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# THE CENTRAL AFRICA REPORT



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

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

JUNE 1 - 14, 2015

## About MS Risk

MS Risk is a privately owned company domiciled in the Isle of Man. It is underwritten by syndicate 2525 of Lloyd's of London for special risks case management in all jurisdictions. It also acts as retained advisors to syndicates in the Lloyd's of London specialty risk insurance markets: kidnap for ransom, extortion, hijack, illegal detention, illegal war tax, malicious product tamper, terrorism, political and war risk.

MS Risk is always mindful and compliant to legislation and guidelines on the use of private security services including, but not limited to the US FCPA (1977), UK Bribery Act (2010), Canadian Bill C-48 (2007), ASX 8 Corporate Governance Principles, and the World Bank/IFC Voluntary Principles on the Use of Government and Private Security Forces. MS Risk is a signatory of the Swiss government's International Code of Conduct. It is transparent and compliant to market expectations on legal and ethical conduct in the performance of services.

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

MS Risk supports clients in a variety of business sectors with the following services:

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

References are always available.

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

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# The Central Africa Report ~ Summary

*June 1 - 14, 2015*



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## **Cameroon**

### *On the Ground Reporting*

- **9 June 2015** – Cameroon’s highest court on Tuesday confirmed a 25-year prison sentence against a Cameroon-born French citizen, in a case that has drawn criticism from the UN human rights office and which could raise tensions with Paris.
- **4 June 2015** – According to a top UN official, Nigerian-based Boko Haram jihadists are behind horrendous violence in Cameroon, where they have kidnapped more than 1,000 children, using some of them as human shields.

## **Central African Republic**

### *On the Ground Reporting*

- **5 June 2015** – The UN’s top human rights official indicated Friday that he is “deeply concerned” that no action has been taken over allegations that African Union (AU) peacekeepers killed eleven people in the CAR last year.
- **4 June 2015** – A UN spokesman disclosed Thursday that the UN mission in the CAR is investigating a new case of

child sex abuse, which involves one of its own peacekeepers.

## *International Developments*

- **4 June 2015** – The French army announced Thursday that it will more than halve its troop deployment in the CAR this month as part of its handover of the peacekeeping mission to the UN.
- **3 June 2015** – According to officials, the Paris prosecutor's office has received documents that are linked to a military investigation of alleged sexual abuse carried out by French soldiers against children in the CAR.
  - On Wednesday, United Nations chief Ban Ki-moon moved to contain a scandal over the UN's handling of child sexual abuse allegations in the CAR by ordering an independent, external review of the case.

## **Chad**

### *Regional Reporting*

- **3 June 2015** – Former Chadian dictator Hissene Habre refused to answer questions at a hearing held Wednesday ahead of his trial for numerous atrocities, which officials accuse he committed during his presidency.

## **Democratic Republic of the Congo**

### *On the Ground Reporting*

- **9 June 2015** – Officials reported Wednesday that Congolese soldiers, backed by UN forces, have launched a military operation against a rebel group operating in the country's northeast and have killed at least 34 militants.
- **8 June 2015** – The Congolese government has slammed statements that were made by a visiting US official pertaining to the on going election dialogue, stating that the comments are an "unacceptable" and "intolerable" interference in the country's internal affairs.
  - On Monday, Human Rights Watch (HRW) appealed to authorities in the DRC to exhume a mass grave located near the capital Kinshasa, which contains hundreds of corpses.
- **4 June 2015** – After a mass trial, a court in the DRC has sentenced 46 civilians to up to 15 years in prison for sexual offences.
  - A top US State Department official indicated Thursday that despite lingering concerns pertaining to human rights records of Congolese generals involved in the campaign, the Congo's army and UN forces should work together in the fight against rebels operating in the eastern region of the country.
- **2 June 2015** – A local official and a witnesses reported Tuesday that gunmen attacked the airport in the eastern DRC's largest city, Goma, in an overnight raid in which four government soldiers and three suspected assailants were killed.

### *International Developments*

- **4 June 2015** – The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has urged leaders in the DRC to reform their tax system as part of efforts to pay for costly upcoming elections.

## **Republic of Congo**

### *On the Ground Reporting*

- **6 June 2015** – Thousands of high schools students rioted on Friday in three of the country's largest cities after the government decided to cancel baccalaureate exams after the questions were leaked on line.
- **2 June 2015** – The Republic of Congo's former Prime Minister Ange Edouard Pongui on Monday expressed opposition to a proposed amendment of the constitution, which might allow a presidential third term.

## Central Africa Report ~ Security Summary

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Gabon** - There are currently no travel advisories for Gabon.

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

# Angola

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

## Luanda

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

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

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

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



## Cabinda Province

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

## Lunda Norte and Lunda Sul

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

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

# Cameroon

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

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

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



## On the Ground Reporting

- **9 June 2015** – Cameroon's highest court on Tuesday confirmed a 25-year prison sentence against a Cameroon-born French citizen, in a case that has drawn criticism from the UN human rights office and which could raise tensions with Paris. Lawyer Lydienne Yen-Eyoum, 56, who once represented Cameroon in a lawsuit against the local unit of French bank Societe General, was



arrested in 2010 and charged with embezzling state funds. She was sentenced in 2014. The government has indicated that she embezzled over 2 billion CFA francs (US \$3.4 million) and demanded that she reimburse 1 billion CFA francs. Ms Yen-Eyoum has denied the charge. On Tuesday, the country's Supreme Court disclosed in a statement that it had confirmed the 2014 judgment of the Yaoundé Special Crimes Court. In a 27 April report, the UN human rights office indicated that Ms Yen-Eyoum's arrest and detention for four years prior to the trial was arbitrary and that the length of her detention went over Cameroon's legal limit.

- **4 June 2015** – According to a top UN official, Nigerian-based Boko Haram jihadists are behind horrendous violence in Cameroon, where they have kidnapped more than 1,000 children, using some of them as human shields. According to Najat Rochdi, the UN humanitarian coordinator for Cameroon, “the system they use is just inhuman,” adding that since last July, the militants began launching cross-border attacks. Although initially, these hit-and-run strikes were aimed at stealing food, the attacks soon escalated, with the jihadists burning villages and killing people, adding that by the end of the year, they began to kidnap children. According to Ms Rochdi, “the information I have is around 1,500” have been taken since, adding that they were mainly used as servants to help carry tents and to fetch water. Ms Rochdi has also disclosed that at the height of the attacks in northern Cameroon in February, Boko Haram deployed children on the frontline, adding “to my knowledge, the children were used as human shields...(and) were aged between eight and 12.” She has disclosed that in those attacks, which are no longer taking place, the children were backed by locally recruited youths, with hundreds of heavily armed militants taking up the rear. It remains unclear whether the children were from Cameroon, Nigeria or elsewhere.



people in the CAR last year. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein has indicated that a full and transparent investigation has not been conducted by responsible authorities either inside or outside the country. According to the UN, the incident occurred in a small town north of the capital Bangui, when eleven people were arrested by peacekeeping troops from the Republic of Congo after an exchange of fire with an armed group. The 11, which included five women and one child, were detained at a Congolese peacekeeping base in March 2014 and were not heard from again. Witnesses at the base reported hearing screaming and gunshots shortly after the detainees were brought there. They have indicated that they later saw vehicles travel to a nearby facility, with several witnesses reporting that Congolese soldiers declared the facility off limits for weeks afterward, warning that there may be land mines in the area. Some sources have disclosed that they believe that the detainees were buried in the area. Mr Hussein has disclosed that, "upon visiting the area, human rights staff noticed visible undulation in the land, supporting the contention that the land was disturbed at one point." The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is now reporting that Congolese troops may have carried out serious human rights violations, including acts of torture and extrajudicial killings. The agency is deploying a team from Geneva in order to carry out an investigation and has urged the AU, the Republic of Congo and the interim government of the CAR to carry out their own investigations.

- **4 June 2015** – A UN spokesman disclosed Thursday that the UN mission in the CAR is investigating a new case of child sex abuse, which involves one of its own peacekeepers. Sources have disclosed that the head of the MINUSCA mission, Babacar Gaye, launched an investigation after allegations surfaced on Tuesday that a peacekeeper serving in the eastern region of the country had raped a girl under the age of 16. While the peacekeeper's country of origin has not been released, a diplomatic source has disclosed that he is from Morocco, adding that the UN has asked that Morocco open an investigation and that officials are awaiting a response. Spokesman Stephane Dujarric has indicated, "measures have been taken to protect the alleged victim, who has received the appropriate care." In this latest case, the UN spokesman disclosed that the UN was contacted by a local organization, which runs a clinic where the girl was examined, adding that action was taken within 24 hours of receiving the information. Dujarric has indicated that once the suspect's identity has been confirmed, the UN expects "the troop-contributing country to not only repatriate the person, but that the soldiers should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law." Moroccan troops are serving as part of the UN's 10,000-strong MINUSCA force, which took over an African Union mission in September.

## **International Developments**

- **4 June 2015** – The French army announced Thursday that it will more than halve its troop deployment in the CAR this month as part of its handover of the peacekeeping mission to the UN. According to French army spokesman Gilles Jaron, "the number of forces will go from 1,700 to 900 soldiers in the coming month...More and more, our presence will be focused on the capital Bangui. From Bangui, we will be able to deploy extremely quickly in support of UN forces," adding that

several French bases will now pass under the control of the UN. In December 2013, France launched Operation Sangaris, which was tasked with breaking up a cycle of violence that was triggered by a coup earlier in the year. It had a peak strength of 2,000 troops before beginning its drawdown in March. In 2014, the UN launched its own operation, which now has some 10,000 peacekeepers in the country.

- **3 June 2015** – According to officials, the Paris prosecutor's office has received documents that are linked to a military investigation of alleged sexual abuse carried out by French soldiers against children in the CAR. On Wednesday, the prosecutor's office spokeswoman Agnes Thibault-Lecuire disclosed that the documents had been received a day earlier. While Defense Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian ordered that the documents be declassified, effectively paving the way for the handover, Ms Thibault-Lecuire has indicated that the documents will not be made public during the judicial investigation of the case.
  - On Wednesday, United Nations chief Ban Ki-moon moved to contain a scandal over the UN's handling of child sexual abuse allegations in the CAR by ordering an independent, external review of the case. According to spokesman Stephane Dujarric, Ban's "intention in setting up this review is to ensure that the United Nations does not fail the victims of sexual abuse, especially when committed by those who are meant to protect them." The UN has been shaken by accusations that it failed to act quickly to respond to serious claims that French and African troops had sexually abused children at a camp for displaced civilians between December 2013 and June 2014. Last month, France announced that fourteen French soldiers had been placed under investigation, however the decision came ten months after French officials received a leaked UN report detailing testimony of children who stated that they had been sexually abused. The report, which was compiled by the advocacy group AIDS-Free World, also provided accounts from children, aged 8 to 13, who indicated that troops from Chad and Equatorial Guinea had brutally raped boys. The group has since released documents from an internal UN enquiry, which show that senior officials from the UN office of human rights knew of the allegations for months but failed to follow up. Speaking to reporters, Dujarric admitted, "there are systems that failed here... This was not handled in the way that the secretary general would want it to be handled." Meanwhile AIDS-Free World has welcomed the announcement, stating that the outside panel must be allowed to look into decisions taken at all levels of the UN, including Ban's own staff. In a statement, the group indicated "what happened in the Central African Republic was an atrocity, but the fact that the UN stood silent for nearly a year after its own discovery of widespread peacekeeper sexual abuse (even if by non-UN troops) is itself a bitter commentary on the Secretary-General's declared policy of zero tolerance." While the allegations did not target troops serving under the UN blue flag, the case has raised questions about how the UN handles serious allegations that have been directed at foreign troops sent to help deal with a humanitarian crisis. The French troops were serving as part of the Sangaris military

intervention in the CAR while soldiers from Chad and Equatorial Guinea were deployed as part of the African Union's MISCA mission.

# Chad

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

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

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

There is currently a low threat from terrorism.



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

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

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

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

## **Regional Reporting**

- **3 June 2015** – Former Chadian dictator Hissene Habre refused to answer questions at a hearing held Wednesday ahead of his trial for numerous atrocities, which officials accuse he committed during his presidency. According to a court official, Habre appeared briefly before the Extraordinary African Chambers in preparation for his trial for torture, war crimes and crimes against humanity, which is due to begin in Dakar on 20 July. Ibrahima Diawara, one of his lawyers, disclosed that Habre remained silent throughout the 20-minute interrogation, which was aimed at establishing personal details, adding, “there is no reason to participate in what is not a trial. Habre does not recognize the legality or legitimacy of the Extraordinary African Chambers.” After the hearing, which was closed to the media and the public, Habre was seen waving to about a dozen cheering supporters before getting into a car. Habre has been in custody in Senegal since he was arrested in June 2013 at the home he shared with his wife and children. Rights groups have indicated that 40,000 people were killed during the eight years that he was in power, adding that his regime was marked by fierce repression of his opponents and the targeting of specific ethnic groups. The hearings, which were delayed for years by Senegal, where Habre has been living since being ousted in 1990, will set a historic precedent as until now, African leaders accused of atrocities have been tried in international courts.

# Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

**Security Summary** ~ MS Risk advises against all travel to eastern and north-eastern DRC. The only exceptions to this are the towns of Bukavu and Goma, to which MS Risk advise against all but essential travel. We currently advise against all but essential travel to the remainder of the DRC.

The security situation in eastern DRC remains unstable. On 2 June, small arms and heavy weapons fire was heard across the city of Goma. Reports have indicated that most of the gunfire was related to an incident at a military base at the airport, however on the ground sources have reported that shots were fired in the city center and at a vegetable market located close to the airport. MS Risk advises all travellers in Goma and surrounding regions to remain vigilant at all times. Throughout this year, there has been a series of kidnappings that have occurred in North Kivu, specifically in the area around Goma. Additionally military operations against armed groups in the region are ongoing. MS Risk advises all travellers to this region to exercise a heightened level of vigilance, to consider travelling in convoy on trips outside Goma and Bukavu and to avoid making any journey that would involve travel after dark.



## On the Ground Reporting



- **9 June 2015** – Officials reported Wednesday that Congolese soldiers, backed by UN forces, have launched a military operation against a rebel group operating in the country's northeast and have killed at least 34 militants. The operation that is currently underway is targeting the Front for Patriotic Resistance in Ituri (FRPI). Military spokesman for the UN mission (MONUSCO), Jean-Mari Joseph Goncalves, has confirmed "joint operations have been launched on the ground with the UN rapid intervention force of the 1<sup>st</sup> battalion from Bangladesh, supported by UN attack helicopters, to neutralize the positions of the FRPI." Martin Kobler, head of the UN mission, has further indicated that MONUSCO brought in its helicopters and troops after the rebel group left the negotiating table, stating "I call on the FRPI fighters once again to surrender and to enter the disarmament process so as to not risk death." This new operation marks the largest effort against the Congo's myriad of rebel groups since the UN and Congolese military successfully defeated the M23 rebel group in late 2013. The UN's participation in this offensive also comes after a dispute between the mission and Congolese military over a similar effort to oust the FDLR rebel group from the region. In February, efforts to go after the FDLR rebel group stalled when the UN formally ended its support for the Congo military offensive after two Congolese generals linked to human rights violations were selected to lead the operation.
- **8 June 2015** – The Congolese government has slammed statements that were made by a visiting US official pertaining to the on going election dialogue, stating that the comments are an "unacceptable" and "intolerable" interference in the country's internal affairs. During a visit last week, US Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights, Tom Malinowski, made comments that the president's electoral dialogue should not be used as an excuse to delay the upcoming elections. On Monday, government spokesman Lambert Mende stated that Malinowski was repeating the negative messages of the opposition.
  - On Monday, Human Rights Watch (HRW) appealed to authorities in the DRC to exhume a mass grave located near the capital Kinshasa, which contains hundreds of corpses. According to Ida Sawyer, senior Africa researcher at HRW, "Congolese authorities have yet to provide clarity about who is buried there," adding "families of victims of human rights abuses have a right to know if their loved ones are among those buried in the grave." Lambert Mende, a spokesman for the government, however has criticized the HRW's urging for an exhumation. Speaking at a press conference, he stated, "we reject...the moves by HRW to stand for the legal system... If the magistrate (assigned to the case) believes an exhumation is required (he) will ask for one." In March, at least 421 bodies were buried in the mass grave in Maluku district, including stillborn babies, foetuses and poor people, which the government has claimed were interred there in order to clear out the city morgue. The grave was discovered in April and resulted in rumours circulating that it contained people killed during unrest in January, which was sparked by proposed legislation that opponents state was an attempt at extending President Joseph Kabila's hold on power. The HRW is just the latest organization to call for action as the European Union, the United Nations as well as numerous rights and opposition groups have already demanded that a full investigation of

the grave be carried out. While visiting Kinshasa on Thursday, a US State Department official, Tom Malinowski, also urged DRC authorities to exhume the mass grave.

- **4 June 2015** – After a mass trial, a court in the DRC has sentenced 46 civilians to up to 15 years in prison for sexual offences. The 46 were amongst 65 people who had been charged with committing sexual aggression or rape in the region in 2014 and the start of 2015. According to Alphonse Wonga, head of the court in Bunia, “the result was 46 people were sentenced, 13 were acquitted and six files were sent back for further investigation,” adding “the sentences range from seven to 15 years in prison” and are still subject to appeal. The sentences were the result of a three-week public hearing that was held outside the courthouse in Bunia, a city located in the northeastern region of Ituri.
  - A top US State Department official indicated Thursday that despite lingering concerns pertaining to human rights records of Congolese generals involved in the campaign, the Congo’s army and UN forces should work together in the fight against rebels operating in the eastern region of the country. On Thursday, US Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights, Tom Malinowski, stated that the UN and Congo’s army should not let “disputes” block the kind of cooperation that led to the toppling of the M23 rebel group in 2013. Malinowski, who is the assistant secretary of state for democracy, human rights and labor, further indicated “what we need is for the government and the United Nations to work together, to resume the cooperation that was so effective in the past and not to let any disputes between them delay cooperation that is needed to save the lives of people in the east.” Malinowski also voiced “concerns about shrinking space for civil society” as the DRC prepares to hold elections in 2016. In February, the UN formally ended its support for a Congo military offensive against the FDLR militant group after two Congolese generals linked to human rights violations were picked to lead the operation. While the UN had previously disclosed that the removal of the FDLR would be “a turning point” for security in the region, the DRC has so far not complied with UN demands that Gen. Brun Mundevu and Gen. Fall Sikabwe be removed from the operation. The UN maintains that both generals are known to be involved in “massive human rights violations.”
- **2 June 2015** – A local official and a witnesses reported Tuesday that gunmen attacked the airport in the eastern DRC’s largest city, Goma, in an overnight raid in which four government soldiers and three suspected assailants were killed. Locals indicated that they heard intermittent heavy gunfire for several hours beginning around 1 AM on Tuesday. North Kivu governor Julien Paluku confirmed the attack, stating, “they attacked the depot at the airport. There was a heavy exchange of gunfire,” adding that soldiers from the Congolese army’s elite Republican Guard repelled the attack and pursued the assailants from the airport, which lies on the edge of the city, into the city centre, where the shooting continued. A Congolese security official involved in the clashes and a Goma-based diplomat have disclosed that the assailants were Mai-Mai fighters, which is one of the armed militias known to operate in the region. **Update (3 June)** – The government’s spokesman announced Wednesday that soldiers in the DRC have captured the man suspected of being behind

a deadly attack that occurred earlier this week on the largest airport in the eastern region of the country. Government spokesman Lambert Mende described the man who was captured as a “criminal” from the town of Butembo, which is located some 270 kilometres (170 miles) north of Goma. In a statement, Mende indicated that the man “...recruited the band of criminal authors of this aggression before supervising their trip to Goma and the preparation of the attack on the airport,” adding that he was arrested in Goma thanks to information that was provided by three captured assailants and intelligence help from neighbouring Rwanda, whose phone networks were used by the attackers.

## International Developments

- **4 June 2015** – The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has urged leaders in the DRC to reform their tax system as part of efforts to pay for costly upcoming elections. A statement released by the IMF on Thursday indicated that in order to boost its revenues, the DRC needs to “implement without delays” an overhaul of its tax administration, including more robust collection and stronger customs enforcement, adding that higher revenues “would allow an increase in public spending on priority sectors, in particular education, health, and basic infrastructure while contributing to the financing of the elections in 2015 – 16.” The recommendations come after an IMF visit to the DRC, during which discussions focused on encouraging growth and stability. The cost of a series of upcoming votes, which will culminate in the presidential election next year, is estimated at US \$1.1 billion. For 2015, the government’s budget is roughly US \$9 billion and there is concern amongst the country’s opposition that the series of votes will exhaust election funding. Officials have indicated that this could then be used as a mechanism to delay the presidential election and thus extend President Joseph Kabila’s hold on power, as opposition leaders already suspect that the president is positioning himself to make a third run for office, which is barred by the constitution. President Kabila has refused to publicly announce that he will step down at the end of his current term.

# Republic of the Congo

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

Although crime levels are low in Brazzaville and Pointe Noire, MS Risk advises all travellers to take sensible precautions in order to safeguard yourself and your belongings. We advise travellers to not walk in the streets after dark or to carry large amounts of money or valuables. The chance of being targeted by criminals is higher in the rural areas of the country.

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



## On the Ground Reporting

- **6 June 2015** – Thousands of high schools students rioted on Friday in three of the country's largest cities after the government decided to cancel baccalaureate exams after the questions were leaked

on line. On the ground sources have reported that protesting students in Brazzaville, Point Noire and Dolisie threw stones at police and attacked property while security forces fired tear gas in a bid to disperse them. Several protesters were also arrested. According to Education Minister Hellot Matson Mampouya, questions for the exams, which began on 2 June, had been leaked and were now being shared on social media, adding “we felt it would be irresponsible to continue the exams with so many irregularities.” Mampouya has disclosed that the 66,582 students that were registered for the exams will have to retake them on a date that has yet to be decided, adding that the director of exams has been arrested.

- **2 June 2015** – The Republic of Congo’s former Prime Minister Ange Edouard Pongui on Monday expressed opposition to a proposed amendment of the constitution, which might allow a presidential third term. Speaking to media in Brazzaville shortly after a meeting with President Denis Sassou N’Gusso, Pongui stated, “we have told the president that the 2002 Constitution should not be changed.” Since 20 May, the President has been meeting with representatives of political society groups and religious leaders in order to discuss “the state of the nation,” in what is a push for the constitutional amendment. Under the country’s current constitution, which was implemented in 2002, there is a two-term limit to the president, effectively signifying that N’Gusso should leave office after his second term, which is due to end in 2016.

# Equatorial Guinea

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

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



# Gabon

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



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

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

# São Tomé and Príncipe

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

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

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

