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THE CENTRAL AFRICA REPORT



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

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

APRIL 7 - 19, 2015

About MS Risk

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 - Special Assignments
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 - Crisis Response
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References are always available.

More information is found at www.msrisk.com

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The Central Africa Report ~ Summary

April 7 - 19, 2015



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Cameroon

On the Ground Reporting

- **18 April 2015** – Nineteen people were killed Thursday night after Boko Haram militants attacked a Cameroonian village.
 - Sources have disclosed that during the night from Thursday to Friday, Boko Haram militants attacked a Cameroon army position in Amchide, which is located on the border with Nigeria.
- **6 April 2015** – Cameroonian officials have reported that over the several weeks, suspected Boko Haram militants have been seizing food and livestock from farmers and cattle ranchers in the northern region of the country, near the border with Nigeria.

Central African Republic

On the Ground Reporting

- **14 April 2015** - The head of the UN mission in the CAR has called on member states to better fund preparations for the country's upcoming elections and humanitarian relief.
- **10 April 2015** – One protester was killed and several dozen were injured Friday when a demonstration turned violent outside a United Nations base in the CAR.
- **9 April 2015** – A peacekeeper from Bangladesh died Thursday in a traffic road accident on the road to Boali, which is located 95 kilometres northwest of Bangui.

Regional Reporting

- **14 April 2015** – The United Nations is currently in the process of assessing the Rwandan National Polices' readiness as the country prepares to deploy a special peacekeeping unit to the CAR.
 - On Tuesday, despite the CAR's transitional government and foreign partners dismissing the process, former CAR presidents Francois Bozize and Michel Djotodia signed a peace agreement in the Kenyan capital Nairobi.
- **9 April 2015** – In an effort to provide the CAR with a political solution, rival militias in the Central African nation have signed a ceasefire agreement.

Chad

On the Ground Reporting

- **10 April 2015** – Chadian army officials disclosed Friday that seventy-one Chadian soldiers have been killed and 416 have been wounded in less than three months of fighting Boko Haram militants.
- **7 April 2015** – Officials disclosed Monday that seven civilians were killed in an attack in Chad that has been blamed on Nigerian Boko Haram insurgents.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

On the Ground Reporting

- **16 April 2015** – Security sources in the region revealed Thursday that thirty-seven people were kidnapped Wednesday by rebels from Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) in the Rushuru territory of eastern DRC.
- **15 April 2015** – An official disclosed Wednesday that at least five people were beheaded in a machete attack in the eastern area of the DRC.
 - On Wednesday, Human Rights Watch urged DRC officials to release seven political activists held by intelligence services and police.
- **8 April 2015** – According to an army source, Rwandan rebels in the eastern region of the DRC killed around ten soldiers in an ambush earlier this week, in what is now the insurgent's deadliest attack since the start of a military campaign against them, which was launched in February this year.
- **7 April 2015** – In an attempt to put an end to rumours that the bodies of opposition supporters were buried in a recently discovered mass grave in the capital Kinshasa, DRC authorities indicated Tuesday that the grave contained mainly stillborn babies and fetuses.

- Police arrested five members of a pro-democracy group in the eastern DRC on Tuesday as they demonstrated against the illegal detention of activists in the capital Kinshasa.
- Authorities in the DRC have warned residents in the town of Zongo to inform security officials in the region if they find any refugees from the Central African Republic (CAR) carrying weapons.

Gabon

On the Ground Reporting

- **12 April 2015** – Opposition supporters have burnt cars and set fire to the embassy of Benin in the capital city Libreville.

Regional Reporting

- **17 April 2015** – A Gabonese delegation, led by Foreign Minister Emmanuel Issoze Ngondet, arrived in Benin on Wednesday to deliver a personal apology from President Ali Bongo Ondimba to his Beninese counterpart President Boni Yayi over last Sunday's attack on Benin's Embassy in Libreville.
- **13 April 2015** – On Monday, Benin demanded an "official explanation" of the torching of its embassy in Gabon during unrest that erupted after the announcement of the death of a senior Gabonese opposition leader.

Central Africa Report ~ Security Summary

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Gabon - There are currently no travel advisories for Gabon.

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

Angola

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

Luanda

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

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

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

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



Cabinda Province

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

Lunda Norte and Lunda Sul

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

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

Cameroon

Security Summary ~ On 31 March, as a prevention measure against the spread of Ebola, Cameroonian officials closed land, air and sea borders with Ebola affected countries. Flights and vessels travelling from or via Ebola affected countries have been banned. MS Risk advises all travellers to ensure that your onward/return travel arrangements are flexible and that you have taken into account these travel restrictions.

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

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

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

On 14 May 2013, the Government of Nigeria declared a state of emergency in the states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe. Both Adamawa and Borno border Cameroon's far North, North and Adamaoua provinces. MS Risk



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

On the Ground Reporting

- **18 April 2015** – Nineteen people were killed Thursday night after Boko Haram militants attacked a Cameroonian village. According to a security source, “the final toll from this attack is 19 dead, with the majority of the victims decapitated.” Security sources had previously indicated that ten civilians were killed in the cross-border attack on the village of Bia, which is located in Cameroon’s Far North region, however officials had warned that the death toll was likely to rise in the coming days. Security forces had previously identified Bia, which borders Lake Chad, as a recruiting ground for Boko Haram militants.
 - Sources have disclosed that during the night from Thursday to Friday, Boko Haram militants attacked a Cameroon army position in Amchide, which is located on the border with Nigeria. According to a security source, “they burned houses in Amchide, but without losses on our side. The attack was repulsed. We don’t know yet about casualties on the enemy side.”
- **6 April 2015** – Cameroonian officials have reported that over the several weeks, suspected Boko Haram militants have been seizing food and livestock from farmers and cattle ranchers in the northern region of the country, near the border with Nigeria. According to Midjiyawa Bakari, Governor of the Far North region, the militants carried out raids in groups of 5 – 10. They seized cattle, food and money from residents living along Cameroon’s border with Nigeria’s northeastern Borno state, adding that the long and porous border with the West African country has made it possible for the insurgents to attack crop farmers, cattle ranchers and small businesses and to make a quick getaway. Such attacks have forced many food producers in the area to relocate to safer areas further away from the border. Sali Dairou, a member of the National Assembly from northern Cameroon, confirmed these incidents, stating that some of the farmers who refused to cooperate with the insurgents were killed.

Central African Republic

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

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



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

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

Crime

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

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

On the Ground Reporting

- **14 April 2015** - The head of the UN mission in the CAR has called on member states to better fund preparations for the country's upcoming elections and humanitarian relief. According to Babacar Gaye, head of the UN's MINUSCA mission, the UN still lacks half the US \$44 million it says it requires in order to help the CAR move forward with presidential and legislative elections, which are due to take place in July and August. Speaking to the UN Security Council, Gaye stated "the success of the electoral process depends on one-time payment of the funds and we urge member states to respond quickly to this call." He further indicated that the CAR's humanitarian situation remains serious, with the UN only attaining 13 percent of the funds necessary in order to supply humanitarian assistance in 2015. Since January, 50,000 people have been displaced while the fragmentation of armed groups across the country has limited humanitarian access. The Security Council also held consultations ahead of its annual vote to renew MINUSCA's mandate, which is due to expire at the end of this month. In late March, the Council unanimously adopted a resolution that effectively provides for an increase of 750 military personnel ahead of the upcoming elections. The new additions, which include 280 police and 20 corrections officers, effectively means that a total of 10,750 military personnel and more than 2,000 police officers are serving in MINUSCA.
- **10 April 2015** - One protester was killed and several dozen were injured Friday when a demonstration turned violent outside a United Nations base in the CAR. According to UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric, peacekeepers fired warning shots in a bid to push back some 400 protesters, some of whom were armed with knives, who tried to set fire to the base in Kaga-Bandoro, which is located about 350 km (220 miles) north of the capital Bangui. Sources have indicated that the protesters are angry that the UN MINUSCA mission in the CAR has failed to stop raids carried out by ethnic Peuhl pastoralists.
- **9 April 2015** - A peacekeeper from Bangladesh died Thursday in a traffic road accident on the road to Boali, which is located 95 kilometres northwest of Bangui. According to the UN mission in the CAR, twelve people were injured in the incident, including three who are in critical condition.

Regional Reporting

- **14 April 2015** - The United Nations is currently in the process of assessing the Rwandan National Polices' readiness as the country prepares to deploy a special peacekeeping unit to the CAR. According to Assistant Commissioner of Police Jimmy Hodari, who is also the commissioner for the Peace Support Operation, evaluators from the UN's peacekeeping operation and field support departments launched a five-day assessment on Sunday. They are seeking to review the Rwandan

National Polices' contingent-owned equipment and officers' operational capability in order to ensure that they meet the UN requirements. The unit, which is also known as the Specialized Protection Support Unit, is set to serve under the UN's multi-dimensional integrated stabilization mission in the CAR and will be responsible for "providing personal protection including static, mobile and rapid intervention response to ensure the safety and security of CAR high-level officials." Rwanda already has a contingent of Formed Police Unit that is deployed in the CAR.

- On Tuesday, despite the CAR's transitional government and foreign partners dismissing the process, former CAR presidents Francois Bozize and Michel Djotodia signed a peace agreement in the Kenyan capital Nairobi. According to a statement, the signing of the agreement, which was witnessed by Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta, effectively endorses a deal that was signed in Nairobi last week by the mainly Muslim former Seleka rebels and the largely Christian anti-balaka militia. While the Kenyan President has indicated that the agreements effectively lay out the foundation for lasting peace in the CAR, the Central African nation's interim president Catherine Samba Panza has dismissed the initiative and is seeking to organize her own peace forum in Bangui later this month. Diplomats, led by France, have also dismissed the agreement.
- **9 April 2015** – In an effort to provide the CAR with a political solution, rival militias in the Central African nation have signed a ceasefire agreement. According to a statement released by Kenya's State House, where the agreement was signed, Kenya's President Uhuru Kenyatta hosted the signing of the accord on Wednesday between anti-balaka leader Joachim Kokate and former president and ex-Seleka leader Michel Djotodia. According to the statement, the agreement includes a deal "to stop hostilities" and another to "open a new chapter of political stability in their country" by adhering to the transitional road map. The talks, which have been held in Kenya since November 2014, are considered to be controversial, as they do not have the backing of the CAR's transitional government. In response to Wednesday's agreement, the CAR's Communications Minister Georges Adrien Poussou has stated that, "its not a real accord, it's a series of grievances from two armed groups which hold the country hostage." The agreement aims to end years of fighting between the former Seleka and anti-balaka groups. Both sides have been accused of carrying out mass atrocities against civilians, with the UN and other international aid groups documenting the use of child soldiers and ethnic cleansing across the country. It currently remains unclear what impact Wednesday's agreement will have in the CAR as in the past, both leaders have disclosed that rebel fighters on the ground cannot be controlled. Sources have indicated that the fact that the CAR government is not involved in this agreement jeopardises its legitimacy. Previous agreements signed between other rebels, including those that were signed in neighbouring Brazzaville, Congo last July, have also been rejected by officials in the CAR who have indicated that such agreements are not fully representative of the groups that are fighting in the CAR. A second round of talks between the leaders is due to be held in Nairobi however a timeframe for these talks has not been released.

Chad

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

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

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

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



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

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

There is currently a low threat from terrorism.

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

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

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

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

On the Ground Reporting

- 10 April 2015** – Chadian army officials disclosed Friday that seventy-one Chadian soldiers have been killed and 416 have been wounded in less than three months of fighting Boko Haram militants. Speaking to reporters in the Chadian capital of N'Djamena, Chad army chief General Brahim Seid stated that the “valiant soldiers” had died since February 3 in the “just and noble cause of bringing peace and security” to the region, adding “they (troops) have liberated 11 communities in Cameroon, Niger and Nigeria from the hands of Boko Haram... Chadian forces will continue to hurt the terrorists of Boko Haram wherever they are found.” Chad has deployed about 5,000 troops to fight alongside soldiers from neighboring Cameroon, Niger and Nigeria in a bid to end Boko Haram’s six-year insurgency in Nigeria, which has increasingly spilled over into neighboring states. After three months of an aggressive campaign to force the militants out of the

towns and villages that they have captured in northeastern Nigeria over the past year, regional military leaders now believe that Boko Haram's military capacity has been significantly weakened. They have claimed that they have inflicted heavy casualties on Boko Haram however the numbers have been impossible to verify independently. Despite the military operations, Boko Haram militants have continued to stage attacks, often targeting busy markets and bus stations. This fact has been highlighted by Nigerian army chief Seyni Garba, who indicated that even if Boko Haram is weakened, it continues to have the capabilities to carry out "massive assaults," including suicide bomb attacks.

- **7 April 2015** – Officials disclosed Monday that seven civilians were killed in an attack in Chad that has been blamed on Nigerian Boko Haram insurgents. According to Dimouuya Souapebe, the deputy prefect of Baga Sola, on Friday the militants ambushed several civilians who were on their way to a market in Tchoukou Telia, which is located near Lake Chad, adding that some of the victims had their throats cut while others were shot. Sources reported that improvised mines were later discovered along the road between Tchoukou Telia and Ngouboua, which is located close to the border with Nigeria.

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

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

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



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

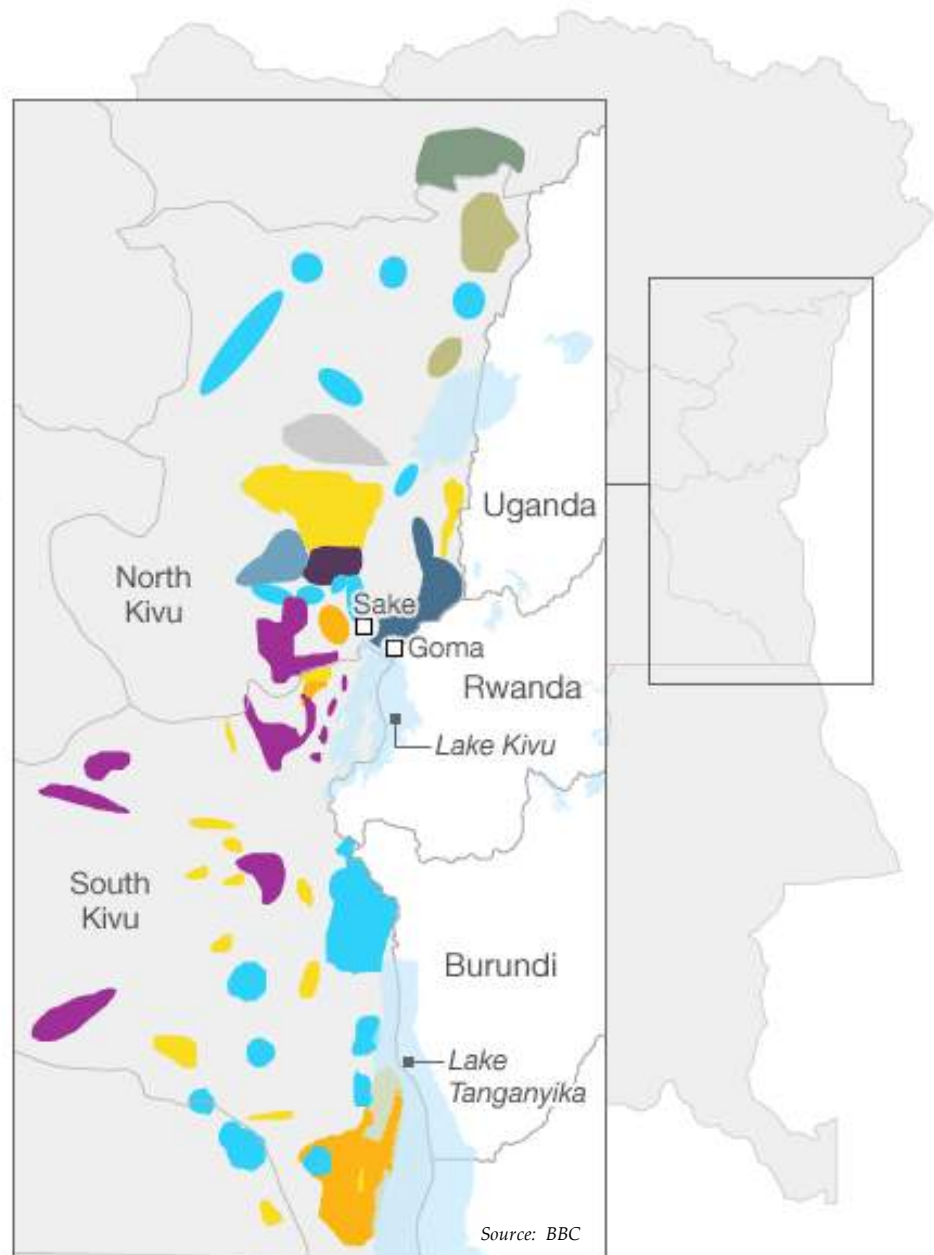
The security situation in eastern DRC, including Beni and Goma, remains unstable. Ugandan rebels have killed over 100 people in and around the town of Beni. Officials have since imposed a overnight curfew on the town. Any foreigners in North Kivu, including Goma, are currently advised to keep their security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

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

REBEL GROUPS

UN forces and the Congolese army are present in large towns

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



Source: BBC

On the Ground Reporting

- **16 April 2015** – Security sources in the region revealed Thursday that thirty-seven people were kidnapped Wednesday by rebels from Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) in the Rushuru territory of eastern DRC. According to sources, the 37 people were taken to the bush by their kidnapers. Officials have indicated that they do not know where the hostages have been taken. Despite North Kivu deputy governor Feller Litachichirwa indicating that a decision had been taken during a recent meeting of the provincial security committee to bolster security in the region, multiple kidnappings have been reported in the past few months. This has led to the Congolese army in deciding to escort all public vehicles using the Goma-Kanyabayonga route.
- **15 April 2015** – An official disclosed Wednesday that at least five people were beheaded in a machete attack in the eastern area of the DRC. According to Amisi Kalonda, the area administrator of the town of Beni, “five civilians were killed by machete in the Mbau area,” adding that the victims were killed “as they were going to work in the fields this morning.” Mbau lies around 30 kilometres (20 miles) from Beni in the North Kivu province. Residents of the village who managed to escape the attack had alerted the army. Officials in the region have blamed the attack on Uganda Islamist rebels from the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). **Update (16 April)** – Officials have updated the death toll, stating that nineteen people, including a pregnant woman, were killed in a machete attack in eastern DRC.
 - On Wednesday, Human Rights Watch urged DRC officials to release seven political activists held by intelligence services and police. In a statement, the New York-based international watchdog stated, “authorities should immediately release seven peaceful activists who have been wrongfully detained, some since March 15, 2015,” adding “security forces in the eastern city of Goma beat and otherwise mistreated demonstrators protesting government repression, including with water torture.” On 15 March, the DRC’s National Intelligence Agency (ANR) arrested dozens in the capital Kinshasa, seizing people who had just attended a US-sponsored workshop of the Filimbi project, which aims to help young civilians become involved in democratic citizenships. At the time, security agents arrested French journalists, a US diplomat, the French owner of the venue and visiting opposition activists from Burkina Faso and Senegal as well as dozens of DRC nationals. They were all taken to the ANR headquarters. While the French and American detainees were released the same night, and the Burkinabe and Senegalese activists were expelled days later, Human Rights Watch has indicated that three people remain detained in Kinshasa, including Fred Bauma, leader of the opposition Goma-based movement Struggle for Change (LUCHA). Four LUCHA members have been held in Goma since a rally that was held on 7 April to protests the arrests in the capital city. The HRW has noted that according to the DRC’s constitution, “security forces may not hold suspects without charge for more than 48 hours and should then let them go or turn them over to the appropriate judicial authorities.”
- **8 April 2015** – According to an army source, Rwandan rebels in the eastern region of the DRC

killed around ten soldiers in an ambush earlier this week, in what is now the insurgent's deadliest attack since the start of a military campaign against them, which was launched in February this year. The military source disclosed that the ambush took place on Monday in the Masisi region of North Kivu province, adding that two colonels were amongst those killed. Several other soldiers were also injured in the attack, which was carried out by rebels from the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR).

- **7 April 2015** – In an attempt to put an end to rumours that the bodies of opposition supporters were buried in a recently discovered mass grave in the capital Kinshasa, DRC authorities indicated Tuesday that the grave contained mainly stillborn babies and fetuses. Speaking to reporters, Kinshasa's interim governor Luzolani Mavema stated "the bodies of 421 people were buried on March 19 in the capital's Maluku district," and that amongst these, there were "around 300 stillborn babies and fetuses abandoned in streams, rivers and even hospitals." He added that the rest of the bodies included 23 that were abandoned, 34, which were drifters, and 64 that are yet to be identified. Mavema stressed that the government has "absolutely nothing to hide," adding that a number of the bodies had been handed over by the Red Cross. Rumours have been circulating that the mass grave may hold the bodies of government opponents who were killed during protests and mass arrests that took place in January. At the time, protesters had denounced moves, which they claimed were aimed at delaying presidential elections in an attempt to allow President Joseph Kabila to remain in power despite the constitution's limit on presidential terms. At the time, upwards of forty-two people died during the violent protests. According to an official, a judicial enquiry into the mass grave has been opened at the request of the United Nations Joint Office for Human Rights (BCNUDH) in the DRC. **Update (16 April)** – A minister disclosed Thursday that the DRC's government is ready to exhume the bodies of more than 400 people buried in a mass grave in March. According to Justice and Human Rights Minister Alexis Thambwe Mwamba, police, judiciary and the administration have opened inquests into the burial of 421 bodies in rural Maluku, adding that magistrates will determine whether or not an exhumation is needed.
- Police arrested five members of a pro-democracy group in the eastern DRC on Tuesday as they demonstrated against the illegal detention of activists in the capital Kinshasa. According to members of the youth movement Lucha, police in the city of Goma arrested the members as they encouraged residents to participate in five minutes of protest. The increasing number of detentions of activists in the DRC comes as the country's political climate is intensifying ahead of the presidential elections, which are due to take place next year, when President Joseph Kabila's mandate is set to end. Civil society leaders have warned that the government is targeting activists in a bid to silence critics of the government. On 15 March, some forty activists, musicians and journalists were detained in the capital city during a news conference that was organized by Congolese and West African pro-democracy advocates. A US diplomat was amongst those who were detained. While he was released shortly afterwards, officials have indicated that at least three of those who attended the meeting, including a

member of Lucha, remain in the custody of the Congolese National Intelligence Agency (ANR). Rights groups however have warned that the total number who remain detained is likely higher, with officials holding them despite the detainees not having been charged with a crime or given access to a lawyer.

- Authorities in the DRC have warned residents in the town of Zongo to inform security officials in the region if they find any refugees from the Central African Republic (CAR) carrying weapons. The appeal comes shortly after a CAR refugee was recently found with a grenade and comes at a time when refugees continue to enter the DRC in a bid to escape the ongoing violence in the CAR. Zongo mayor Michel Siazoo stated Monday that he is appealing "...to the local population, especially host families, to inform the security forces of any refugee who has a weapon," adding that "some refugees are selling a grenade for as low as 0.5 US dollar." The mayor warned the town's residents that members of the CAR's Seleka and anti-Balaka militias are likely to have mixed in with the refugees fleeing the CAR. Officials in the region have reported that over the past few days, over 250 refugees have arrived in Zongo after fleeing violence in the CAR's capital Bangui

Republic of the Congo

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

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

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



Equatorial Guinea

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

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

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



Gabon

Security Summary ~ While there is currently no travel advisory for Gabon, on 12 April, violent protests erupted in the capital city Libreville. Protesters burned cars and buildings, including Benin's Embassy. The protests have been linked to the sudden death of prominent opposition figure Andre Mba Obame. Further protests in the coming weeks may occur. MS Risk advises all travellers to the country to avoid large gatherings and demonstrations, as they may turn violent with minimal notice. We advise that you monitor the local news and adhere to advice given by local security officials.



Gabon has closed land, air and sea borders with countries affected by Ebola. This includes Nigeria. Flights and ships travelling from or via Ebola affected countries are banned. MS Risk advises all travellers to ensure that onward/return travel arrangements are flexible. These preventative measures have been taken in order to stop the spread of Ebola to Gabon. There is currently a low threat from terrorism.

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

On the Ground Reporting

- **12 April 2015** – Opposition supporters have burnt cars and set fire to the embassy of Benin in the capital city Libreville. Reports have indicated that the violence erupted after the announcement of the death of senior opposition figure Andre Mba Obame, 57, who died after a prolonged illness in neighbouring Cameroon earlier on Sunday. While Mba Obame had served as an adviser to former President Omar Bongo, he broke with the ruling party and ran for the presidency as an independent after Bongo's death in 2009. While the official results had indicated that the late leader's son Ali Bongo had won the elections, Mba Obame had declared himself the winner, a move that led to authorities accusing him of treason. In a statement released by Mba Obame's National Union political party, which he joined shortly after the 2009 presidential elections, officials confirmed his passing however no cause of death has been released. On the ground sources have reported that a group of supporters, who have accused the government of poisoning Mba Obame, burned government service cars in the capital Libreville before arriving at Benin's embassy. Gabon's Interior Minister Guy Bertrand Mapangou has stated that everything will be done in order to find the perpetrators of the violence.

Regional Reporting

- **17 April 2015** – A Gabonese delegation, led by Foreign Minister Emmanuel Issoze Ngondet, arrived in Benin on Wednesday to deliver a personal apology from President Ali Bongo Ondimba to his Beninese counterpart President Boni Yayi over last Sunday's attack on Benin's Embassy in Libreville. Speaking shortly after meeting with the President, Foreign Minister Ngondet disclosed that Gabon's government had "strongly condemned the destruction and burning of Benin's Embassy in Libreville by some individuals on April 12, 2015," adding "we are in Cotonou to express our solidarity and apologies of our president to his Beninese counterpart and brother, over this unfortunate incident." The Gabonese chief diplomat has stated that last Sunday's incident had violated the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, noting, "the acts that led to the burning of Beninese Embassy in Libreville were isolated acts. The protests were not meant to oppose Beninese interests in Gabon." He further indicated that Gabonese authorities have taken additional measures to not only secure Benin's embassy in Libreville, but to also protect Beninese nationals and their properties across the entire national territory.
- **13 April 2015** – On Monday, Benin demanded an "official explanation" of the torching of its embassy in Gabon during unrest that erupted after the announcement of the death of a senior Gabonese opposition leader. On Sunday, opposition supporters set fire to cars and buildings in Gabon's capital city Libreville after officials announced the death of Andre Mba Obame. Benin's embassy was amongst those buildings that had been affected however it was not immediately clear why it was targeted during the unrest. In a statement released Monday, Beninese officials indicated that the fire was "an unacceptable act and of a rare seriousness in a relationship between

nations,” adding “the safety of diplomatic missions and the protection of their personnel are the responsibility of the receiving government.” In the statement, Benin demanded “an official explanation from the Gabonese government.” Benin’s government has also called on all its citizens living in Gabon to “take shelter from the acts of vandalism and violence orchestrated by uncontrolled groups of protesters.” **Update (14 April)** – Diplomatic sources in Cotonou disclosed Tuesday that Gabon’s government has apologized to Benin’s government and has strongly condemned Sunday’s destruction of the latter’s embassy in Libreville. A letter issued from the Gabonese government to Beninese authorities indicated, “Gabon’s government wishes to express its support to Benin’s Embassy in Libreville and would wish to assure Beninese authorities that these acts will not be repeated.” According to the letter, Gabon’s government has promised that an investigation into the incident has been launched in order to identify those responsible for the attack so that they can be charged before competent authorities. In regards to Beninese nationals living in Gabon, the letter noted that the Beninese community in Gabon had totally integrated, with a source stating “Gabon’s government, in its desire to maintain peace and security across the national territory, calls on Beninese nationals living in Gabon to remain calm and support all measures taken to safeguard their physical integrity and safety of their properties.”

São Tomé and Príncipe

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

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

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

