State, Borno State, Yobe State, Gombe State and Bauchi State. This is due to the frequent violent attacks, which have been occurring over the past months. We advise against all but essential travel to Kano state, Kaduna State, Jigwa State, Katsina State, Sokoto State, Zamfara State, Kebbi State, Jos City, Riyom and Barkin Ladi Local Government Areas in Plateau State; Okene Region of Kogi

State. These areas have witnessed an increase in violent attacks. We also advise against all but essential travel to Mubi Town in Adamawa State and the area north of Mubi Town that borders Borno State where there has also been a rise in violent

attacks. We also advise against all but essential travel to the non-riverine areas of Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers and Akwa Ibom States, Abia State, Kaduna City, Zaria City.

There is currently a high threat from terrorism. Over the past few weeks there have been a number of explosive attacks in Damaturu, Kano, Jos, Kaduna, Abuja and Lagos. Further such attacks are highly likely to occur. MS Risk currently advises all travellers in Nigeria to avoid public places, especially where crowds gather.

#### *Northern Nigeria*

Travelling anywhere in the northern region of Nigeria is extremely dangerous as there is a high risk of travellers being kidnapped or caught up in a terrorist or other violent incident. While taking the right precautions will aid in reducing the risks, this will not eliminate them all together. MS Risk advises all travellers to the northern region of the country to not maintain regular patterns of travel or movement.

If you live in northern Nigeria, you are advised to review your security regularly and to strengthen it accordingly. Due to the risks, particularly of terrorism, having increased in the past few years, good security two years ago is unlikely to be adequate now.

Companies with workers in northern Nigeria, even in areas which are not subject to specific advice against travel, will require a high level of security. In light of the recent kidnappings of Westerners, employers are advised to review their security arrangements and to ensure that compounds are protected.

#### *Kidnapping*

Although recent incidents of kidnapping have mostly occurred in northern Nigeria, MS Risk advises that such kidnappings can take place anywhere in the country

#### *Threats and Terrorism*

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

## Coverage of the Presidential Elections (28 March) & Gubernatorial and State Assembly Elections (11 April)

- **12 April 2015** – Voting in Nigeria's key regional elections has been extended into Sunday in Rivers state after irregularities were reported at some polling stations. The Independent National Electoral Commission's (INEC) top official in Rivers state, Gesila Khan, indicated Sunday that voting has been extended in nine wards where election materials were never delivered to polling stations, adding that results from Saturday's vote have been thrown out in other parts of the state after ballot papers were openly stolen. The INEC has stated that it was broadly satisfied with the polling process, with the exception of Rivers state, where local INEC officials conceded that malpractice had tainted the vote in some areas.
  - According to Nigeria's election agency, the INEC, sixty-six violent incidents marred the country's regional polls, with the restive oil-producing Rivers state the worst affected. The INEC did however

praise the nationwide voting, saying that it was “relatively peaceful.” A statement released by the INEC on Sunday indicated that electronic voter identification devices, which were used for the first time in last months’ general election, broadly worked in the regional vote despite problems in some areas. The commission however highlighted the “significant number of violent incidents” recorded across the country. Officials have not commented on the number of casualties that resulted from the unrest, the statement did however indicate that the southern Rivers state reported 16 incidents of violence while the remaining 50 incidents were spread throughout the country.

- **11 April 2015** – On Saturday, Nigerians began voting to choose new state governors and local assemblies. Some 760 candidates are in the running for 29 governor and deputy governor positions while some 5,290 hopefuls are in the running for local assembly seats in Nigeria’s thirty-six states. The main opposition All Progressives Congress (APC) is expected to benefit from Muhammadu Buhari’s presidential win against incumbent Goodluck Jonathan of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). The PDP currently has 21 governors while the APC has 14.
  - There was a heavy police presence on the streets of the city of Port Harcourt on Saturday as the country went to the polls to elect state governors and assembly members. While the state capital of Rivers was calm on Saturday, officers were out in force, screening vehicles and keeping watch, after large protests erupted shortly after the presidential election two weeks ago. In the Rumuola area of the city, about fifty members of the All Progressives Congress (APC) staged a protest alleging fraud on the part of the People’s Democratic Party (PDP). The APC claimed that the PDP rigged the results of the presidential election, which saw the state vote nearly 95 percent in favor of President Goodluck Jonathan. Police spokesman Ahmad Muhammad has indicated that there has been sporadic incidents of violence. Part of the local electoral commission office in Buguma was burned down. There were also reports of shots being fired in some places.
- **1 April 2015** - Challenger General Muhammadu Buhari has won Nigeria’s presidential election by 2.57 million votes, defeating incumbent Goodluck Jonathan. On Wednesday, Nigeria’s Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) announced that Gen Buhari, of the All Progressives Congress (APC), won 15,424,921 votes (53.95 percent) of the 28,587,564 total valid ballots case. Rival Jonathan of the People’s Democratic Party (PDP) won 12,853,162 votes (44.96) in the elections, which was held on Saturday and Sunday. In a statement released Wednesday, INEC chairman Attahiru Jega stated, “Muhammadu Buhari, of the APC, having satisfied the requirement for the law and scored the highest number of votes, is hereby declared the winner and is returned elected.” In an unprecedented step, which will likely help to defuse anger amongst disgruntled supports of the former president, Mr Jonathan called Gen Buhari at 5:15 PM (1615 GMT) on Tuesday, prior to the final results being declared, to concede defeat. A spokesman for Gen Buhari’s APC party praised Mr Jonathan, stating, “he will remain a hero for this move. The tension will go down dramatically,” adding “anyone who tries to foment trouble on the account that they have lost the election will be doing so purely on his own.” In a statement released late Tuesday, Jonathan stated, “I promised the country free and fair elections. I have kept my word.” He urged disputes over the results to be settled in court rather than on the street, adding, “nobody’s ambition is worth the blood of any Nigerian.” Jonathan will officials hand over power to Buhari on 29 May. Gen Buhari’s move is a significant moment in Nigeria’s history, as never before has a sitting president lost an election. Jonathan had led Nigeria since 2010. While he won elections in 2011, over the past year, Nigeria has suffered a series of major attacks carried out by Boko Haram militants, with many believing that Gen Buhari is better positioned to defeat the militant group after Jonathan failed to maintain his promise of ending the six-year insurgency. While military gains against the militant group in recent weeks were welcomed, they were also seen as too little too late,

particularly by those who have lived under constant threat. This was reflected in Borno state, which has been the worst-affected region by the Islamists rampage. Initial results indicated that Buhari won 94 percent of the vote in the state as hundreds of thousands of people defied threats of suicide attacks and bombings to vote. While Buhari has acknowledged that the task of completely defeating Boko Haram will be challenging, along with other challenges, including dealing with widespread poverty, his military background resulted in many believing that the former leader is better equipped to fight the insurgents.

- **31 March 2015** - General Muhammadu Buhari has won the presidential elections. Results at 18:00 local time showed that Gen Buhari had won 15.4 million votes, with Mr Goodluck Jonathan winning 13.3 million votes, a margin of victory that is likely to render any legal challenges irrelevant. In an unprecedented step, which should help to defuse anger amongst disgruntled supporters of the former president, Mr Jonathan called Gen Buhari on Tuesday to concede defeat. A spokesman for Gen Buhari's All Progressives Congress (APC) party praised Mr Jonathan, stating, "he will remain a hero for this move. The tension will go down dramatically," adding "anyone who tries to foment trouble on the account that they have lost the election will be doing so purely on his own." Gen Buhari's move is a significant moment in Nigeria's history, as never before has a sitting president lost an election. Mr Jonathan had led Nigeria since 2010. While he won elections in 2011, over the past year, Nigeria has suffered a series of major attacks carried out by Boko Haram militants, with many believing that Gen Buhari is better positioned to defeat the militant group after Mr Jonathan failed to maintain his promise of ending the six-year insurgency.
- **30 March 2015** – Officials have imposed an overnight curfew in the southern Rivers state as tensions escalated over local results in the country's general elections. Information Commissioner Ibim Semenitari has confirmed that the lockdown, which will last from 7:00 PM (1800 GMT) until 6:00 AM, aims "to prevent the breakdown of law and order because of the tense political situation." Violence already erupted in the state capital, Port Harcourt, after allegations of vote-rigging by the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and election officials.
  - According to on the ground sources, some 2,000 women protesting against the conduct of elections in Nigeria's Rivers state were teargassed Monday as they attempted to register their complaints with electoral officials. Sources have revealed that armed police and soldiers prevented the women, who are supporting the opposition All Progressives Congress (APC) party, from entering the electoral commission office in the state capital, Port Harcourt. The APC has alleged that the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), along with election officials, rigged the presidential and parliamentary election. The PDP however has dismissed these allegations and calls that the election be rescheduled in the state, saying that it was "the behavior of bad losers." Elections chief Attahiru Jega has confirmed that he did receive a letter from the opposition calling for a re-run. He has since promised to carry out a "thorough investigation," adding, "there are many alleged cases of malpractice and we certainly pay a lot of attention to...it and if any of our staff are involved, we will apply appropriate sanctions."
  - US Secretary of State John Kerry and his British counterpart Phillip Hammond have voiced concerns over possible political interference in Nigeria's vote count, allegations which Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has rejected. In a joint statement released Monday, the two diplomats disclosed, "we have seen no evidence of systematic manipulation of the process. But there are disturbing indications that the collation process – where the votes are finally counted – may be subject to deliberate political interference." The INEC spokesman Kayode Idowu has rejected these comments, stating "there is absolutely no basis for that at all... There is no interference at all. We are about to start the collation process. We have no evidence of political interference." While both Britain

and the United States welcomed “the largely peaceful vote,” Kerry and Hammond have warned that any attempt at fraud “would contravene the letter and spirit of the Abuja accord, to which both major parties committed themselves,” adding that their governments “would be very concerned by an attempts to undermine the independence” of the electoral commission. In the wake of these comments, the top US diplomat for Africa, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, has clarified that there were no reports of pressure being applied to INEC chairman Attahiru Jega, but rather that there were concerns in a number of states. According to Ms Thomas-Greenfield, “we all, not just the US and UK, but others in the international community, have received a lot of calls and information regarding fears that there was some interference at the collation centers... So we wanted to make sure that there was a clear understanding that this was unacceptable.” While the top diplomat did not specify as to which states had raised concern, she did note that the reporting of malpractice so far did not compromise the overall integrity of the elections.

## On the Ground Reporting

- **9 April 2015** – The United Nations on Thursday launched an appeal for US \$174 million in what it called “life-saving aid” for almost 200,000 Nigerians who have fled the country due to Boko Haram’s ongoing insurgency. According to the UN, the insurgents have killed up to 15,000 people since 2009. Liz Ahua, the West African representative for the UNHCR, which is the UN’s refugee agency, has indicated that “displaced people in northeastern Nigeria and across borders are in a vary dramatic situation... They continue to fear for their lives, and are at this point unable to return to their homes.” According to the UNHCR, some 192,000 people have fled the West African country, crossing into neighboring Cameroon, Chad and Niger in a bid to seek refuge from the violence. A further 1.2 million have been displaced internally. Staff and volunteers in twenty-three aid organizations and UN agencies say that they are increasingly struggling to provide food, shelter, education and sanitation for the refugees.
- **6 April 2015** – Witnesses disclosed Monday that suspected Boko Haram gunmen opened fire on villagers and torched a number of buildings in northeastern Nigeria. According to a resident of the town, roughly two-dozen assailants stormed the village of Kwajaffa at dusk on Sunday and ordered the residents out of their homes, adding that some of the locals had believed that the insurgents “were going to preach and leave,” instead they “opened fire on the crowd... They then went on setting fire to homes, burning half of the village before they left.” The village is located in the southern part of Borno state.
- **5 April 2015** – At least four people have been killed after suspected Boko Haram fighters raided a local market in a village near the city of Maiduguri on Saturday. On the grounds sources have disclosed that scores of Boko Haram gunmen stormed the village of Kayamla, which is located 20 kilometres (12.5 miles) from Maiduguri in Borno state. They opened fire on the weekly market and killed four traders. The attackers also looted food stores and took away livestock before fleeing. Sources have disclosed that the militants likely attacked the market in a bid to replenish their supplies. The attackers fled before troops and local vigilantes had mobilized from the nearby town of Konduga.
  - Two al-Jazeera television journalists, who had been detained by the Nigerian military since 24 March, have been freed. According to a statement released Sunday by the Qatar-based broadcaster, Ahmed Idris and Ali Mustafa have been allowed to leave the Maiduguri hotel where they were detained and return to the network’s Abuja office. Officials have not disclosed any further details on the conditions of their release. The men, both Nigerian nationals, were detained in the northeastern region of Nigeria, where troops are currently carrying out military operations targeting Boko Haram

militants. At the time, Nigerian defense spokesman Chris Olukolade had stated that the pair was “found to have been loitering around areas where military operations are ongoing in the northeast and have been restrained in Maiduguri.” Al-Jazeera officials however later disclosed that the pair were taken from their hotel room after having “finished filming a story on the military with their cooperation,” and that their camera equipment was confiscated.

- **4 April 2015** – Police officials disclosed Saturday that gunmen have stormed two communities in Nigeria’s southern oil state of Rivers, killing at least nine people and injuring two others a week ahead of the gubernatorial election. According to police spokesman Ahmad Muhammad, “it was about 19:30 hrs (1830 GMT) of yesterday (Friday). Some unknown armed men invaded Obrikom and Obor communities and went on a shooting spree,” adding that the assailants had also set ablaze the house of a local politician, Vincent Ogbagu, who is a state parliament candidate in the 11 April election. The police spokesman disclosed that the initial death toll of six had since risen to nine.
  - Militants of the Urhobo minority ethnic group blew up a natural gas pipeline in Nigeria’s Delta state early on Friday. According to Isa Ado, spokesman for the Pulo Shield Taskforce, which is composed of members of various Nigerian security forces investigating oil theft in the country’s oil-producing delta region, “the Urhobo militants who carried out the attack have claimed responsibility,” adding that the militants were trying to draw attention to their exclusion from lucrative pipeline protection contracts with the state oil company.
- **3 April 2015** – An explosion near a bus station in the northeastern city of Gombe has killed at least five people and injured 15 others. Muhammad Garkuwa, a drivers’ union official, disclosed Thursday “we had an explosion outside the motor park (bus station) this evening around 8:30 pm (1930 GMT) which killed five people and injured 15 others,” adding “the explosion was from an explosive left by a woman in her handbag beside a bus waiting to convey passengers to Jos.” While no one has claimed responsibility for the attack, the incident bore the hallmarks of Boko Haram, which in recent weeks has increasingly carried out a string of similar explosions against so-called “soft targets,” including bus stations and markets in northeastern Nigeria. **Update (4 April)** – The death toll from an explosion near a bus station in Gombe has risen to 10.
  - The electoral commissioner for Kano state has died in a house fire along with his wife and two children. According to his office, resident electoral commissioner Mukaila Abdullah had presided over the elections last weekend. Lawan Garba, spokesman for the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Kano confirmed the incident. Police officials have not yet commented on the cause of the fire.
- **2 April 2015** – The Chadian army disclosed Thursday that nine Chadian soldiers were killed and sixteen wounded after Boko Haram fighters in northeastern Nigeria ambushed them. According to a military spokesman, fighting took place on Wednesday about 10 kilometres (6 miles) from the town of Malam Fatori, which was retaken by regional forces earlier this week. Colonel Azem Bernandoa Agouna disclosed, “elements of the Chad-Niger (military alliance) were killed in a pocket of resistance... After heavy fighting, the armed forces of Chad and Niger totally cleaned up the zone.” According to a statement released by the military, the allied troops killed “more than 100” members of Boko Haram, adding that large quantities of equipment were also seized by the soldiers. While regional forces captured Malam Fatori on Tuesday, and were met with no resistance as Boko Haram fighters had already fled the town, some insurgents remained in the vicinity, launching an attack on Wednesday between Malam Fatori and the border town of Bosso in Niger. The capture of Malam Fatori is crucial for the regional coalition as the town, which is located close to Nigeria’s northeastern border, had become known as the militant group’s main refuge in the region

whenever its fighters fell back after defeats. Chadian and Nigerien troops had made the town a primary target when they entered Nigeria on 8 March.

- A curfew in the southern Rivers state, which was put in place in a bid to contain unrest after the opposition disputed results from the weekend's general elections, has been lifted. A statement released by secretary to Rivers government George Feyi disclosed, "the general public is hereby informed that the dusk-to-dawn curfew declared by the state government early in the week is lifted with immediate effect." While former president Goodluck Jonathan was declared the winner in Rivers, receiving nearly 95 percent of the vote, thousands of opposition supporters descended on the electoral office in the state capital Port Harcourt on Sunday and Monday, demanding a rerun of the vote. Rivers State Governor Rotimi Amaechi, a member of the opposition All Progressives Congress (APC) party, had earlier issued a statement indicating that there had been "no election" in the Rivers state, claiming that supporters of Jonathan's People's Democratic Party (PDP) and its loyalists in the security forces had rigged the results. Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) chairman Attahiru Jega later certified the results in Rivers state. While a major crisis was averted during the general election, the state remains on edge with governorship and state legislative polls due to take place on 11 April.
- **31 March 2015** - Military officials disclosed Tuesday that troops from Chad and Niger attacked Boko Haram militants on islands on Lake Chad, which the insurgents have been using as a safe haven in the wake of ongoing military operations to force them out of captured territory in northeastern Nigeria. Sources have disclosed that Chadian and Nigerien militaries have bombed the islands, with a number of fighters reportedly killed. Nigerian forces were not involved in Monday's operations and there has been no comment from Nigeria.
  - Soldiers from Chad and Niger have recaptured a border town from Boko Haram. According to the Chadian government and army spokesman, the town of Malam Fatori, which was seized by the militant group in November, has been recaptured. While military sources in January had falsely claimed to have retaken the border town, on Tuesday, Chad's Communications Minister Hassan Sylla Bakari disclosed that this time there was no doubt who controlled the town. Nigerien military sources have disclosed that the forces launched airstrikes before an offensive by ground troops captured the town and the nearby village of Abadam, adding that several Boko Haram fighters were killed in the clashes.
- **30 March 2015** - In the wake of troops fighting Boko Haram fighters outside of Bauchi city, the state capital of Bauchi, authorities have imposed an indefinite lockdown on three areas. On the ground sources have reported that late Sunday, soldiers, supported by two fighter jets, intercepted the militants who were in 20 pick-up trucks at Dungulbe village, which is located seven kilometres (four miles) from the state capital. The troops engaged them in fierce fighting, with a military officer in the city disclosing "the fighter jets are pounding the enemy position while ground troops are engaging them... The operation is still on-going but the terrorists have suffered serious losses and are in disarray." Residents reported that the insurgents arrived in Dungulbe at around 10:00 am (0900 GMT) and set up camp in preparation for an invasion of the city. The militants are believed to have come through the town of Alkaleri, which is 60 kilometres (37 miles) away, where they carried out a dawn raid on Saturday. A spokesman for the Bauchi state governor disclosed that an indefinite, round-the-clock curfew had been imposed on three areas, Bauchi, Kirfi and Alkaleri, because of the fighting, stating that it was imposed in order to "...enable security agencies to restore normalcy in the affected areas... By this curfew, residents of the three affected local governments are to remain in their homes until further notice." The main opposition All Progressives Congress (APC)



candidate for the Bauchi state governorship, Mohammed Abullahi Abubakar, has blamed the curfew on his political opponents, claiming “the curfew was only an attempt by the PDP (Peoples Democratic Party) to tinker with the results of the elections.”

- Eight suspected Boko Haram fighters were killed Monday in fighting that erupted in the states of Bauchi and Gombe, in northeastern Nigeria. According to a local who lives in Gombe Abba, which is located 10 kilometres (6 miles) from Dukku, in Gombe state, gunmen in several vehicles arrived in the village around 4:30 AM (0330 GMT) and were intercepted by soldiers who engaged them in a gun fight, adding “the soldiers killed four of the gunmen and captured one...The rest of the gunmen fled.” Bauchi state police spokesman Haruna Mohammed disclosed that police and local vigilantes “got wind of the approaching hoodlums (and) engaged them in a fierce gun battle” at about 7:30 AM in Tafawa Balewa. According to Mohammed, four gunmen were killed and four of their 18 four-wheel drive pick up trucks, that were mounted with heavy machineguns were seized, along with empty shells and ammunition, adding that the same fighters then “...went back to Jitar village in Bauchi LGA (local government area) and killed three vigilante members...the entire surrounding has been cordoned off by combined security forces and (an) intensive patrol is on-going to flush out fleeing miscreants.” On the ground sources have revealed the suspected Boko Haram gunmen have been roaming Bauchi and neighbouring Gombe since this past weekend, when they launched a series of attacks, targeting polling stations. In recent weeks, as coalition military forces have captured territory in the three northeastern states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe, effectively forcing the militants out of their captured towns, Boko Haram has increasingly been operating in the states of Gombe and Bauchi.

# 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.



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.

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## On the Ground Reporting

- **7 April 2015** – Police in Sierra Leone raided a funeral on Tuesday and arrested thirteen people suspected of organizing an unsafe burial and risking the spread of the disease. According to police superintendent De Samah, “heavily armed” police arrived to prevent a 50-year old man from being interred on the outskirts of the capital of Freetown after they were tipped off about the ceremony. Mr Samah confirmed that police were able to stop the burial and that they “...have put out an alert for an ambulance which eyewitnesses said brought the corpse to the cemetery...We arrested those present because there was no burial permit nor any documents relating to the burial.” Palo Conteh, the national Ebola response chief, has disclosed that traditional funeral rights, which involve contact with the body, remain the biggest driver of Ebola transmission in the West African nation. While unsafe burials were common at the beginning of the epidemic, latest figures released by the World Health Organization (WHO) show that in the week leading up to 29 March, there was just one reported unsafe burial in Sierra Leone. Alimamy Kamara, head of the Ebola Response Centre in charge of Freetown and the surrounding area, stated last week that people organizing unsafe burials risked two years in jail, adding, “people should adhere to the government policy of safe and dignified burials so that we can end the high rate of transmission of the Ebola virus.”
- **4 April 2015** – Sierra Leone’s eastern district of Kailahun has recorded its first case in nearly four months. According to officials, a 9-month-old boy tested positive for Ebola after dying in Kailahun, the Sierra Leonean district located on Guinea’s border, which recorded the country’s first Ebola case last May and which was for months the epicenter of the crisis. Kailahun went from recording up to eighty infections per week in June to no cases by the end of last year. Winnie Romeril, a spokeswoman for the World Health Organization (WHO) has indicated that local and foreign experts have been dispatched to investigate the case. While Alex Bonapha, the Kailahun district council chairman has indicated that it remains unclear how the boy may have contracted the deadly disease as both his parents are healthy, sources have disclosed that the boy underwent a blood transfusion before dying and that he may have contracted the disease during the blood transfusion. **Update (7 April)** – On Tuesday, Sierra Leonean officials disclosed that they had mistakenly reported an Ebola positive case in Kailahun, a former hotspot for the deadly virus that had not seen a case for nearly four months. According to National Ebola Response Centre spokesman Sidi Yahya Tunis, a nine-month-old baby was pronounced Ebola positive last week however he was later found to have died from other causes. The spokesman blamed the mistake on a “lapse” by health officials who took the blood sample from the corpse.
- **1 April 2015** – According to an official, Sierra Leone has recorded ten new Ebola cases during a three-day nationwide shutdown, declaring that the West African nation is now at the “tail end” of the deadly epidemic. Alfred Palo Conteh, the head of the country’s Ebola response, has indicated that while hundreds of sick people were identified as health teams went door-to-door on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, only ten of the sick eventually tested positive for the disease. This figure indicates that there were not that many hidden Ebola cases across the country, as had been feared. By contrast, during the three-day shutdown in September, more than 260 new cases had been identified.
- **30 March 2015** – Sierra Leonean officials ended the West African nations three-day lockdown Sunday evening. During the curfew period, which was ordered by President Ernest Bai Koroma and which ran from 0600 GMT on Friday until 1800 GMT Sunday, some 26,000 volunteers went door-to-door to check for sick people and to raise awareness about the deadly disease. While officials at the National Ebola Response Centre (NERC) have indicated that locals had overwhelmingly complied with the lockdown, which is the

second to take place in six months and which primarily focused on hotspots in the capital as well as areas in the north and west of the country, on the ground sources have revealed that there were some reports of people wandering the streets, particularly in the capital Freetown. Witnesses and local media have also reported that there was an incident that occurred in the Kaffu Bullom chiefdom in the northern district of Port Loko, in which a group of health workers was attacked. According to medical worker Festus James, “yesterday (Saturday) we visited a quarantine house where we discovered a seven-year-old boy who was looking sick... We wanted to take him to the hospital for further checks when we were pelted with stones and water was thrown at us. We had to flee from the area together with our two security guides.” In Kambia, which is also located in the northern region of the country near the border with Guinea, media reports have indicated that some people took refuge in the bush in order to avoid encountering the health teams. The head of NERC’s Situation Room, Obi Sesay told reporters Monday that overall “the campaign went well and we are pleased over the level of compliance,” adding that official figures detailing the results of the campaign will be released Tuesday.

- On Saturday, police fired tear gas at an angry crowd fighting over food supplies while other residents defied a three-day nationwide lockdown imposed by the government in a bid to accelerate the end of the Ebola outbreak. Prior to the lockdown, residents in and around the capital Freetown, which is one of the remaining Ebola hotspots in Sierra Leone, were told to stock up on food and water however on the second day of the campaign, which was launched Friday, some residents indicated that they had already run out of supplies. On the ground sources have disclosed that in the Devil Hole neighborhood, hundreds of people left their homes in order to find food at a collection point. Sources have revealed that some residents complained that they had not received food. Fighting erupted, with police later arriving on the scene to disperse the crowd. Several arrests were made. According to Adam Dumbuya, a resident, people are desperate for food because of how the distribution is going... This has led to panic.” Elsewhere in the eastern and central areas of the capital city, residents defied lockdown rules by wandering onto the streets in search of supplies.



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