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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 15 - 28, 2015

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 - Interim Security
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 - Special Assignments
- Crisis Response
 - Crisis Response
 - Business continuity management
 - Hostile operations support to commercial interests
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References are always available.

More information is found at www.msrisk.com

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The Central Africa Report ~ Summary

June 15 - 28, 2015



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Angola

On the Ground Reporting

- **26 June 2015** – On Friday, the prosecution released a statement, indicating that fifteen Angolan opposition activists, among them rapper Luaty Beirao, have been charged this week with planning to attack and oust long-serving President Jose Eduardo dos Santos.
- **21 June 2015** – On Sunday, the interior ministry reported that Angolan police have arrested at least thirteen young opposition activists, including rapper Luaty Beirao, who have campaigned against President Jose Eduardo dos Santos.

Cameroon

On the Ground Reporting

- **19 June 2015** – According to Amnesty International, Cameroonian authorities have been holding 84 children, some as young as 5 years old, for months without charge after officials accused their teachers at Quranic schools of running terrorist training camps.

Regional Reporting

- **23 June 2015** – On Tuesday, the office of Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari announced that he has accepted an invitation to travel to Cameroon, where he will attend talks on regional cooperation to defeat Boko Haram militants.
- **15 June 2015** – President Muhammadu Buhari disclosed Monday that he is planning to visit Cameroon to cement a regional fighting force against Boko Haram.

Central African Republic

On the Ground Reporting

- **23 June 2015** – On Tuesday, a UN spokesman revealed that UN peacekeepers have been accused of sexually abusing street children in the CAR capital of Bangui, adding that an investigation has been launched by the country that contributed the troops.
- **22 June 2015** – The United Nations announced Monday that a former Supreme Court Justice of Canada will lead a review of how the UN has handled allegations that French and African troops sexually abused children in the CAR.

Domestic News

- **18 June 2015** – A spokesman for the interim government disclosed Thursday that the CAR will hold presidential and parliamentary elections on 18 October.

Chad

On the Ground Reporting

- **18 June 2015** – Chad's military has indicated that it has carried out airstrikes in Nigeria on suspected Boko Haram positions.
- **17 June 2015** – Following Monday's double suicide bomb attacks, Chadian officials have banned people from wearing the full-face veil.
- **16 June 2015** – On Tuesday, scores of police and soldiers were seen patrolling the capital city, just a day after twin suicide attacks, blamed on Boko Haram militants, killed 24 people and wounded more than 100.
- **15 June 2015** – On Monday, officials in neighboring Chad reported that at least 23 people have been killed and more than 100 injured in suicide attacks carried out in the capital N'Djamena.

Regional Reporting

- **15 June 2015** – Chad’s deposed president Hissene Habre has suffered a serious heart problem while in detention in Senegal, his lawyer reported Sunday, just days before he is due to go on trial for crimes against humanity.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

On the Ground Reporting

- **25 June 2015** – On Thursday, the powerful and popular governor of Katanga province in the southeastern DRC, Moise Katumbi, indicated that he was unsurprised by a fraud charge that was filed earlier this week by President Joseph Kabila.
- **24 June 2015** – On Wednesday, officials at the United Nations disclosed that after a three-week military operation, around a quarter of Congolese militia group, the Patriotic Revolutionary Forces of Ituri (FRPI) have been “neutralized.”

International Developments

- **15 June 2015** – The International Criminal Court (ICC) announced Monday that the trial of former warlord Bosco Ntaganda will open in The Hague rather than in the DRC, due to concerns over witnesses’ safety.

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.

On the Ground Reporting

- **26 June 2015** – On Friday, the prosecution released a statement, indicating that fifteen Angolan opposition activists, among them rapper Luaty Beirao, have been charged this week with planning to attack and oust long-serving President Jose Eduardo dos Santos. According to the prosecution, they have been accused of wanting to incite an insurrection by erecting barricades on the streets of the capital Luanda and burning tires in places that are frequented by foreigners, including the airport. The statement further indicated that the activists face up to twelve years in prison if convicted on charges of “rebellion” and seeking to “attack the president of the republic,” adding that they wanted to replace the executive with a “national salvation government.” The arrests began last Saturday, with several activist groups, including the Angolan Revolutionary Movement, denouncing the arrests, stating that they are an abuse of power and a violation of freedom of expression. The country’s main opposition parties, Unita and Casa, have also condemned the government’s actions and have called for the activists to be released.
- **21 June 2015** – On Sunday, the interior ministry reported that Angolan police have arrested at least thirteen young opposition activists, including rapper Luaty Beirao, who have campaigned against President Jose Eduardo dos Santos. According to the statement, the interior ministry disclosed that its criminal investigation unit had arrested “13 Angolan citizens who were caught red-handed as they prepared to carry out acts aimed at disrupting public order and security in the country.” On social media, activist groups, including the Angolan Revolutionary Movement, indicated that as many as twenty people had been arrested when police raided a youth meeting in in the capital, Luanda. The Angolan police has not commented on the arrests. Amongst those detained are rapper Beirao, a key figure of the Angolan opposition movement, and Manuel Nito Alves, who was jailed for two months in 2013 for printing anti-Dos Santos t-shirts. Since March 2011, the youth

movement has been calling for protests aimed at bringing down the president, who has ruled for thirty-five years. The activists are also demanding better living conditions.

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

- **19 June 2015** – According to Amnesty International, Cameroonian authorities have been holding 84 children, some as young as 5 years old, for months without charge after officials accused their teachers at Quranic schools of running terrorist training camps. According to Amnesty,

Cameroonian forces arrested the 84 children in December, along with 43 men in the northern town of Guirvidig, accusing the teachers of using the schools “as fronts for Boko Haram training camps.” The international human rights organizations has called on Cameroonian authorities to release the children immediately, stating that nearly all of them are too young to face criminal charges. Steve Cockburn, Amnesty International deputy regional director for West and Central Africa, stated Monday “detaining young children will do nothing to protect Cameroonians living under the threat of Boko Haram.” A government spokesman has not yet responded to the report, however he indicated that a news conference will be held Monday.

Regional Reporting

- **23 June 2015** – On Tuesday, the office of Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari announced that he has accepted an invitation to travel to Cameroon, where he will attend talks on regional cooperation to defeat Boko Haram militants. The official announcement comes after President Buhari last week indicated that he was planning to visit Cameroon. Cameroon’s President Paul Biya was noticeably absent from a recent summit of regional leaders in Abuja, aimed at cementing a new fighting force to take on the insurgents. At the time, observers indicated that his absence was due to strained relations between the two states. Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria have all agreed that a new 8,700-strong force should be deployed by 30 July.
- **15 June 2015** – President Muhammadu Buhari disclosed Monday that he is planning to visit Cameroon to cement a regional fighting force against Boko Haram. While last week, President Buhari met with his counterpart from Benin, Chad and Niger at a summit in Abuja, Cameroon’s leader Paul Biya was noticeably absent and was represented by his defense minister. During his first week in office, President Buhari visited neighboring Chad and Niger, adding that he would have gone to Cameroon’s capital Yaoundé to hold talks with Biya had he not been invited to attend the G7 summit in Germany. On the sidelines of the African Union (AU) summit in Johannesburg, he stated “but on my return to Nigeria now, I will try to go to Cameroon.”

Central African Republic

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

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



Crime

Incidents of theft and robbery occur regularly. Armed gangs are known to operate in the outlying areas of Bangui. You are advised to take personal security precautions and be vigilant in public places at all times. Avoid carrying valuables or wearing jewelry in public. Do not walk alone at night and avoid any isolated or poorer areas.

On the Ground Reporting

- **23 June 2015** – On Tuesday, a UN spokesman revealed that UN peacekeepers have been accused of sexually abusing street children in the CAR capital of Bangui, adding that an investigation has

been launched by the country that contributed the troops. UN Spokesman Stephane Dujarric has indicated that the UN mission in the CAR was made aware of the abuse allegations on 19 June and that the troop contributing country was notified on 20 June, adding “medical care and assistance is now being provided to the alleged victims... What we know is that the crimes could go back as far as 2014 and then most recently occurred this year.” Dujarric did not disclose how many children were alleged to have been abused. He further indicated that “if the allegations are substantiated this would constitute a grave violation of UN principles and the code of conduct for UN peacekeepers. The member state would be requested to make swift and appropriate punitive action,” adding that the country that contributed the troops involved had started an investigation and was expected to report back to the UN “as quickly as possible.” Punishment for crimes committed by UN peacekeepers is the responsibility of the country they come from. The UN has also not revealed which country the troops were from or how many soldiers have been involved. Earlier this month, the UN mission in the CAR, MINUSCA, revealed that it was investigating a separate allegation that a peacekeeper had sexually abused a girl in the country’s east. These allegations against UN peacekeepers operating in the country come after an informal UN report detailed accusations of sexual abuse of children by peacekeepers from France, Chad and Equatorial Guinea in Bangui between December 2013 and June 2014. While those soldiers were not UN peacekeepers, as the UN did not take over the African Union (AU) operation until September 2014, the UN has been criticized for its slow handling of those allegations.

- **22 June 2015** – The United Nations announced Monday that a former Supreme Court Justice of Canada will lead a review of how the UN has handled allegations that French and African troops sexually abused children in the CAR. Officials have revealed that Marie Deschamps will chair the independent panel, which will include Hassan Jallow of Gambia, a prosecutor of the UN tribunal for Rwanda, and Yasmin Sooka, executive director of the Foundation of Human Rights in South Africa. Deschamps served on the Supreme Court for ten years until 2012 and recently presented a report on sexual misconduct in the Canadian armed forces. Earlier this month, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon announced the creation of the panel, which followed a number of allegations that French troops had sexually abused children at a camp for displaced civilians near the CAR capital, Bangui, between December 2013 and June 2014. According to UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric, the panel, which is due to begin work next month and aims to submit a report within ten weeks, will have unrestricted access to all UN records, staff members and other UN personnel in order to assess the world body’s response to the allegations.

Domestic News

- **18 June 2015** – A spokesman for the interim government disclosed Thursday that the CAR will hold presidential and parliamentary elections on 18 October. Georges Ndamoyen, a spokesman for the transitional government, has disclosed that the new election calendar had been agreed upon following a meeting between government officials and donors on Thursday. The elections will be preceded by an electoral census from 27 June to 27 July and a referendum on a new

constitution, which will take place on 4 October. If required, a second round of elections will be held on 22 November. Ndamoyen further disclosed that the elections will require a total budget of 20 billion CFA francs (£21.79 million) of which around half had already been collected from government resources and donor funding. The presidential and parliamentary elections have been repeatedly delayed. During a national peace forum last month, officials indicated that a previous timetable, which would have seen the elections being held in June or July, was unrealistic. While violence across the CAR has eased in recent months, sporadic killings continue to occur. In a statement read on state radio on Thursday, the Justice Ministry stated that a court in the capital Bangui will on 29 June begin trying around fifty cases of alleged crimes involving acts of violence and economic infractions. The announcement follows interim President Catherine Samba Panza's signing of a law earlier this month, which created a Special Criminal Court to judge crimes committed over the past two years of turmoil.

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.

On 15 June, there were a number of explosions in central N'Djamena, near the Presidency. Chadian security services have restricted movement in this area. MS Risk advises that all travellers take extra care and monitor the local news.

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



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

There is currently a low threat from terrorism.

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

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

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

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

On the Ground Reporting

- **18 June 2015** – Chad's military has indicated that it has carried out airstrikes in Nigeria on suspected Boko Haram positions. In a statement, the Chadian government disclosed that the strikes were in response to the "cowardly and barbaric" bombing on Chad's capital, N'Djamena, on Monday. According to the Chadian military, the group suffered heavy casualties and six of its bases were destroyed. However Nigeria's military has reported that the strikes did not occur on its territory. In a statement, Nigerian officials disclosed that it had identified the targets but the raids probably hit Niger. While Chad has previously carried out strikes on Nigerian territory, these latest strikes are the first since Monday's twin blasts, which killed more than twenty people and wounded more than 100.
- **17 June 2015** – Following Monday's double suicide bomb attacks, Chadian officials have banned people from wearing the full-face veil. On Wednesday, the country's prime minister indicated that the veil was used as a "camouflage" by militants and stated that security forces will burn all full-face veils sold in markets. At a meeting with religious leaders, Prime Minister Kalzeube Pahimi

Deubet disclosed that the ban applied everywhere, not only in public places, adding that any clothing that covers everything but the eyes was camouflage. In recent months, Boko Haram militants have increasingly been using female suicide bombers in neighboring Nigeria, as they are more likely to smuggle bombs into public places without detection.

- **16 June 2015** – On Tuesday, scores of police and soldiers were seen patrolling the capital city, just a day after twin suicide attacks, blamed on Boko Haram militants, killed 24 people and wounded more than 100. According to on the ground sources, the areas around the presidential palace and police headquarters in N'Djamena, which was one of the targets of Monday's bombing, were sealed off, which checkpoints were set up across the city and vehicles with tinted glass windows were banned from the roads. The government has stated, "these attacks, which aimed to strike fear into the people, will not slacken Chad's determination to combat terrorism." The Chadian government has called on the population to "keep its legendary serenity because the situation is entirely under control." While Boko Haram has yet to claim responsibility for the suicide bombings, which also targeted a police academy, both Chad and France have accused the militants of being behind the "barbaric attacks." During a visit to Algiers, where the regional threat posed by jihadist's was high on the agenda, French President Francois Hollande stated "there is no doubt that Boko Haram is responsible and will be brought to justice for this new humanitarian terror." Nigerian President Mahamadou Issoufou also firmly condemned "these acts of unspeakable cruelty," in a statement that was read late Monday on state television. President Issoufou also urged the international community to back member states of the Lake Chad Basin Commission. In the past, Boko Haram's leader, Abubakar Shekau, has threatened several times to attack Chad and other countries that have joined forces to fight his militant group.
- **15 June 2015** – On Monday, officials in neighboring Chad reported that at least 23 people have been killed and more than 100 injured in suicide attacks carried out in the capital N'Djamena. Eyewitnesses reported that attackers on motorcycles blew themselves up outside two police buildings. According to witnesses, one of the bombers on a motorcycle blew himself up after security officers fired at him outside a building where the national police chief is based while the second explosion went off at the headquarters of the national police academy. The Chadian government has blamed the attacks on Nigerian-based Boko Haram, however the militant group has not commented. Hours after the attack, Communications Minister Hassan Sylla Bakara stated that Boko Haram had "made a mistake targeting Chad," and that the group would be "neutralized." The Communications Minister condemned the "appalling and barbaric attack," stating that it "would not diminish Chad's determination and commitment to fighting terrorism." The minister added that all four of the attackers had been killed. On the ground sources have reported that in the wake of the attack, large numbers of troops have been deployed on the streets of the capital and a ban has been imposed on cars with tinted windows. Chadian forces have played a key role in helping Nigeria battle the jihadist group, and the headquarters of a regional force that is being set up in N'Djamena. While the group has never targeted N'Djamena before, this attack should not come as a huge surprise, given the country's role in fighting the insurgency.

Boko Haram has previously criticized and taunted Chadian President Idriss Deby in its videos. In a statement United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon condemned the bombings and praised Chad's "courageous role" in fighting Boko Haram.

Regional Reporting

- **15 June 2015** – Chad's deposed president Hissene Habre has suffered a serious heart problem while in detention in Senegal, his lawyer reported Sunday, just days before he is due to go on trial for crimes against humanity. According to his lawyer, Francois Serres, Habre, 72, is currently undergoing tests and it remains unclear whether the problems will affect the start of the trial, which is due to begin on 20 July at a specially-appointed court in the capital, Dakar. Serres disclosed that "Habre had a serious heart problem during the night of Monday-Tuesday and the same thing again during the night of Wednesday-Thursday," adding that his client had suffered years of high blood pressure. The court in Dakar has charged Habre with war crimes and torture and he would be the first former African leader to be tried for human rights offences by another African state.

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

- **25 June 2015** – On Thursday, the powerful and popular governor of Katanga province in the

southeastern DRC, Moise Katumbi, indicated that he was unsurprised by a fraud charge that was filed earlier this week by President Joseph Kabila. According to Katumbi, “ I already had dealings with the judiciary before the presidential election of 2011,” adding “already in 2009 – 2010, the Congolese government started legal proceedings against my family and myself in (former colonial power) Belgium and in Great Britain.” He further indicated that while he hasn’t “...been officially notified of the suit,” but “the procedure and the method used wouldn’t astonish me.” Katumbi, who is a wealthy businessman who turned to politics and who works closely with foreign mining firms, is a popular figure tipped to be possibly elected the next president of the DRC. According to sources, his name was on a list filed Tuesday against several people, including four governors and Kabila’s former cabinet chief. The legal document was drawn up on the president’s behalf by Luzolo Bambai Lessa, special presidential advisor on fighting corruption. Katumbi was accused of arms trafficking, financing rebels and money laundering in the period prior to the last presidential election, which occurred in 2011, and which was won by Kabila amidst allegations of widespread fraud from both domestic and foreign observers. The bank accounts of the governor were seized for a time however the charges against him were eventually dropped.

- **24 June 2015** – On Wednesday, officials at the United Nations disclosed that after a three-week military operation, around a quarter of Congolese militia group, the Patriotic Revolutionary Forces of Ituri (FRPI) have been “neutralized.” In early June, the Congolese army, with the backing of UN peacekeeping troops, launched an offensive against the FRPI. In recent months, Ituri, which is located in the DRC’s northeast, has experienced a resurgence in violence after the surrender of FRPI leader Cobra Matata in November last year. According to Martin Kobler, who is the head of the UN’s MONUSCO mission in the DRC, the offensive has left 35 people dead, 52 wounded and 36 captured alive. Kobler has further indicated that the UN had provided military aid, including attack helicopters and drones, as well as logistical support. This operation has indicated that both Kinshasa and the MONUSCO are attempting to repair their strained relationship after several months of tensions that arose over which Congolese leaders should lead joint missions. The UN announcement of the military operations in northeastern DRC comes as Kobler has urged the Congolese government and the international community to fund the demobilisation and reintegration of former rebels, adding that the programme was suffering delays. Speaking at a press conference in Kinshasa, Kobler disclosed that while MONUSCO had unblocked US \$6 million for the programme, “the international community is a bit reluctant to give us more money at the moment because the Congolese government’s contribution is not clear.” According to Kobler, under plans for the programme, the Congolese government is supposed to provide US \$10 million, however so far, it has only given US \$1.5 million.

International Developments

- **15 June 2015** – The International Criminal Court (ICC) announced Monday that the trial of former warlord Bosco Ntaganda will open in The Hague rather than in the DRC, due to concerns over witnesses’ safety. Rwandan-born Ntaganda faces eighteen counts of war crimes and crimes

against humanity for his role in the civil conflict in the DRC's volatile northeast a decade ago, including allegations that he used child soldiers and sex slaves in his rebel army. In March, a panel of ICC judges had recommended that the trial's opening statements be held in the city of Bunia, in the country's northeastern region, in order to bring proceedings closer to the victims, however on Monday, the court stated that "concerns over witnesses and victims' safety and well-being, as well as the security of the local communities involved," had been an important factor in deciding to hold the opening proceedings in The Hague instead. In its statement, the ICC further disclosed that the ICC also had to take into account "the concerns expressed by the victims that the accused's return would remind them of the suffering and trauma," as well as the logistics and costs of the move, which were estimated at more than US \$677,000 (600,000 euros), adding "the ICC Presidency concluded that the potential benefits of holding proceedings in Bunia are, in view of the Presidency, outweighed by these risks." Prosecutors have alleged that Ntaganda, who surrendered to the court last year, was involved in raping women and child soldiers and keeping them as sex slaves. He is also accused of using child soldiers in his Patriotic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (FPLC) in attacks prosecutors say killed at least 800 people as warlords battled rival militias for control of the mineral-rich Ituri province. Ntaganda, 41, has pleaded not guilty to the charges.

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.



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.



