



**MS | RISK**

## **West Africa Report**

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

**April 13 - 26, 2015**



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MS Risk has a dedicated team of researchers, a 24/7 hotline service and a pool of trained and experienced consultants to support client needs.

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  - Due diligence and investigations.
- Project Management
  - Interim security
  - Training
  - Special assignments
- Crisis Response
  - Crisis management
  - Business continuity management
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- 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)

## 24 hr Contact Information:

Email: [operations@msrisk.com](mailto:operations@msrisk.com)  
Telephone: +44 207 754 3555

## Summary

April 13 - 26, 2015



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### Benin

#### *On the Ground Reporting*

- **24 April 2015** – Benin's land borders with its neighbors will be closed between 25 – 27 April in order to ensure peaceful legislative elections, which will take place on 26 April.

#### *Domestic News*

- **26 April 2015** – On Sunday, Benin went to the polls to vote in legislative elections that are seen as a key test for President Thomas Boni Yayi, whom the opposition accuses of planning to stay beyond his second term in office, which is due to end next year.
- **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.

## Gambia

- **19 April 2015** – On Friday a magistrates' court in the Gambian capital Banjul issued an arrest warrant for an exiled Gambian politician who allegedly assaulted a close associate of President Yahya Jammeh.

## Guinea

- **26 April 2015** – After days of deadly clashes between activists and security forces, Guinea's opposition has called for renewed protests.
- **23 April 2015** – Witnesses reported Thursday that security forces killed a protester and wounded four others as opposition supporters clashed with police in a series of anti-government rallies in Guinea's largest towns and cities.
- **22 April 2015** – President Alpha Conde stated Wednesday that the country's constitution ruled out the kind of changes to the election timetable that are currently being sought by opposition supporters.
- **20 April 2015** - Guinean security forces took to the streets of the capital Conakry on Monday as new protests were launched.
  - According to judicial sources, a prosecutor has called for the death penalty for fifteen people accused of the murders of a nine-member Ebola team in southern Guinea.
- **19 April 2015** – Ahead of new protests, which are due to take place Monday in order to call for a disputed electoral timetable to be dismissed, a Guinean government delegation has met with opposition leader Cellou Dalein Diallo.
- **16 April 2015** – Guinean authorities have confirmed at least nine new cases of Ebola in the southwestern region of Forecariah, which is located near the border with Sierra Leone.
- **15 April 2015** – In a bid to end two days of violent clashes, which have left two dead, including a young girl, and wounded several, Guinea's government and opposition protesters offered concessions on Tuesday.
- **14 April 2015** – Violent clashes erupted for a second day on Tuesday between security forces and opposition parties.
- **13 April 2015** – Guinean police opened fire on anti-government protesters on Monday, killing one protester and wounding several others during violent clashes that erupted in the capital Conakry.

## Liberia

- **18 April 2015** – On Saturday, seven hundred Liberian Ebola workers protested in the streets of the capital city for a second day, demanding promised hazard pay.

## Mali

- **24 April 2015** – Seven UN peacekeepers have been seriously injured in a landmine blast in northern Mali.
- **22 April 2015** – In a statement released Wednesday, Mali's Tuareg-led rebellion reaffirmed its refusal to sign a peace deal that has been agreed by the Malian government and other armed groups and which is due to be officially recognized on 15 May.
  - The UN peacekeeping mission in Mali disclosed Wednesday that it had arrested three people in the town of Aguelhok, which is located in the Kidal region, on Monday after discovering landmines.
- **20 April 2015** – On Monday, UN officials in Mali reported that a driver was killed in an ambush on a peacekeeping supply convoy in northern Mali in what is the third deadly assault on the mission in less than a week.
- **18 April 2015** – The UN mission in Mali reported Saturday that two drivers have been shot dead after a peacekeeping supply convoy was attacked in northern Mali.

- According to a statement released Saturday, international mediators in the ongoing conflict in Mali have invited all parties to sign a peace and reconciliation agreement at a ceremony due to take place in Bamako on 15 May.
- **15 April 2015** – A suicide bomber attacked a United Nations barracks in northern Mali on Wednesday, killing three civilians and wounding sixteen people, including several peacekeepers.
- **14 April 2015** – According to a newly released report compiled by Human Rights Watch (HRW), armed groups operating in Mali are carrying out an increasing number of attacks, with violence taking place closer to the capital Bamako.
- **13 April 2015** – According to officials, a Malian military vehicle struck a roadside bomb in the southern region of Mali on Sunday, killing two soldiers and wounding three others.

## Mauritania

- **20 April 2015** – A court in Mauritania has sentenced a senior al-Qaeda leader, who has been accused of planning attacks on the United States, Europe and Australia, to twenty years in prison for “terrorist activities.”

## Niger

- **26 April 2015** – Suspected Boko Haram fighters in motorized canoes attacked a Niger army base on an island in Lake Chad.
- **22 April 2015** – Since Monday, all schools in and around the capital, Niamey, have been closed because of a meningitis outbreak that has killed 85 people this year.
  - The World Health Organization for Animal Health (OIE) disclosed Wednesday that Niger has confirmed an outbreak of the highly pathogenic H5N1 bird flu.
- **20 April 2015** – Niger’s defense ministry reported late Monday that Nigerien soldiers intercepted a shipment of nearly three tonnes of cannabis being escorted by a group of heavily armed smugglers in the mountains of northern Niger.
- **18 April 2015** – According to Niger’s agriculture minister, more than 2.5 million people in the West African nation are suffering from food insecurity because of a shortfall in the cereal harvest caused by poor weather and crop pests.
- **16 April 2015** – Niger’s health minister revealed Thursday that a meningitis epidemic, which broke out in Niger in January, has killed 75 people so far.

## Nigeria

### *Coverage of the Gubernatorial and State Assembly Elections (11 April)*

- **13 April 2015** – Official election results on Monday showed that the party of Nigeria’s president-elect Muhammadu Buhari has won governorship elections in a majority of the West African country’s thirty-six states, effectively allowing it to build its strength nationwide after a historic presidential win.

### *On the Ground Reporting*

- **25 April 2015** – Local officials and witnesses reported Friday that suspected Boko Haram insurgents have forced hundreds of soldiers to flee Marte, a border town in Nigeria.
- **23 April 2015** – Security sources reported Thursday that Nigerian troops have been forced to retreat from Boko Haram’s Sambisa Forest stronghold after a landmine blast killed one soldier and three vigilantes.
- **21 April 2015** – In a surprise move less than six weeks before leaving office, outgoing President Goodluck Jonathan on Tuesday dismissed Nigeria’s police chief, a decision that has raised questions of a political motive.
- **18 April 2015** – According to police officials, at least twenty-three villagers were killed after clashes erupted between two mainly fishing and farming communities in Nigeria’s central Benue state.
  - Government officials disclosed Saturday that a “mysterious” disease, which kills patients within 24 hours, has claimed at least seventeen lives in a southeastern Nigerian town.

- **17 April 2015** – On Friday, Nigerian air traffic controllers suspended a strike that had grounded all domestic flights, however they have warned that a more damaging work stoppage would be launched next week if their demands were not met.
- **16 April 2015** – On Thursday, Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan told the United Nations that his country would not need the help of an international force in the fight against Boko Haram.

## Sierra Leone

- **22 April 2015** – Police in the capital Freetown are searching for seven people who fled an area of the city that was placed under quarantine when a member of their family died of Ebola.
- **14 April 2015** – On Tuesday, Sierra Leone reopened its schools, more than eight months after classes were shut in a bid to end the spread of the deadly Ebola virus.

## Togo

- **26 April 2015** – According to Togo's electoral commission, turnout for the weekend elections was low.
- **21 April 2015** – Amnesty International (AI) has called on the Togolese government to respect the right to demonstrate ahead of the country's presidential elections on 25 April.
- **19 April 2015** – The Commission of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) will deploy 100 poll observers to Togo on Monday ahead of the 25 April presidential elections.



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## **Ghana**

An outbreak of the Ebola virus disease has been confirmed in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia. There currently are no confirmed Ebola cases in Ghana. MS Risk advises all travellers to Ghana to take the necessary precautions, including maintaining strict standards of hygiene and avoiding eating bush meat.

Although there is currently no travel advisory for Ghana, the country has seen an increase in violent robbery in 2013. Throughout 2014, there have been a number of cases of violent robberies involving foreign nationals who have been attacked and robbed while travelling in taxis after dark. There have also been incidents where an assailant has been concealed in the trunk of the taxi. Recently, a number of foreign nationals in Tamale have been attacked and robbed by machete wielding individuals. MS Risk advises all travellers to the Tamale area to travel by private car and to avoid walking on the roads, or using a motor scooter or bicycle after dark.

Most armed robberies occur at night however there have been some reports of such incidents occurring during daytime. A common tactic has been to deliberately cause a minor road traffic accident in order to force the targeted vehicle to stop. As a result of ongoing local Chieftancy and land disputes, isolated inter-ethnic violence and civil unrest can occur at any time, including in the Northern, Upper East and Volta regions. A dusk to dawn curfew has been put in place on the Hohoe community in the Volta region. This is due to communal clashes over the exhumation of the Chief Imam of Hohoe. If you are considering travelling to the Northern Region, MS Risk advises you to remain alert to the potential of new outbreaks of flooding which is common in the Upper West, Upper East and Northern Regions during the rainy season, which spans from March to November. We advise that you monitor the local weather reports and expect difficulties when travelling to affected areas during this season.

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## **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

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.

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## 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.

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## Sahel Region

**Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country**

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



### Security Summary

The current Ebola outbreak affects, Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. Some airlines have suspended flights to the affected countries due to the deteriorating public health situation. MS Risk advises all to carefully assess your need to travel to these countries. If you do decide to travel, we advise that you make sure you have adequate arrangements in place for onward travel/exit and have adequate emergency health provisions.

There is a very real threat of kidnap to westerners in the Sahel and surrounding regions. The Sahel region includes Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania and Niger, however the kidnap threat extends to other countries, including Algeria, Cameroon, Libya and Nigeria. Following the military intervention in Mali, which was launched in January 2013, the threat of kidnap and terrorist attacks has increased, with further attacks highly likely to continue.

There are currently around six hostages being held in the Sahel and surrounding regions. Victims in the region have included construction workers, NGO workers, tourists and diplomats of various nationalities, primarily European.

## Benin

### No Travel Restrictions



### Security Summary

Benin's land borders with its neighbors will be closed between 25 – 27 April in order to ensure peaceful legislative elections, which are due to take place on 26 April.

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.

### On the Ground Reporting

- **24 April 2015** – Benin's land borders with its neighbors will be closed between 25 – 27 April in order to ensure peaceful legislative elections, which will take place on 26 April. Over 4.5 million Beninese voters are expected to cast their votes Sunday to elect 83 members of parliament. Benin shares land borders with Nigeria on the west, Niger to the north, Burkina Faso to the northwest and Togo to the west.

### Domestic News

- **26 April 2015** – On Sunday, Benin went to the polls to vote in legislative elections that are seen as a key test for President Thomas Boni Yayi, whom the opposition accuses of planning to stay beyond his second term in office, which is due to end next year. About 4.4 million voters are eligible to cast their ballots to elect 83 lawmakers. The president has announced plans for constitutional reforms that are aimed at targeting corruption by strengthening the justice system. However the opposition has insisted that his real motive for the constitutional amendment is to remove the two-term limit on presidential mandates so that he can run for office in 2016. Nine hours of voting had been scheduled to begin at 0600 GMT however polling stations in several districts in Cotonou were still closed at mid-morning because of delays in the distribution of election materials. The African Union envoy for the election, Mali's former interim president Dioncounda Traore, indicated that while he had seen "large crowds," he confirmed that there were numerous delays at the polling stations that he had visited.

- **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.”

## Burkina Faso

**Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country**

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



### Security Summary

There is currently an Ebola virus outbreak in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. While there currently have been no confirmed cases of the Ebola virus in Burkina Faso, MS Risk advises all travellers to remain cautious, including maintaining strict standards of hygiene. As a precautionary measure, Burkina Faso's environmental ministry has banned all special hunting for bats, which is the main carrier of the deadly virus.

#### Threats and Concerns

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

border with Mali may enable such elements to gain access. The regional Islamist elements that could threaten Burkina Faso include: al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), Ansar al Dine, Ansar al Sharia and Boko Haram.

#### Kidnapping Threats



There is a heightened risk that terrorist groups, including AQIM and MUJAO, may cross the northern borders from Mali into Burkina Faso in order to carry out kidnaps. MS Risk therefore advises against all travel to the areas of Burkina Faso north of the town of Boulssa, which is 25 km north of the capital of Ouagadougou. We particularly advise against all travel to the regions that border Mali and Niger. Since 2008, over 25 Westerners have been kidnapped in the Sahel region, and a number of these hostages continue to be held. AQIM operates directly or through criminal gangs who carry out kidnappings on their behalf or pass on their kidnap victims in return for payment.

### *Crime*

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

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

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

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

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

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



# 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

- **19 April 2015** – On Friday a magistrates' court in the Gambian capital Banjul issued an arrest warrant for an exiled Gambian politician who allegedly assaulted a close associate of President Yahya Jammeh. According to officials, Sheikh Sidia Bayo, leader of the National Transitional Council of the Gambia (NTCG) and the Gambian Alliance Democratic Party, is alleged to have ordered his security team to target Gambian businessman Amadou Samba in a hotel elevator in the Senegalese capital Dakar earlier this year. While the incident occurred in Senegal, and is being investigated by Senegalese authorities, President Jammeh's regime is seeking to have Mr Bayo extradited to the Gambia to stand trial for the assault. Since launching his National Transitional Council of the Gambia in September 2012, which is seeking a regime change in Banjul, many have seen Mr Bayo as a problem for the President's regime. Mr Bayo, a French national of Gambian descent, was recently expelled by the Senegalese government after he was accused of complicity in an attempt to topple President Jammeh's regime in December 2014.

## 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. Over the past several weeks, there have been a number of violent demonstrations that have occurred in the capital city Conakry and across the country. Violent demonstrations are likely to further take place, particularly in the run up to the Presidential elections, which are due to take place in October. MS Risk advises all travelers to Guinea to maintain extreme vigilance, to monitor the local media and to avoid large gatherings.

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,

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

- **26 April 2015** – After days of deadly clashes between activists and security forces, Guinea's opposition has called for renewed protests. In a statement issued late Saturday, the coalition of the main opposition parties stated that it was planning "another peaceful march" in Conakry on Thursday followed by a nationwide demonstration next week. The call for renewed protests follows two weeks of clashes that erupted between anti-government activists and security services, which have left several people dead and dozens wounded. A delegation of the European Union (EU) in Conakry has called for an end to the bloodshed, noting that it is "a very worrying signal at a time when all political actors should be working together to eradicate Ebola." In a statement released Saturday, the delegation called on both sides to "exercise the utmost restraint in their statements and political actions and resume political dialogue without delay," adding that it urged the Guinean government and opposition to "work constructively in order to reach a consensual solution for organization elections and preserving peace in the country."
- **23 April 2015** – Witnesses reported Thursday that security forces killed a protester and wounded four others as opposition supporters clashed with police in a series of anti-government rallies in Guinea's largest towns and cities. On the ground sources have reported that clashes broke out around midday between demonstrators and police in the suburbs of the capital Conakry. Youths gathered in large crowds on the main streets in Conakry where they faced off against security forces who had deployed in large numbers in the capital and across the country. Local media reported that demonstrators clashed with police in Kinda, Guinea's third-largest city and the head quarters of the country's military. A policeman and a protester were wounded. In the central town of Mamou, security forces blocked the road leading to the headquarters of the main opposition party. Earlier this week, around a dozen police officers were wounded in clashes. According to a hospital source in Labe, which is Guinea's second-largest city and an opposition stronghold, the victim "was beaten with batons by security forces." At least five civilians sustained minor injuries. The opposition had called for a nationwide day of protest against a disputed election timetable. Thursday's protests come as the president has ruled out any review of the election timetable despite two weeks of violent clashes that have affected the capital Conakry. Over the past two weeks, violence between opposition activists and police in Conakry have left several dead however demonstrators have vowed that they will continue unauthorized rallies against President Alpha Conde. Ahead of Thursday's protests, Conakry governor Soriba Sorel Camara criticized sections of the opposition in a statement read on public radio, for having "chosen the street" to make their case. He also accused activists of "acts of rare barbarity" including "stoning public and private vehicles, seriously wounding public order officials." He urged the public to go about their normal business.
- **22 April 2015** – President Alpha Conde stated Wednesday that the country's constitution ruled out the kind of changes to the election timetable that are currently being sought by opposition supporters. Speaking to reporters shortly after meeting with French President Francois Hollande in Paris, President Conde stated "the Guinean constitution requires that presidential elections take place on a precise date... We will do

everything possible to maintain order in the republic.” Under the current timetable, presidential elections are scheduled for October ahead of the local elections, which are set to take place next year.

- **20 April 2015** - Guinean security forces took to the streets of the capital Conakry on Monday as new protests were launched. Calling for a disputed election timetable to be dismissed, hundreds of youths burnt tyres and barricaded roads across the capital city. Police officers responded with tear gas, which led to brief clashes erupting between the protesters and policemen. In a statement released late Monday, the government disclosed that a trainee policeman, who was apparently shot by protesters, had been seriously wounded, adding that two demonstrators were arrested after they caused extensive damage. Former Prime Minister Sidya Toure, of the Union of Republic Forces (UFR), however claimed “another very successful day for the opposition, which has paralyzed the entire city.” UFR officials indicated that police had fired tear gas at their headquarters as the protesters got underway, with one official indicating that pro-government demonstrators threw stones at the UFR building while police stood by. Toure later stated that “as soon as demonstrations start in Conakry, they always start by hitting the UFR headquarters with tear gas to prevent us from mobilizing and going out.” He further indicated that the authorities were desperate to avoid demonstrations on the nearby Fidel Castro highway as “if this route is blocked as well as the Prince highway, its finished for Conakry.” In a statement released early Monday, Governor Soriba Sorel Camara stated that he expected that the Guinean opposition would be “throwing stones, dumping garbage and burning tyres on public roads,” noting that protests were going ahead despite the capital city still being affected by the Ebola outbreak. Camara called on residents of Conakry to “go about their usual activities,” adding that the state would ensure their safety and secure their property. Schools, shops and petrol stations remained closed across the capital on Monday, with the Prince highway, which is the main route from the suburbs into central Conakry, almost deserted. **Update (21 April)** – According to an opposition leader and an eyewitness, at least five people were wounded by gunfire in the capital on Monday during violent opposition protests. On the ground sources disclosed Monday that as early as 0300 GMT, some opposition supporters had erected barricades and burned tyres on the streets while youths fought street battles with the police and gendarmes. Monday’s clashes intensified in the evening and regular gunshots were heard in several neighborhoods.
  - According to judicial sources, a prosecutor has called for the death penalty for fifteen people accused of the murders of a nine-member Ebola team in southern Guinea. The victims, including journalists and local health officials, went missing after angry locals attacked their delegation during an outreach visit in the southern town of Womey in September 2014. Two days after the attack, officials recovered eight bodies from the septic tank of a nearby primary school. Williams Fernandez, prosecuting at the trial, which is taking place in the southern city of N’Zerekore, indicated that twenty-six defendants have been accused of a number of offences, including murder, criminal conspiracy, robbery, assault and theft. He has called for fifteen of the accused to be sentenced to death while the remaining eleven to be acquitted. The five-week trial is due to conclude at the end of this week. The deadly Ebola outbreak first emerged in Guinea in December 2013 and quickly spread to neighboring Liberia and Sierra Leone. The outbreak also sparked fear and paranoia amongst villagers, who felt that the government and the international community could not be trusted. Many Guineans believe that local and foreign healthcare workers were part of a conspiracy to deliberately introduce the outbreak. **Update (22 April)** – Eleven people have been sentenced to life in prison for murdering eight Ebola workers while another fifteen have been acquitted.
- **19 April 2015** – Ahead of new protests, which are due to take place Monday in order to call for a disputed electoral timetable to be dismissed, a Guinean government delegation has met with opposition leader



Cellou Dalein Diallo. According to a statement released Sunday by the delegation, which was headed by justice minister Cheick Sako, their first meeting in almost eighteen months had “relaunched a dialogue” with former prime minister Diallo, adding “this step was intended to reiterate to the opposition the government’s willingness to review the dialogue (which is) the only route that ends with a calmer political climate and inclusive elections.” Diallo confirmed that he had received the group of senior officials however he warned that cancelling Monday’s planned protests was “out of the question” without the guaranteed implementation of a 2013 agreement that stipulates that local elections take place before the presidential polls. On Monday, protesters are due to march to the headquarters of the country’s national electoral commission. In recent days, supporters of Diallo’s Union of Democratic Forces of Guinea have rallied over the electoral timetable, which they claim has been pushed through without consultation and which gives the ruling party an unfair advantage. They are also concerned about the fragile security situation in Guinea, which they blame on President Alpha Conde’s regime.

- **16 April 2015** – Guinean authorities have confirmed at least nine new cases of Ebola in the southwestern region of Forecariah, which is located near the border with Sierra Leone. As part of an emergency 45-day drive to tackle the Ebola outbreak in Guinea, on 12 April authorities launched a four-day door-to-door campaign in Forecariah in a bid to improve community participation in reporting suspected cases. Sakoba Keita, national coordinator for the fight against Ebola in Guinea, disclosed that authorities had also detected deaths in the community however only one of them has been confirmed as Ebola. Officials have indicated that the community’s reluctance to curb traditional burial practices, which involve touching the dead, remains to be the main reason for the continued spread of the deadly disease.
- **15 April 2015** – In a bid to end two days of violent clashes, which have left two dead, including a young girl, and wounded several, Guinea’s government and opposition protesters offered concessions on Tuesday. Since Monday, hundreds of youths have been protesting in the capital Conakry, throwing stones at police who have responded with tear gas and warning shots. The protests have brought traffic in the capital to a standstill. The government indicated Tuesday that at least seven anti-government demonstrators were shot Monday, one fatally, while a young girl also died in the violence “after a fall.” However the government has denied claims made by the opposition and medical sources that police had fired at protesters. In a statement released Tuesday, the prime minister disclosed that he had “given firm instructions on maintaining law and order, in strict compliance with the law and hopes that light be shed on the gunfire recorded during the clashes and the circumstances that caused injuries.” After an appeal by Prime Minister Mohamed Said Fofana for talks, Guinea’s opposition indicated that it was calling off the protests until next week. Opposition leader Cellou Dalein Diallo indicated “we have decided to suspend the demonstrations until Monday to allow our members and the population space to breathe.” Diallo’s announcement followed a government statement, which indicated that the prime minister had “set up a small committee to make concrete proposals for the rapid resumption of dialogue with the opposition parties,” adding “ahead of these proposals, the prime minister formally asks the leaders of political parties to agree to come to the discussion table so that the debate can be held in an atmosphere of serenity.” While the statement further disclosed that the government remained “open to any suggestion that respects the law” in order to end the crisis, Diallo has indicated that any dialogue with the government could only take place if the election commission cancelled the current electoral timetable.
- **14 April 2014** – Violent clashes erupted for a second day on Tuesday between security forces and opposition parties. On the ground sources reported witnessing security forces mobilizing in large numbers in a bid to prevent opposition activists from gathering for unauthorized rallies. Government sources have indicated that police had arrested fifteen people, while ten wounded were being treated in hospital, including

seven that were admitted on Tuesday. Shops remained closed across the capital city while the Marche Madina, which is the one of the largest markets in West Africa, was closed for most of the day.

- **13 April 2015** – Guinean police opened fire on anti-government protesters on Monday, killing one protester and wounding several others during violent clashes that erupted in the capital Conakry. On the ground sources have disclosed that rioting broke out around 9:30 AM in several suburbs of the capital city, including in Simbaya and Hamadallaye. The opposition had called for demonstrations in all parts of the capital against the ongoing lack of security, for which it blames the regime of President Alpha Conde. In March, the opposition also boycotted parliament in protest over the timetable for the presidential elections. They have accused the president of using the Ebola outbreak as an excuse to postpone voting. Former Prime Ministers Cellou Dalein Diallo, Sidya Toure and Lansana Kouyate have accused the president of repeated rights violations, stating that he had “lost all legitimacy.” They have called on supporters to back several demands, including a call to bring forward local elections, which are due to take place in March next year.



## 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

- **18 April 2015** – On Saturday, seven hundred Liberian Ebola workers protested in the streets of the capital city for a second day, demanding promised hazard pay. Protests were held Friday in Monrovia, where demonstrators disrupted a ceremony during which French medical charity Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) was due to hand over management of Liberia's main Ebola unit to the government. On Saturday, the workers, who were hired by MSF, again blocked the entrance to Liberia's largest Ebola facility. The Ebola Treatment Unit, known as ELWA 3, has more than 400 beds and a work force that includes 700 healthcare workers who were hired by MSF. A spokesman for the workers stated that they "...were told that we would receive risk benefits at the end of the epidemic. MSF wants to turn over (ELWA 3) to the government and the government has not yet given us our risk benefit." The protesters have not disclosed the amount of the hazard pay they say is owned by the government and MSF officials present at the protests declined to comment. Saye Bawuo, Liberia's assistant health minister has apologized for the cancellation of Friday's event and has indicated that the health ministry will "look into this issue, to see how redress can be attended to."

# 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

- **24 April 2015** – Seven UN peacekeepers have been seriously injured in a landmine blast in northern Mali. According to a source, a UN vehicle struck a landmine on a road that links Kidal and Gao late Thursday, leaving seven peacekeepers injured. Olivier Salvador, spokesperson for the UN mission in Mali, confirmed that attack however he provided no details on the incident.
- **22 April 2015** – In a statement released Wednesday, Mali's Tuareg-led rebellion reaffirmed its refusal to sign a peace deal that has been agreed by the Malian government and other armed groups and which is due to be officially recognized on 15 May. While the UN Security Council had urged the main Tuareg rebel alliance, known as the Coordination for the Movements of Azawad (CMA), to agree to the deal or face sanctions, the Coordination on Wednesday reiterated its position, stating that it "shall not commit" to the document in its current form. The alliance has previously stated that it could not accept the accord without "amendments," including one that recognizes "Azawad," the name that is used by the Tuaregs for the northern part of Mali, as a "geographic, political and juridical entity." International and African diplomats as well as the Bamako government have rejected this amendment. The Coordination's statement did add that the CMA "reaffirms its commitment to respect the ceasefire of May 23, 2014 signed in Kidal and the declaration of cessation of hostilities of July 24 2014 in Algiers."
  - The UN peacekeeping mission in Mali disclosed Wednesday that it had arrested three people in the town of Aguelhok, which is located in the Kidal region, on Monday after discovering landmines. According to UN officials, since 2013, around 325 civilians, security personnel and peacekeepers have been wounded or killed by explosive ordnance in Mali.
- **20 April 2015** – On Monday, UN officials in Mali reported that a driver was killed in an ambush on a peacekeeping supply convoy in northern Mali in what is the third deadly assault on the mission in less than a week. A statement released by the UN's MINUSMA peacekeeping mission indicated that the civilian contractors were targeted at 11:30 AM, around 30 kilometres (20 miles) west of Gao, adding "initial reports indicate that at least one driver was killed, his truck was later set on fire." MINUSMA chief Mongi Hamdi has condemned the attacks, stating that the UN "...will adjust our security arrangements so that such crimes are not repeated. MINUSMA cannot tolerate this." He has called for the perpetrators to be brought to justice and has urged the Malian military and police to increase security in the area. It was not immediately clear how the victim was killed however Monday's attack comes just days after two drivers were shot dead as a MINUSMA supply convoy was ambushed nearby.
- **18 April 2015** – The UN mission in Mali reported Saturday that two drivers have been shot dead after a peacekeeping supply convoy was attacked in northern Mali. According to a statement released by MINUSMA, two assailants stopped the convoy some 15 kilometres (9 miles) from the main city of Gao and "coldly killed two drivers" in the attack which occurred late Friday. They later set the vehicles on fire. Officials have disclosed that a third person was wounded in the attack. No group has claimed responsibility for Friday's attack, however the incident comes just days after an attack on the UN peacekeeping base in the same region as Gao, in which three civilians were killed and sixteen people were wounded. Al-Mourabitoun has claimed responsibility for that attack.
  - According to a statement released Saturday, international mediators in the ongoing conflict in Mali have invited all parties to sign a peace and reconciliation agreement at a ceremony due to take place in Bamako on 15 May. The statement disclosed that mediators meeting in Algiers in order to review progress on the accord "invite and encourage all political-military movements...to proceed by signing the agreement." Peace talks, which were launched in Algiers last July, resulted in last month an



agreement between the Malian government and some armed groups that operate in the region. However the main Tuareg rebel alliance has not signed the agreement, stating that they want several amendments to be made before they can sign. On 10 April, the UN Security Council urged the Tuareg rebel alliance to sign the agreement or face sanctions. The agreement, which was negotiated under UN auspices, provides for greater regional autonomy for the north in line with long-standing demands by Tuaregs and other groups.

- **15 April 2015** – A suicide bomber attacked a United Nations barracks in northern Mali on Wednesday, killing three civilians and wounding sixteen people, including several peacekeepers. According to UN officials, the militant was attempting to drive into a camp used by the UN's MINUSMA peacekeeping mission in Ansong, in the northern region of Gao, when the explosives went off. A statement released by MINUSMA disclosed, "the attack left nine injured, two seriously, among the peacekeepers from the Niger contingent. In addition, the explosion has killed at least three civilians. Seven (civilians) were also injured." The UN mission in Mali has not disclosed whether the bomber was acting alone or if there were others in the vehicle. Militants operating in northern Mali have staged a number of deadly attacks on UN forces, with at least 35 peacekeepers killed and over 140 wounded since MINUSMA was deployed in July 2013. The camp targeted on Wednesday is situated near the scene of the killing of a Red Cross worker two weeks ago. That attack was claimed by the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO). Last month, a Chadian peacekeeper and two children died when militants fired more than thirty rockets at a UN barracks in the northern city of Kidal. **Update (17 April)** – In a recording released Friday, an al-Qaeda-linked group, led by Algerian militant Mokhtar Belmokhtar, has claimed responsibility for a deadly suicide attack that targeted the UN mission in Mali. In an audio message that was sent to Mauritanian news agency Alakhbar, which frequently publishes statements attributed to extremist groups that operate in the region, Belmokhtar's al-Murabitoun group indicated that it had carried out the attack. The group disclosed that it had targeted Nigerien nationals because their president, Mahamadou Issoufou, had taken part in the mass Paris rally over the jihadist attack on French satirical weekly Charlie Hebdo in January. They further added that the attack was also an act of revenge for Niger allowing French and American troops on its soil, and described Wednesday's attack as "the second operation to avenge insults against the Prophet," referring to Charlie Hebdo's cartoon depictions of Islam's Prophet Mohammed. While the Malian government had initially reported that a civilian MINUSMA worker and a child were killed in the attack, adding that the suicide bomber was also killed and 21 people, including several peacekeepers, were wounded, al-Murabitoun has denied that any civilians were killed, arguing that this would not have been possible "given the distance between the camp and the town." It appears that al-Murabitoun is increasingly gaining strength and ability to carry out deadly attacks in Mali, with the militant group most recently claiming responsibility for the 7 March attack on a Bamako nightclub. Al-Murabitoun was formed in 2013 from the merger of Belmokhtar's Signatories in Blood group and the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO). Belmokhtar, a former al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) chief, is wanted by the security services of several countries after allegedly masterminding a siege in January 2013 of an Algerian gas plant, in which thirty-eight hostages were killed. He is also believed to have been behind twin car bombings that occurred in Niger in May of that year and which killed at least twenty people. Belmokhtar, who is thought to be based in Libya, has been designated a foreign terrorist by the United States, with the State Department offering a US \$5 million reward for information leading to his capture.
- **14 April 2015** – According to a newly released report compiled by Human Rights Watch (HRW), armed groups operating in Mali are carrying out an increasing number of attacks, with violence taking place closer to the capital Bamako. The new report has indicated that while the French-led military operation, which was

launched in early 2013, helped to dislodge radical Islamic militants from power in northern Mali, many of these security gains are now being reversed as militants are increasingly becoming active further south from their northern strongholds where they have targeted civilians accused of supporting the French and UN forces. Corrine Dufka, West Africa director for the rights group, has warned that the Malian government must move quickly to restore order. Sources have disclosed that much of the violence in central Mali has been blamed on a new radical group, known as the Macina Liberation Movement. It is believed that this militant group has links to the same jihadists who gained control of northern Mali between 2012 – 2013. According to the HRW report, armed men have been attempting to recruit boys and young men to join the new extremist group. Over the past few months, attacks in Mali have increased, however militants have also begun to target areas in central and southern Mali. On Sunday, at least two Malian soldiers were killed when their vehicle hit a roadside bomb in Segou region while last month, a masked gunman opened fire inside a popular restaurant in the capital city. Five civilians, including two foreigners were killed.

- **13 April 2015** – According to officials, a Malian military vehicle struck a roadside bomb in the southern region of Mali on Sunday, killing two soldiers and wounding three others. According to Col. Souleymane Maiga, the attack took place Sunday in Mali's Segou region, which is located between Niono and Diabally. While there was no immediate claim of responsibility, suspicion has fallen on armed groups that are aligned with Islamic militants from the Timbuktu area of northern Mali.

## Mauritania

**Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country**

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



## Security Summary

### Summary

Due to the current Ebola outbreak in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, Mauritania has closed some of its southern border crossings. MS Risk advises all travellers to the area to check with local officials. Mauritanian authorities have decided to deny entry to citizens arriving from those African countries that have been affected by the current Ebola outbreak.

MS Risk advises against all travel to the provinces of Tiris Zemmour, Adrar, Tagant, Hodh el Chargui, Dakhlet-Nouadhibou and Inchiri. We also advise against all travel to the northern and eastern regions of the country, especially the desert areas north of Oualata-Tichit-Ouadane-Zouerat line, as well as the border areas with Algeria, Mali and Morocco. MS Risk also advises against all but essential travel to the rest of the country, which includes travel along the Nouakchott-Nouadhibou corridor which comprises of the north-south arterial road that runs between these two cities and which passes through Nouamghar. This is due to extremist groups and armed smugglers that are active in these areas, which has resulted in high threats of terrorism as well as a heightened risk of banditry and kidnapping.

### Terrorism



Following the French military intervention in Mali there has been a heightened possibility of retaliatory attacks that may target Western interests in the region. Attacks could be indiscriminate and by occur in places that are frequented by foreigners. Consequently we advise vigilance.

#### *Kidnapping*

There is a high risk of kidnapping throughout Mauritania and Westerners are the favoured target. In the past, hostages have been held captive for several months before being released. MS Risk advises anyone traveling to Mauritania to take particular caution in the region of Inchire (Akjoujt is the capita) as well as in the areas that border Mali and Morocco.

For companies with employees remaining in Mauritania, MS Risk advises you to arrange a trustworthy escort that is familiar with the country. The use of varied and unpredictable routes and schedules when moving from one location to another is also highly advised. Exercise a high awareness of personal security at all times and monitor the local developments. On 14 May 2013, the Government of Nigeria declared a state of emergency in the states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe. Both Adamawa and Borno border Cameroon's far North, North and Adamaoua provinces. It is possible that military operations there might have an impact across the border in Cameroon.

## On the Ground Reporting

- **20 April 2015** – A court in Mauritania has sentenced a senior al-Qaeda leader, who has been accused of planning attacks on the United States, Europe and Australia, to twenty years in prison for “terrorist activities.” According to a judicial source, Younis al-Mauritani, who was arrested in the southwestern Pakistani city of Quetta in 2011 along with two other high-ranking jihadists in a joint operation carried out by US and Pakistani intelligence agencies, was jailed Monday in a closed hearing in the Mauritanian capital Nouakchott. Officials have disclosed that al-Mauritani's arrest was a serious blow to the global terror network and came four months after al-Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden was killed in Pakistan by US forces. At the time, Pakistani army officials disclosed that bin Laden had instructed al-Mauritani to focus on economic targets in the US, Europe and Australia, including “...gas/oil pipelines, power generating dams and strike ships/oil tankers through explosive-laden speed boats in international waters.” Western intelligence officials from two separate countries confirmed that al-Mauritani was part of al-Qaeda's top team and that he was linked to threats against Europe. He was extradited to Mauritania in May 2013 after Mauritanian authorities had issued an international warrant for his arrest, accusing him of participating in a deadly 2005 attack on an army barracks and shootout with police in Nouakchott in 2008.

# 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

- **26 April 2015** – Suspected Boko Haram fighters in motorized canoes attacked a Niger army base on an island in Lake Chad. According to a source, the Nigerien army may have suffered “heavy losses” in the attack on Karamga Island however casualty figures have not been released. A statement by the defense ministry, which was broadcast Saturday night on state television, indicated that the assailants approached at dawn on Saturday in about ten motorized canoes, adding “operations are ongoing with the aid of allies” to put an end to the insurgent movement.”
- **22 April 2015** – Since Monday, all schools in and around the capital, Niamey, have been closed because of a meningitis outbreak that has killed 85 people this year. Officials have indicated that a shortage of vaccines to treat the current strain has caused the outbreak to spread, adding that a campaign to vaccinate all children between two and 15 will begin on Friday however only half of the 1.2 million doses needed are currently available. Niger’s prime minister indicated Wednesday, “for the rest of the needed vaccines, we are appealing to all our partners to come to our aid to supplement the stock of vaccine doses we direly need.” According to Niger’s health minister, 905 cases have been recorded in seven of the country’s eight regions however most of the cases are in Niamey and Dosso. **Update (24 April)** – The death toll in a meningitis epidemic that broke out in Niger in January has reached 129. According to Health Minister Mano Aghali, as of 22 April, “there are a total of 1,150 cases and unfortunately 129 deaths.” On 19 April, the government released data, stating that 85 deaths and 908 cases had occurred, however it noted that the cases were multiplying fast.
  - The World Health Organization for Animal Health (OIE) disclosed Wednesday that Niger has confirmed an outbreak of the highly pathogenic H5N1 bird flu. Earlier this month, authorities in Niger had reported a suspected case of H5N1 bird flu at a chicken farm in Maradi, which is located near the border with Nigeria, where several cases have been confirmed. According to a statement released by the OIE, out of 2,440 poultry birds on the farm in Maradi, 2,290 died from the disease. The cause of the outbreak remains unknown.
- **20 April 2015** – Niger’s defense ministry reported late Monday that Nigerien soldiers intercepted a shipment of nearly three tonnes of cannabis being escorted by a group of heavily armed smugglers in the mountains of northern Niger. In a statement released by the ministry, the seizure occurred on Sunday in the Air Mountains, an area that is regularly traversed by criminal gangs, some with links to Islamist militant groups, in a bid to smuggle drugs and migrants into northern Africa and then onward to Europe. Officials have disclosed that ten people were arrested and that three vehicles as well as machine-guns, assault rifles, a grenade launcher and ammunition were seized during the operation, which was carried out by Nigerien troops and a partner nation. While the ministry statement did not name the partner country, France has deployed troops to northern Niger however French military sources have not commented on Sunday’s operations.
- **18 April 2015** – According to Niger’s agriculture minister, more than 2.5 million people in the West African nation are suffering from food insecurity because of a shortfall in the cereal harvest caused by poor weather and crop pests. On Saturday, Nigerien minister Maidagi Allambeye disclosed, “a survey conducted since December 2014 indicated that 15.7 percent of the population, or 2,588,128 people, are in a situation of food insecurity, including 410,297 in severe insecurity.” He further indicated that the situation has been aggravated by the presence of some 200,000 refugees who have fled Boko Haram attacks in neighboring



Nigeria. Officials have indicated that the food insecurity in Niger is linked to a cereal deficit of more than 230,000 tonnes at the end of the 2014 crop year, with the government attributing the shortfall to drought, floods and caterpillar attacks. The presence in southeastern Niger of more than 150,000 refugees, who have fled attacks by Boko Haram, along with more than 50,000 refugees in the western region of the country, who have fled the ongoing insecurity in northern Mali, have further impacted the food situation. In an attempt to reduce this cereal deficit, the Nigerien government has already launched a programme to irrigate 130,000 hectares of land in order to produce 500,000 tones of food.

- **16 April 2015** – Niger's health minister revealed Thursday that a meningitis epidemic, which broke out in Niger in January, has killed 75 people so far. According to minister Mano Aghali, the total number of nationwide cases currently stands at 697, adding that while the epidemic has spread to nearly all of the regions of the country, with the exception of southeastern Diffa near the border with Nigeria, more than half of the deaths have occurred in the capital Niamey. A previous report released at the end of March had indicated that the epidemic had affected 345 people between 1 January and 29 March, with 45 fatalities. The health minister has indicated that a vaccination campaign is due to begin next week in the most affected zones, adding that authorities have already distributed 13,500 doses of the vaccine.

# Nigeria

**Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country**

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



## Security Summary

### Summary

MS Risk advises 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 Gubernatorial and State Assembly Elections (11 April)

- **13 April 2015** – Official election results on Monday showed that the party of Nigeria's president-elect Muhammadu Buhari has won governorship elections in a majority of the West African country's thirty-six states, effectively allowing it to build its strength nationwide after a historic presidential win. According to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), following Saturday's regional polls, the All Progressives Congress (APC) party held at least 21 governor's seats however more seats could be added as results from several states were still pending. The INEC described the regional vote as "relatively peaceful," despite the 66 separate incidents of violence that had occurred. Buhari is due to be sworn in on 29 May and his administration will benefit from having a majority of loyalist governors, including in the economic capital Lagos.

## On the Ground Reporting

- **25 April 2015** – Local officials and witnesses reported Friday that suspected Boko Haram insurgents have forced hundreds of soldiers to flee Marte, a border town in Nigeria. According to a local community leader, "the terrorists, numbering over 2,000, appeared from various directions on Thursday and engaged the soldiers in Kirenowa town and adjoining communities in Marte," adding "they fought with soldiers over the night and the fight continued today (Friday), forcing hundreds of soldiers to flee." This is the third time that

Boko Haram has seized control of Marte, which is located in Borno State. The town is amongst several that were retaken by Nigeria's military in recent weeks.

- **23 April 2015** – Security sources reported Thursday that Nigerian troops have been forced to retreat from Boko Haram's Sambisa Forest stronghold after a landmine blast killed one soldier and three vigilantes. In a statement released Thursday, Defense spokesman Chris Olukolade disclosed that a senior Boko Haram commander was killed as well as a number of militants who attacked a patrol, however progress has been severely hindered because of improvised explosive devices. One source has disclosed that "Boko Haram have buried landmines all over the routes leading to their camps in the forest, which is no doubt a huge obstacle regarding the military offensive against them." Troops have withdrawn just five kilometres from Boko Haram's main camp in the densely forested area because of the landmines. The retreat comes just one day after Nigeria's top military brass indicated that soldiers were conducting offensives "in some forest locations" in the area after it was announced last week that operations were imminent. The Sambisa Forest is located in the state of Borno, some 80 kilometres (50 miles) from the town of Chibok.
- **21 April 2015** – In a surprise move less than six weeks before leaving office, outgoing President Goodluck Jonathan on Tuesday dismissed Nigeria's police chief, a decision that has raised questions of a political motive. A State house press released carried the headline "President Jonathan sacks Suleiman Abba," adding that the police chief had been relieved of his duties "with immediate effect." President Jonathan has named deputy police chief Solomon Arase as the acting head of the force. While no reason has been given for his dismissal, the wording in the statement was unusually strong compared to similar past statements, which have typically thanked outgoing security chiefs for their services. The Nation newspaper, which is pro-opposition, ran a front-page story on Saturday claiming that the president was facing pressure from his loyalists to fire Mr Abba over his handling of the elections. According to Debo Adeniran of Coalition Against Corrupt Leaders lobby group, "the timing of (Abba's) sacking, especially a few weeks after a general election in which Jonathan lost, is food for thought," adding "it is even more intriguing because Abba still has some 10 years to go before retirement." Mr Adeniran has suggested that the former police chief may have made enemies by refusing "to carry out the bidding of Jonathan and the (ruling) Peoples Democratic Party to rig the election." Nigeria's police spokesman has not commented on the removal of Mr Abba, who was only appointed in August last year. Buhari, who won the elections in March, will be sworn in on 29 May and is widely expected to nominate his own choices to fill Nigeria's top security posts.
- **18 April 2015** – According to police officials, at least twenty-three villagers were killed after clashes erupted between two mainly fishing and farming communities in Nigeria's central Benue state. State police spokesman Austin Ezeani confirmed, "some 23 corpses have been recovered following the fighting between Ologba and Egba communities in Agatu local government area of the state." He indicated that several villagers were also injured adding, "the two neighbors were fighting over ownership of a fish pond. The violence broke out on Friday and continued until Saturday...." Ezeani also disclosed that the Egba people were also accusing the Ologba villagers of aiding Fulani herdsmen in attacking them last month, which resulted in the deaths of 82 villagers. Police have been deployed to the area in a bid to ease tensions. Over the past few years, hundreds of people have been killed in attacks and reprisal attacks between farmers and ethnic Fulani herdsmen in the state.
  - Government officials disclosed Saturday that a "mysterious" disease, which kills patients within 24 hours, has claimed at least seventeen lives in a southeastern Nigerian town. According to the government spokesman for Ondo state, Kayode Akinmade, "seventeen people have died of the mysterious disease since it broke out early this week in Ode-Irele town," however he noted that "outside a total of 17 deaths recorded, in the past 72 hours we have not recorded any new cases."

There is no patient of the disease in any hospital and the disease has not spread beyond the town.” Officials have indicated that the disease, which has symptoms including headache, weight loss, blurred vision, and loss of consciousness, killed the victims within 24 hours of their falling ill. Laboratory tests have so far ruled out Ebola or any other virus. Health officials and experts from both the government and aid agencies, as well as World Health Organization (WHO) epidemiologists, have arrived in Ode-Irele. **Update (20 April)** – Nigerian health officials disclosed Monday that ethanol poisoning from a local gin may have been responsible for the sudden death of 18 people last week. According to Ondo state health commissioner Dayo Adeyanju, “we strongly suspect ethanol poisoning and in view of this, we have ordered another toxicology test for the surviving victims,” adding “our investigations revealed that five of the victims took local gin mixed with herbs. Three of them died while the other two have been put under close observation.” In total, 23 people have been affected, eighteen of which have died. The five others have been referred to the Lagos University Teaching Hospital, where they will undergo further tests and monitoring. Mr Adeyanju has indicated that the disease is not contagious and that no new cases have been reported over the past four days however he noted that officials “...will continue to monitor the situation. We are appealing to our people to report any case of sudden illness or death to the health authorities for immediate action.” On Sunday, officials from the WHO disclosed that pesticide poisoning may have been the cause of the mysterious deaths.

- **17 April 2015** – On Friday, Nigerian air traffic controllers suspended a strike that had grounded all domestic flights, however they have warned that a more damaging work stoppage would be launched next week if their demands were not met. Yakubu Dati of the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) confirmed, “normal flights have now resumed,” adding, “the strike was a warning strike.” International carriers were not affected by Thursday’s strike. The work stoppage by the National Association of Air Traffic Controllers resulted in chaos and frustration at airports across the country. On Friday, local media quoted union chief Victor Eyarua as saying that a more protracted strike would be launched on 20 April if their calls for better pay and improved working conditions were not met. Due to the poor conditions of many roads and relatively limited train work, coupled with attacks by roadside bandits who target motorists, domestic air travel in Nigeria has developed into a crucial means of transport across the West African nation.
- **16 April 2015** – On Thursday, Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan told the United Nations that his country would not need the help of an international force in the fight against Boko Haram. In a statement to the UN, the outgoing president indicated that in recent months, the support of troops from Cameroon, Chad and Niger, along with the Nigerian military, had resulted in regaining most of the towns and villages seized by the militants in the northeastern states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe, noting that he wanted the UN to instead focus on helping to rebuild communities and to assist those who have been affected by the militant group’s six-year insurgency. The statement further indicated that the Nigerian military has now “commenced a final push to take the last stronghold of the insurgents in Sambisa forest” in Borno state, where 219 schoolgirls who were abducted by Boko Haram from Chibok over a year ago are believed to be held. President Jonathan made the remarks shortly after meeting with the special representatives of the UN secretary general for West and Central Africa, Mohammed Ibn Chambas and Abdoulaye Bathily.



# Sierra Leone

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



## Security Summary

MS Risk advises against all but essential travel to Sierra Leone. This is due to the current Ebola outbreak in the country. Violent incidents have taken place under cover of crowds in the streets of Freetown. Over the weekend of 25 – 27 July, there

were reports of demonstrations and local disturbances occurring in Kenema and Freetown. These events were related to the Ebola outbreak. Further such demonstrations and disturbances cannot be ruled out. MS Risk advises all travellers to Sierra Leone to follow local news reports, be alert to any developments and void all large crowds and demonstrations as they may turn violent. There are also occasional small riots between rival groups of youths in the central and eastern areas of Freetown. If you encounter such an incident, you should leave the area immediately. There is a low threat from terrorism. There is a possibility that retaliatory attacks may be carried out in Sierra Leone. This is due to the country's participation in the intervention in Mali. During the rainy season, May to October, roads can become extremely difficult, even for off-road vehicles. MS Risk therefore advises all travellers in the country to exercise due caution when travelling by road throughout the season.





## On the Ground Reporting

- **22 April 2015** – Police in the capital Freetown are searching for seven people who fled an area of the city that was placed under quarantine when a member of their family died of Ebola. Officials from the National Ebola Response Centre (NERC) indicated earlier this week that part of the densely-populated Moa Wharf township was sealed off after a youngster, who had tested positive for the deadly virus, died on Tuesday. According to the NERC, a group of seven people from the same household, including his mother, are believed to have gone into hiding in the Goderich fishing community, which is located around 30 kilometres (20 miles) west of Freetown. NERC spokesman Sidi Tunis has confirmed that another six people who had been in contact with the youngster have been transferred to a clinic for observation.
- **14 April 2015** – On Tuesday, Sierra Leone reopened its schools, more than eight months after classes were shut in a bid to end the spread of the deadly Ebola virus. Classrooms have been empty since the government announced a state of emergency in July last year in response to an outbreak that has killed around 10,000 people in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. While the reopening of Sierra Leone's schools had been initially set for 30 March, as the rate of new infections had slowed, the date was pushed back to 14 April after a sharp rise in new cases, mostly around the capital Freetown and in three other western districts. According to the latest figures released by the World Health Organization (WHO), only nine confirmed cases were reported in the seven days leading up to 5 April, compared with 25 in the previous week – effectively a fifth consecutive weekly decrease and the lowest weekly total in almost a year.

# Togo

## No Travel Restrictions



## Security Summary

Presidential and legislative elections will be held on 25 April. Togo's land borders will be closed for the entire day. There is currently no travel advisory for Togo. Crime is on the rise in the capital city Lomé. Local authorities warn of a rise in violent robberies and car-jacking incidents that target both foreigners and Togolese alike. Togolese authorities have also warned motorists to only stop for individuals in uniform, particularly after dark. You should avoid travelling alone where possible even within Lomé city limits, especially after dark.

## On the Ground Reporting

- **26 April 2015** – According to Togo's electoral commission, turnout for Saturday's elections was low. The Independent National Electoral Commission indicated early Sunday that of some of the 3.5 million voters called to polling stations on Saturday, only 53 – 55 percent took part in the election. While counting began as soon as the polling stations closed on Saturday, by Sunday afternoon, no results had been announced however the CENI has another five days in order to announce the outcome. Officials have indicated that the turnout was significantly lower than in 2010, when nearly two thirds of registered voters took part.
- **21 April 2015** – Amnesty International (AI) has called on the Togolese government to respect the right to demonstrate ahead of the country's presidential elections on 25 April. On Tuesday, the international rights group warned against the excessive use of force, stating that in March, police had used live rounds during a demonstration to support a teachers' strike. According to Amnesty officials, around thirty people were wounded in the town of Gle, which is located 160 kilometres (100 miles) north of the capital Lomé. Officials further indicated that the police had arrested twenty people and that one man died after his release. In November 2014, thousands demonstrated in a failed bid for term limits aimed at barring President Faure Gnassingbe from running for a third term in office.
- **19 April 2015** – The Commission of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) will deploy 100 poll observers to Togo on Monday ahead of the 25 April presidential elections. According to a statement released Sunday, the sub-regional bloc has indicated that the long-term mission will be made up of experts in conflict prevention, elections analysis, and gender and media management. Former Liberian interim president Professor Amos Sawyer will head the election observer mission. Once they arrive in Togo, the ECOWAS poll observers will meet with officials of the National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI) as well as officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs. A technical team of the

Togolese Political Affairs Department and Early Warning Commission of the ECOWAS Commission will also support the poll observers.



South Suite, Ragnall House, 18 Peel Road  
Douglas, Isle of Man, IM1 4LZ

24 hr Global Contact: +44 207 754 3555  
[www.msrisk.com](http://www.msrisk.com)

**Directors**

S.J. Bingham, V.K. Prentice, P.O.J Tracy  
Registered in the Isle of Man No. 007435V