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West Africa Report

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

May 25 – June 7, 2015



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24 hr Contact Information:

Email: operations@msrisk.com
Telephone: +44 207 754 3555

Summary

May 25 – June 7, 2015



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Sahel Region

- **2 June 2015** – On Tuesday, Secretary General Ban Ki-moon warned that as long as there is one Ebola case in the West African region “all countries are at risk,” urging all nations to support the final battles aimed at wiping out the deadly disease in Guinea and Sierra Leone.
- **28 May 2015** – On Thursday, the World Health Organization (WHO) warned against complacency about the deadly Ebola virus, stating that the crisis is not over.
 - The United Nations has reported that the number of people displaced by conflicts in the Sahel region has more than doubled in just over a year to a staggering 3.5 million.

Burkina Faso

On the Ground Reporting

- **5 June 2015** – On Friday, an African human rights court ordered Burkina Faso to reopen a probe into the 1998 murder of journalist Norbert Zongo, who was killed while investigating the former president's brother.
- **26 May 2015** – On Tuesday, authorities exhumed human remains from the purported grave of Burkina Faso's assassinated leader, nearly three decades after he was killed during a coup in the West African nation.

Domestic News

- **2 June 2015** – Burkina Faso's President Michel Kafando disclosed Tuesday that it was essential that the country's new leaders, due to be elected in October, draft a new constitution and submit it for referendum.

Gambia

On the Ground Reporting

- **3 June 2015** – Gambian government sources have disclosed that a Lebanese businessman, accused by the United States of providing financial support to the Lebanese militant movement Hezbollah, left Gambia at the weekend in compliance with an expulsion order.
- **27 May 2015** – According to two international rights organizations, Gambian authorities have detained, and in some cases have "disappeared," friends and relatives of the alleged suspects of a failed coup, including elderly women and a child.

International Developments

- **6 June 2015** – The European Union (EU) has summoned the Gambian ambassador for an explanation after its representative to the country was expelled.

Ghana

On the Ground Reporting

- **4 June 2015** – Authorities reported Thursday that massive flooding in the capital city swept stored fuel into a nearby fire, setting off a large explosion at a gas station, which killed 73 people and set alight neighboring buildings.
- **27 May 2015** – Tests on poultry at two farms in Ghana, including one located in the capital Accra, have confirmed the presence of H5N1 avian flu.

Guinea

On the Ground Reporting

- **1 June 2015** - The head of the UN mission on Ebola in Guinea disclosed Monday that violence in the western area of the country has "jeopardized" the fight against the deadly virus.
 - Meanwhile Justice Minister Cheick Sako has denied reports that were published last week, which indicated that police had arrested six people who used a taxi in order to transport a dead Ebola victim who was wearing sunglasses in an attempt to make him look as though he were alive.
- **25 May 2015** – Six people have been put in isolation in prison after being accused of travelling with a corpse of a relative who had died of Ebola.

Domestic News

- **4 June 2015** – According to the United Nation's top regional official, Guinea opposition leaders have accepted a government offer to begin talks aimed at resolving tensions that have sparked violent street protests.

- **25 May 2015** – On Monday Guinean President Alpha Conde asked his government to open talks with opposition leaders “without delay.”

Ivory Coast

On the Ground Reporting

- **29 May 2015** – On Friday, the African Union (AU) announced that Ivory Coast President Alassane Ouattara, who is currently seeking re-election for a second term, has promised not to try and stay in office for a third consecutive mandate if he wins.

Liberia

On the Ground Reporting

- **2 June 2015** – Liberian police have charged twenty-three people over riots at a palm oil plantation in which a senior company official was taken hostage and a government minister was wounded.
- **28 May 2015** – Police officials disclosed Wednesday that armed protesters entered a palm oil plantation in the southeastern region of the country, taking several people hostage and injuring a senior government official.

International Developments

- **26 May 2015** – On Tuesday, United States health authorities disclosed that a US man has died of a rare virus in New Jersey after returning from West Africa, noting however that the risk of contagion is very low.

Mali

On the Ground Reporting

- **5 June 2015** – The head of Mali’s main Tuareg-led rebel groups indicated Friday that his movement will sign a final deal on 20 June.
- **3 June 2015** - On Wednesday, rights campaigners denounced pro-government forces’ killing of six civilians, including an aid worker for a European charity, in northern Mali, stating that the deaths were a “war crime.”
- **1 June 2015** – Mauritanian al-Akhbar news agency reported Monday that al-Qaeda’s North Africa branch has claimed responsibility for two attacks against the United Nations’ MINUSMA peacekeeping mission in Mali that occurred last week.
- **28 May 2015** – Officials reported Thursday that three UN peacekeepers were wounded in northern Mali when a vehicle in a convoy escorting their commander and the force’s police commissioner hit a landmine.
- **26 May 2015** – Militants opened fire on two Bangladeshi peacekeepers in the Malian capital on Monday, killing one.

Niger

On the Ground Reporting

- **2 June 2015** – Niger’s President Mahamadou Issoufou announced Tuesday that a multinational force being set up to combat Nigeria’s Boko Haram Islamist insurgency in the Lake Chad region will be operational in the coming weeks.
 - New figures released by the World Health Organization (WHO) on Tuesday indicate that an epidemic of meningitis in Niger has killed 545 people, out of 8,234 people who caught the disease, noting that the epidemic has now peaked.

Domestic News

- **4 June 2015** – Niger’s President Mahamadou Issoufou, who is facing a fragmented opposition, has indicated that he wants to ensure that next year’s presidential and parliamentary elections are “...transparent, free, honest and credible.”

- **25 May 2015** – On Monday, Niger's parliament revised the country's 2015 budget to 1,732.4 billion CFA francs (US \$2.90 billion) from 1,707 billion, which was approved in December, in order to meet high defense expenses as the country's troops continue to battle Nigerian-based Boko Haram.

Nigeria

On the Ground Reporting

- **4 June 2015** – Two blasts rocked northeastern Nigeria on Thursday, killing at least six people, just hours before President Muhammadu Buhari urged closer regional cooperation to defeat Boko Haram.
 - Nigerian police on Thursday confirmed that a French tourist was shot dead while his wife was injured in a suspected robbery that occurred in the country's Ebonyi State.
- **3 June 2015** – Three senior officials from the country's central bank, along with two others from a commercial bank, have been remanded in custody after appearing in court where they were charged with currency fraud.
 - Amnesty International disclosed Wednesday that there was sufficient evidence for the International Criminal Court (ICC) to probe senior Nigerian military officers for war crimes in the battle against Boko Haram.
 - At least eleven people were killed Wednesday in an explosion in Maiduguri.
 - The military in Abuja announced that a Nigerian officer has taken charge of the new African Union-backed Multi-National Joint Task Force, which is based in the capital of neighboring Chad.
- **2 June 2015** – On Tuesday, suspected Boko Haram militants launched a renewed attack on Maiduguri, just days after the military repelled an assault on the key city.
 - Boko Haram has released a new video, its first since February and the first time the group is using the logo "Islamic State in West Africa" – after the group's leader in March pledged allegiance to Islamic State (IS).
 - A spokesman disclosed Tuesday that former governor of the state of Adamawa, Murtala Nyako, has turned himself in for questioning at the country's anti-graft agency following claims of money laundering.
- **1 June 2015** – A spokesman announced Monday that the country's anti-corruption agency has arrested six senior officials from Nigeria's central bank and 16 from commercial banks over an alleged US \$33m (£21m) currency fraud.
 - A man condemned to hang when he was 16 because of confessions that were extracted under torture, has been pardoned after ten years on death row.
- **31 May 2015** – Officials have reported that more than sixty people have died in southeastern Nigeria after a fuel tanker crashed into a busy bus station and caught fire.
 - Boko Haram militants raided two towns in northeastern Nigeria, torching public buildings and looting food and fuel stores.
- **30 May 2015** – According to witnesses and security sources, Nigeria's military on Saturday repelled a Boko Haram attack on the key northeastern city of Maiduguri, which saw rocket-propelled grenades fired into homes.
- **29 May 2015** – The winner of Nigeria's presidential election in March, Muhammadu Buhari, has been sworn in as leader of Africa's most populous country.
 - According to a military spokesman, clashes between Chad's army and Boko Haram militants on an island located on Lake Chad have killed four soldiers and thirty-three militants.
- **27 May 2015** – On Wednesday a community group in the country's oil-producing Niger delta indicated that it had shut down an oil facility operated by Eni's Agip in Bayelsa state's Nembe 5 region following a dispute with the company.
 - Nigeria's army has dismissed at least 200 soldiers for cowardice and failure to fight against Boko Haram. According to several soldiers, up to 4,500 other rank and file soldiers could be dismissed.
- **26 May 2015** – A union leader disclosed Tuesday that a crippling strike over fuel, which brought Nigeria to a near standstill, has been called off "in the national interest."
 - The UN children's agency warned Tuesday of an "alarming spike" in suicide bombings carried out by women and girls, warning that this has placed children in danger of being seen as potential threats.

- According to police, suspected Fulani herdsmen have killed at least 23 people in central Nigeria, in what is the latest clash in a long-running battle with farming communities in the region.
- Witnesses reported Tuesday that Boko Haram militants have killed at least 43 people in a five-hour assault on the town of Gubio in the northeastern state of Borno.
- **25 May 2015** - According to a local government official, Boko Haram fighters hacked to death ten people in a remote village in northeastern Nigeria.
 - On Monday, Nigeria's federal high court ordered drug agents to release a newly elected senator and suspend its extradition proceedings on 20-year-old drug charges.

Domestic News

- **1 June 2015** – On Monday, a spokesman for President Muhammadu Buhari announced that the newly elected president will this week make his first foreign trip since taking office.

Regional Reporting

- **4 June 2015** – On Thursday, a senior US diplomat disclosed that the US will deploy a team to Nigeria in the next few weeks in order to discuss with the new government ways to renew cooperation in the fight against Boko Haram. Washington has quickly reached out to newly elected President Muhammadu Buhari.
- **3 June 2015** – During a visit to Niger's capital on Wednesday, Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari stated that he was seeking help from neighboring countries to eradicate Boko Haram before they do "more serious damage."

Senegal

International Developments

- **3 June 2015** – A draft report has indicated that a UN panel accused Senegalese authorities of arbitrarily detaining the son of former president Abdoulaye Wade and have called on the government to hand over unspecified compensation.

Sierra Leone

On the Ground Reporting

- **1 June 2015** – Police disclosed Monday that a lawmaker is in police custody after being arrested on suspicion of flouting the country's anti-Ebola laws by washing the body of his dead father.
 - The United Nations Ebola Chief has indicated that he believes that it is only a matter of weeks before the Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone will end.

Togo

On the Ground Reporting

- **2 June 2015** – Togo's authorities announced Tuesday that African leaders will meet in Togo later this year in order to discuss drawing up a continental charter against maritime piracy.

Security Summaries for West African States

Sahel Region – Page 10

Benin

On Tuesday, 5 May, protests erupted in the commercial capital Cotonou after security forces attempted to arrest an opposition lawmaker. Thousands of people took to the streets, burning tires and setting alight a fire-brigade truck. Further protests in the coming days may occur. MS Risk advises all travellers in Cotonou to avoid large gatherings as they may turn violent with minimal notice.

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 and Sierra Leone. While Benin currently has no confirmed cases of the Ebola virus, MS Risk advises all travellers to remain cautious, including maintaining strict standards of hygiene and avoiding eating bush meat. There is a heightened threat of terrorist attack globally from groups or individuals motivated by the current conflict in Iraq and Syria. Attacks could be indiscriminate and can occur in places where foreigners gather. There have been incidents of mugging, personal assault and carjacking in Cotonou. Armed robberies have also been reported in other areas, most notably in those regions that border Nigeria.

Burkina Faso – Page 12

The Gambia – Page 16

Ghana – Page 18

Guinea – Page 20

Guinea-Bissau

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

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

Ivory Coast – Page 23

Liberia – Page 25

Mali – Page 27

Mauritania – Page 32

Niger – Page 34

Nigeria – Page 36

Senegal – Page 46

Sierra Leone – Page 48

Togo – Page 50

Sahel Region



Security Summary

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

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

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

On the Ground Reporting

- **2 June 2015** – On Tuesday, Secretary General Ban Ki-moon warned that as long as there is one Ebola case in the West African region “all countries are at risk,” urging all nations to support the final battles aimed at wiping out the deadly disease in Guinea and Sierra Leone. Speaking to a General Assembly meeting on efforts to end the Ebola epidemic, which has killed over 11,100 people mainly in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone, the UN chief stated, “we are on the home stretch now and what happens now is critical.” While Liberia, which was once the worst affected country, has now been declared Ebola-free, Ban has warned that in Guinea and Sierra Leone, “the battle has not yet been won,” and “any lapse in vigilance could allow the virus to spread.” Dr David Nabarro, the UN Ebola chief, told the assembly that the priority is to ensure that the outbreak ends as soon as possible, “which will take several weeks and may take a number of months... But everybody should be ready in case the disease recurs and needs to be controlled, especially in the coming 12 months.” Ban also disclosed that UN agencies who will be taking over responsibility for tackling the outbreak as the UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Repose (UNMEER) scales down “will need considerable resources to go the distance and support recovery” in the three hardest-hit countries. UNMEER’s acting chief Peter Jan Graaff has indicated that UNMEER’s office in Mali closed on 31 March while its office in Liberia has handed over its operations to the UN country team. The Sierra Leone office is expected to end operations by the end of June, with Graaff indicating, “UNMEER could complete its transition by July 31 and be closed by the end of August,” noting however that if the situation deteriorates,

the timeline could be changed “to ensure that the UN’s political leverage and convening power is maintained.” The UN Secretary General has indicated that he will convene an International Ebola Recovery Conference in New York on 10 July, which will aim to mobilize resources to start early recovery in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

- **28 May 2015** – On Thursday, the World Health Organization (WHO) warned against complacency about the deadly Ebola virus, stating that the crisis is not over. Speaking at a meeting on Ebola in Paris, Sylvie Briand, head of epidemiology at the UN’s health agency, indicated, “we have to keep our guard up,” noting that the situation in Guinea left her “deeply concerned.” Ms Briand has warned against hopes that a line could be drawn under the epidemic, stressing that “the crisis isn’t over,” and that she is “...afraid there could be another wave that could spread to neighboring countries.” The WHO official pointed out to the fact that Ebola first emerged in Guinea at the end of 2013 and by April 214, it had practically disappeared. However it then dramatically bounced back a couple of months later before spreading to neighboring Liberia and Sierra Leone, and scattering cases in Mali, Nigeria and Senegal. While Liberia earlier this month was declared Ebola-free, both Guinea and Sierra Leone remain vulnerable to resurgence of the deadly virus.
 - The United Nations has reported that the number of people displaced by conflicts in the Sahel region has more than doubled in just over a year to a staggering 3.5 million. At the beginning of 2014, the UN humanitarian agency had reported that around 1.6 million people were displaced across the nine Sahel countries: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal. However on Thursday, UN Assistant Secretary General Robert Piper, who coordinates the UN’s humanitarian work in the Sahel, warned that on top of chronic crises, including food insecurity, malnutrition and epidemics, the region was facing a “very troubling dynamic” in which displacement linked to conflicts was “really escalating dramatically.” Speaking to reporters in Geneva, Mr Piper indicated that across the region, “there is a very big increase in the number of people affected by conflict, who have been pushed from their homes and from their livelihoods as a result.” He noted that violence caused by Boko Haram militants in northeastern Nigeria, has resulted in a spilling over effect, with civilians moving into neighboring Cameroon, Chad and Niger and spurring much of the displacement. Also fueling displacement is the continued unrest in northern Mali, which in recent months has increased as violence between armed groups has escalated. According to the UN, by the middle of last year, around 150,000 Malians had fled to neighboring countries, while an equal number were displaced inside the country. According to the World Food Programme, despite peaceful elections after the French operation, Mali remains divided and the north has seen a recent upsurge in attacks that has forced some 32,000 people from their homes in the past two weeks alone. Mr Piper has also indicated that conflicts outside of the Sahel region are also contributing to the displacement in the area, with violence in places such as Darfur and the Central African Republic forcing refugees to flee into Sahel countries. Consequently, the widespread displacement is taking a heavy toll on host communities, which are themselves often poor and “extraordinarily vulnerable.”

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 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. On 4 April 2015, a Western national was abducted in the Tambau Region by an armed group. His current whereabouts remain unknown. 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.

On the Ground Reporting

- **5 June 2015** – On Friday, an African human rights court ordered Burkina Faso to reopen a probe into the 1998 murder of journalist Norbert Zongo, who was killed while investigating the former president's brother. In its decision, the African Court on Human and People's Rights told Burkinabe authorities "reopen the investigation in order to locate, prosecute and try those responsible for the murders of Norbert Zongo and his three companions." The judges also ordered Burkina Faso's government to pay 25 million CFA francs to each of the victims' partners as well as 15 million CFA francs to each of their children. The court's judgment cannot be appealed. In 1998, the bodies of Zongo and three colleagues were found in a burnt car. At the time, he was looking into the murder of the driver of Francois Compaore, the brother of then president Blaise Compaore. Though six "serious suspects" were identified by a Burkinabe commission tasked with probing the murders, only one suspect was charged for the killing of Zongo, presidential guard member Marcel Kafando. He was later acquitted. In 2006, Burkinabe authorities closed the case, indicated that there was a lack of evidence. Since Blaise Compaore was toppled in a popular uprising late last year, the investigation into Zongo's killing has been receiving renewed attention, with the country's new interim government pledging in November to reopen the case.
- **26 May 2015** – On Tuesday, authorities exhumed human remains from the purported grave of Burkina Faso's assassinated leader, nearly three decades after he was killed during a coup in the West African nation. The family of slain President Thomas Sankara is now seeking more answers about his death as the man who overthrew Sankara in 1987, former president Blaise Compaore, has been ousted from power. Sankara was believed to have been buried along with twelve others, however some have questioned whether the remains in the exhumed grave are in fact his. Medical experts from Burkina Faso and France are overseeing the exhumation and will conduct DNA tests in order to identify the bodies. Experts are also expected to be able to determine what kind of bullets killed Sankara and how many hit him. The lawyer for Sankara's family confirmed Tuesday that human remains were exhumed and that the bodies had been buried in the soil without caskets, adding that the first remains were found at a depth of 45 centimeters (1 ½) feet and included bits of red fabric.

Domestic News

- **2 June 2015** – Burkina Faso's President Michel Kafando disclosed Tuesday that it was essential that the country's new leaders, due to be elected in October, draft a new constitution and submit it for referendum. In an interview during a visit to France, President Kafando stated, "it is absolutely necessary that there is a change in the constitution" and that the text be put to the people in a referendum. The president, who has been appointed as interim head of state following the fall of long-serving Blaise Compaore in October 2014, has denied rumours that voting for the new government will be postponed, stating that parliamentary and presidential elections will be held as planned on 11 October and that the transition period will not be prolonged. Given the duration of the transition, which will end with the elections, the Burkinabe president has indicated that he does not expect the process of drafting a new constitution to be easy, stating, "a constitution assumes there's a constituent assembly to propose, deliberate and pass the text. And it also assumes that we submit it for referendum," adding "but we will encourage those who come (to power) to

continue down this path.” President Kafando will not be able to legally stand in the upcoming presidential elections.

Gambia

No Travel Restrictions

Security Summary



There is no travel advisory for Gambia, MS Risk advises all travellers to the country to be aware that the Gambian government is currently blocking consular access to all foreign nationals in detention. As a result, Embassies in the Gambia will not be able to provide consular assistance to their nationals who may be detained by the Gambian authorities. 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

- **3 June 2015** – Gambian government sources have disclosed that a Lebanese businessman, accused by the United States of providing financial support to the Lebanese militant movement Hezbollah, left Gambia at the weekend in compliance with an expulsion order. Last week, state television reported that Husayn Tajideen, known locally as an importer of rice and flour to the small West African nation, was accused of “unacceptable business practices that are detrimental to the Gambian economy,” adding that he had 30 days to close all local businesses. Tajideen has not commented on the accusations, while staff at a supermarket that serves as one of his main businesses in Gambia declined to comment on his expulsion. In the past, Tajideen's family has denied accusations that some of its businesses serve as fronts for Hezbollah. The US accuses Tajideen and two brothers of running an African business network, which reaches as far as Angola and Democratic Republic of Congo, and which helps finance Hezbollah. Gambia had previously ordered Tajideen's expulsion in 2013, accusing him of profiteering, however he later received a presidential pardon for reasons that remain unclear. It was not immediately clear if the other two brothers are residents of Gambia.
- **27 May 2015** – According to two international rights organizations, Gambian authorities have detained, and in some cases have “disappeared,” friends and relatives of the alleged suspects of a failed coup, including elderly women and a child. According to Human Rights Watch (HRW) and Amnesty International, most

were arrested in the days that followed the 30 December 2014 attempted coup, with officials indicating that some have not been heard from or seen since they were taken away in early January. In a statement, the two rights organizations indicated, “the government has refused to acknowledge the whereabouts or even the detention of many of them, effectively holding them outside of the protection of the law,” adding, “this amounts to enforced disappearance, serious violation of international law.” The HRW and Amnesty have urged the Gambian government to reveal the whereabouts of the detained and either charge them or release them immediately.

International Developments

- **6 June 2015** – The European Union (EU) has summoned the Gambian ambassador for an explanation after its representative to the country was expelled. Agnes Guillaud has been given 72 hours to leave the country, without receiving a reason. According to an EU spokesman, the move appears to have been carried out with no justification. On Saturday, officials indicated that the EU has summoned the Gambian ambassador in order to seek an explanation for the expulsion. The EU has been critical of the Gambia’s human rights record, particularly regarding its laws penalizing homosexuality. Last year, the EU blocked nearly US \$15 million in aid to the West African nation.

Ghana

No Travel Restrictions



Security Summary

An outbreak of the Ebola virus disease has been confirmed in Guinea and Sierra Leone. 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.

On the Ground Reporting

- **4 June 2015** – Authorities reported Thursday that massive flooding in the capital city swept stored fuel into a nearby fire, setting off a large explosion at a gas station, which killed 73 people and set alight neighboring buildings. According to Billy Anaglate, spokesman for Ghana's national fire services, the flooding "caused the diesel and petrol to flow away from the gas station and a fire from a nearby house led to the explosion." The fire broke out at the filling station in the Kwame Nkrumah Circle area of the city late on Wednesday night. A local resident reported, "many people took shelter under a shed at the station during severe rain across the country and got trapped when the explosion happened." During a visit to the scene on

Thursday, President John Dramani Mahama called the death toll “catastrophic” and offered condolences to the families of the victims. Officials have warned that the death toll was preliminary and that it could rise over the coming days. At least two days of rains have caused chaos in Accra and have left many suburbs submerged and people stranded, as roads have been blocked and cars were carried away in or upturned by the floodwaters. Communications minister Edward Omane Boamah has indicated that power supplies have been cut to some communities as electricity sub-stations were under water. Boamah, who called the situation a “national emergency,” indicated that the armed forces, police, fire and the National Disaster Management Organization have been deployed in order to help those affected. Officials have indicated that more rains are forecast on Thursday and Friday, with storms coming in from the east. **Update (5 June)** – An explosion at a petrol station in the capital city and flooding caused by torrential rains has killed around 150 people. Authorities have indicated that around 96 people who sought shelter from floods overnight at the state-owned GOIL gas station near a busy downtown intersection were killed. Thousands more were made homeless in the citywide flooding.

- **27 May 2015** – Tests on poultry at two farms in Ghana, including one located in the capital Accra, have confirmed the presence of H5N1 avian flu. According to the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research, five of six samples tested positive for the disease earlier this month. Research Kofi Odoom has indicated that no human infection has been confirmed in the country, adding that the institute was conducting tests on people who may have handled the infected birds. A health ministry official has disclosed that at least 20,000 chickens on five farms around the capital city and the port town of Tema have been destroyed, however it remains unclear whether the disease had been confirmed in all the locations. Avian flu has already been detected in several other West African countries, including Ghana’s neighbors Burkina Faso and Niger.

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



Faranah, Kissidougou, Guekedou, Macent and Nzerekore. MS Risk advises all travellers on these routes to remain vigilant and to avoid travel after dark. Official and unofficial checkpoints may be set up along these routes. Vehicles and passengers



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

- **1 June 2015** - The head of the UN mission on Ebola in Guinea disclosed Monday that violence in the western area of the country has “jeopardized” the fight against the deadly virus. According to local authorities and residents, around sixty people have been arrested as a result of the unrest in the past week. The head of the UN mission (UNMEER), Abdou Dieng, has now warned that the unrest had “jeopardized the treatment of people with the Ebola virus.” In a statement Dieng has called “...upon all the people of Guinea to support and collaborate with national and international stakeholders in the fight against Ebola,” noting that the unrest in the country had led to public buildings being damaged, an ambulance being burned and that “Ebola response partners were attacked.”
 - Meanwhile Justice Minister Cheick Sako has denied reports that were published last week, which indicated that police had arrested six people who used a taxi in order to transport a dead Ebola victim who was wearing sunglasses in an attempt to make him look as though he were alive. In a statement, the minister dismissed “the rumor that an Ebola patient, dressed up for the journey, was stopped by the security services.” According to the minister, the infected man had in fact travelled to a village in western Guinea for treatment and had died on the way back.
- **25 May 2015** – Six people have been put in isolation in prison after being accused of travelling with a corpse of a relative who had died of Ebola. If after twenty-one days they do not show any signs of having contracted the deadly virus, they will be tried for violating the health emergency. According to Guinean authorities, the body was seated upright in a taxi, dressed in a T-shirt and jeans with sunglasses and sandwiched between three others. The head of Guinea’s Ebola response, Dr Sakoba Keita, has indicated that those now in quarantine in prison had been travelling in a taxi with the body of the police recruit from the town of Forecariah towards the capital, Conakry. They were stopped at an Ebola checkpoint where security officials became suspicious when the seemingly well-dressed passenger remained motionless. Guinea is currently battling to control a recent flare up in Ebola cases. Nine days ago, there were only nine patients in Ebola treatment centers countrywide however the latest figures released by the World Health Organization (WHO) indicate that this number has risen to nearly 30 cases. According to Dr Keita, actions, such as transporting corpses in taxis, account for the continued spread of the Ebola epidemic. While Ebola victims must be buried by Red Cross officials, people who disobey these rules generally do so because they want to conduct the funeral themselves in a specific place. Nearly 2,500 people have died in the West African country since the Ebola outbreak began more than a year ago.

Domestic News

- **4 June 2015** – According to the United Nation’s top regional official, Guinea opposition leaders have accepted a government offer to begin talks aimed at resolving tensions that have sparked violent street protests. Guinea’s Justice Minister Cheick Sako invited the head of the opposition, Cellou Dalien Diallo, to

discuss the standoff in a letter dated 26 May. The UN Special Representative for West Africa Mohamed Ibn Chambas has indicated that Diallo, as well as the head of opposition party UFR Sidya Toure, will attend the talks in Conakry from Friday, adding, “good progress has been made... Both sides have come to realize the constitutional imperative of holding presidential elections this year and that it is only through dialogue that they can come to an understanding.” A spokesman for Diallo has indicated that the opposition wanted a dialogue and the two sides were on the verge of agreeing an agenda for the talks but a formal decision had not yet been announced. Discussions are expected to focus on the timing of local elections as well as the role of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

- **25 May 2015** – On Monday Guinean President Alpha Conde asked his government to open talks with opposition leaders “without delay.” In a letter that was circulated to the media, the president instructed Prime Minister Mohamed Said Fofana to find “acceptable and lawful” solutions to the crisis that would lead to “the organization of transparent and fair presidential and local elections.” The announcement of the talks, which are aimed at ending a political deadlock, follows weeks of deadly clashes between anti-government activists and security forces in the capital Conakry and in several provincial towns, leaving several dead and dozens wounded. Guinea’s opposition is demanding that local elections take place ahead of a presidential vote, due in October. They have accused the president of refusing the request, stating that he wants to maintain his support in the local administrations in a bid to rig the October vote. While the president has denied these claims, stating that local officials will not be involved in the presidential polls, he has indicated that the agenda for dialogue should prioritize “the concern that non-elected bodies of local authorities shall not constitute an obstacle to transparency or disable the fairness of the electoral process.” While the president has not set out a timetable for the talks, he has indicated that he hopes “that a dialogue can be organized without delay.” The announcement comes after the president met with opposition leader Cellou Dalein Diallo at the presidential palace in Conakry last week.

Ivory Coast

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

Security Summary

An outbreak of the Ebola virus disease has been confirmed in Guinea and Sierra Leone. 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, which has 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: Attécou, Koumassi, Port Bouet and Yapougon.



MS Risk advises against all but essential travel to the western regions of Dix-Huit Montagnes, Haut-Sassandra, Moyen-Cavally and Bas-Sassandra. Since August 2012, there have been a number of shootings around the capital of Abidjan. Attacks have mainly occurred at night with the targets usually being police and military officials. Further such incidents cannot be ruled out at this time, consequently MS Risk advises those in the capital city to remain vigilant at all times. As of 21 November 2014, there is a curfew in place from 10PM to 5AM in the town of Bondoukou, which is located in the

northeastern region of the country. The curfew has been put in place in response to a high number of robberies that have been occurring at night. There is an underlying threat from terrorism. Attacks could be indiscriminate, including in places frequented by foreigners.

On the Ground Reporting

- **29 May 2015** – On Friday, the African Union (AU) announced that Ivory Coast President Alassane Ouattara, who is currently seeking re-election for a second term, has promised not to try and stay in office for a third consecutive mandate if he wins. According to the statement, “the President of Ivory Coast... told Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma that he will retire after his second term as president, if elected.” The statement from the AU, which was released shortly after talks between President Ouattara and AU commission head Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma on the sidelines of an African Development Bank meeting in Abidjan, comes as the topic of leaders staying in office has emerged as a controversial issue across the continent. President Ouattara, 73, was nominated by the ruling coalition for re-election in the upcoming presidential polls, which are due to take place in October. He is widely favored to remain in office.

Liberia

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



Security Summary

MS Risk no longer advises against all but essential travel to Liberia however we advise all but essential travel to parts of the country, particularly those that are affected by crime. On 9 May, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared Liberia Ebola-free. Officials however continue to caution all those in the country as the outbreak in neighboring Guinea and Sierra Leone continues. We advise that travellers to Liberia continue to practice enhanced precautions as there is a possibility that Ebola may be reintroduced into the country.

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.

On the Ground Reporting

- **2 June 2015** – Liberian police have charged twenty-three people over riots at a palm oil plantation in which a senior company official was taken hostage and a government minister was wounded. According to the company and the Liberian National Police, last week, protesters with machetes broke into the Golden Veroleum Liberia (GVL) in Sinoe County, in the country's southeast, looting equipment and workers' property. A statement released by the police indicated that the protesters were arrested Friday, adding "several weapons including machetes, knives and other deadly instruments were found in their possession." The statement further indicated that the suspects are facing a number of charges, including attempted murder, looting, aggravated assault and armed robbery. GVL indicated that Deputy Internal Affairs Minister Varney Sirleaf, a nephew of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, had been wounded by protesters as he

attempted to negotiate a settlement. A separate statement released by GVL indicated that a GVL vice-president was visiting from Indonesia when the violence erupted while a GVL manager was briefly taken hostage and several workers were wounded, two seriously, while employee housing was broken into and vandalized. The company has indicated that up to 25 members of the association had arrived on site, blocking the entrance to works. The protest has prompted an angry response from the president, who has urged Liberians to stand against violent disorder as she returned from a visit to the Ivory Coast on Wednesday last week.

- **28 May 2015** – Police officials disclosed Wednesday that armed protesters entered a palm oil plantation in the southeastern region of the country, taking several people hostage and injuring a senior government official. According to officials, the violent demonstrations first broke out on Tuesday at a plantation in Sinoe County run by Golden Veroleum Liberia (GVL), whose lead investor is Singapore-listed Golden Agri-Resources. In a statement released Wednesday, Liberian police officials disclosed, “the demonstrators, armed with cutlasses and other deadly instruments, attacked the GVL mess hall and looted several items causing other company workers to flee into nearby bushes for safety.” Deputy Internal Affairs Minister Varney Sirleaf, who is the nephew of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, was visiting the plantation at the time of the incident. He, along with an Indonesian GVL employee, was amongst those taken hostage. Police have indicated that Sirleaf was injured during the incident, however no further details pertaining to his injuries have been released. Liberian police and personnel from the country’s UN peacekeeping mission, UNMIL, later freed both him and the Indonesian worker. In a separate statement released Wednesday, GVL indicated that “we are deeply concerned by the actions of a few individuals who have chosen to disregard the law and safety of our personnel and local residents in the area.” While it remains unclear what sparked the protests, last month, the Forest People’s Programme, which is a group that is campaigning for the rights of indigenous people, accused GVL of taking land without community consent. Under its 2010 concession agreement, Liberia’s government agreed to lease GVL 220,000 hectares of land over a period of 65 years in order to develop its palm oil operations.

International Developments

- **26 May 2015** – On Tuesday, United States health authorities disclosed that a US man has died of a rare virus in New Jersey after returning from West Africa, noting however that the risk of contagion is very low. According to New Jersey health authorities and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the man died of Lassa fever. Officials have indicated that the man, who has not been identified, had travelled from Liberia to Morocco before arriving at New York’s John F. Kennedy International Airport on 17 May. He was hospitalized on 21 May, after an initial hospital visit, during which doctors failed to identify the virus. It was only early Monday, just hours before his death, that blood samples analyzed by the CDC tested positive for Lassa fever. Tests for Ebola and other hemorrhagic fevers came back negative. According to the CDC, the patient was in an isolation unit at the time of his death. CDC officials are currently working to identify those who came in contact with the patient, adding that his close contacts will be monitored for 21 days in order to see if any symptoms emerge. While the virus triggers hemorrhagic symptoms, it differs from Ebola, which has caused an epidemic in West Africa over the past year and a half.

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.

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

On the Ground Reporting

- **5 June 2015** – The head of Mali's main Tuareg-led rebel groups indicated Friday that his movement will sign a final deal on 20 June. On 14 May, the Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA), headed by Bilal Ag Acherif, initialled a peace agreement with the Malian government however it held out on a final deal until

some changes were made. However on Friday, Acherif indicated that following talks in Algiers on security issues, “we will sign the peace accord on June 20.” UN envoy for Mali Mongi Hamdi has welcomed the announcement however he cautioned that the hardest part was still to come.

- **3 June 2015** - On Wednesday, rights campaigners denounced pro-government forces’ killing of six civilians, including an aid worker for a European charity, in northern Mali, stating that the deaths were a “war crime.” According to the International Federation for Human Rights and Malian Association of Human Rights, the victims were murdered following clashes between the country’s main Tuareg-led rebel alliance, known as the CMA, and the pro-government Imghad and Allies Tuareg Self-Defense Group (GATIA). In a joint statement, the rights groups further noted “some of these deaths were summary executions and extra-judicial killings of civilians which therefore constitute war crimes whose perpetrators should be prosecuted by Malian courts and possibly the International Criminal Court.” The statement added that the rights groups had received confirmation that six civilians were killed and that the fighting has displaced around thirty families, mostly from the ethnic-Tuareg Kel Essouk tribe. On 22 May, the UN announced that it was sending investigators to Tin Hama, a town in the northeastern region of Gao, after being alerted to “serious violations of human rights...including the execution of a number of civilians.” The Malian government however has rejected accusations that the army was involved, describing the alleged atrocity as “a bloody settling of scores between armed groups.”
- **1 June 2015** – Mauritanian al-Akhbar news agency reported Monday that al-Qaeda’s North Africa branch has claimed responsibility for two attacks against the United Nations’ MINUSMA peacekeeping mission in Mali that occurred last week. Citing al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) spokesman Abdurrahman Al-Azawadi, the news agency disclosed that AQIM indicated that it was behind a “rocket attack on a MINUSMA base” in northern Mali on Monday and a land mine explosion Thursday, which targeted a UN convoy in the restive north. While on Thursday, MINUSMA officials had indicated that three Burkina Faso peacekeepers were wounded when their convoy triggered at least one mine in the Timbuktu region, al-Akhbar reported that AQIM’s spokesman stated that the mine blast had caused “three deaths.” MINUSMA commander Major General Michael Lollesgaard from Denmark and the mission’s police chief Abdounasir Awale were part of the convoy. At the time, a MINUSMA security source based in Timbuktu reported that it was “very likely” that the mines had been laid just before the convoy arrived, specifically targeting the two commanders, as security checks had been carried out along the route a few hours earlier. Separately, MINUSMA indicated Tuesday that a Bangladeshi peacekeeper had been shot dead and that another was wounded in “an incident” that occurred in the area of Bamako airport. The circumstances of that shooting, however, are still being investigating and the incident has not been attributed by the UN to militants.
- **28 May 2015** – Officials reported Thursday that three UN peacekeepers were wounded in northern Mali when a vehicle in a convoy escorting their commander and the force’s police commissioner hit a landmine. A spokesman for the UN mission confirmed that Force Commander Major General Michael Lollesgaard of Denmark and police commissioner Abdounasir Awale were in the convoy when it was hit by the blast. Radhia Achouri disclosed that the two officers were not injured and that she did not believe they were personally targeted, adding “it is yet another attack in the area. They happened to be on that road at that time,” referring to the road between the town of Timbuktu and Teherdge in the desert north.
- **26 May 2015** – Militants opened fire on two Bangladeshi peacekeepers in the Malian capital on Monday, killing one. According to Bangladesh army spokesman Nur Islam, one of the peacekeepers died on the scene and the other was rushed immediately to hospital with bullet wounds after the ambush on their SUV. A Malian security source disclosed, “armed men that we have not yet identified shot at two peacekeepers who were on board a UN vehicle on Monday night. One of them was killed and the other seriously

wounded,” adding “we are seeking clarification and details. This has to be viewed as a terrorist act. The perpetrators are the enemies of peace.” On Tuesday, a UN official confirmed that an investigation is being opened into Monday night’s ambush.

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

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

Terrorism



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

Kidnapping

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

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

Niger

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

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



Security Summary

A state of emergency is current in effect in the region of Diffa. This is due to Boko Haram attacks, which occurred earlier this year. A curfew is also in place, resulting in 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 Tillabéri 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.



On the Ground Reporting

- **2 June 2015** – Niger's President Mahamadou Issoufou announced Tuesday that a multinational force being set up to combat Nigeria's Boko Haram Islamist insurgency in the Lake Chad region will be operational in

the coming weeks. Speaking to reporters outside the Elysee Palace in Paris, after holding a meeting with French President Francois Hollande, President Issoufou stated “we have discussed the situation on our southern side with Boko Haram rampaging in the Lake Chad zone...We think that in the coming weeks, with the new administration settling into place in Nigeria, we are going to be able to launch the mixed multinational force, to which all of the countries of the Lake Chad Basin contribute.” In a separate statement released by the Elysee, officials indicated that President Holland had told President Issoufou that France would “continue its logistical support and intelligence to the countries neighboring Lake Chad” to combat the militant group. The force, which was approved by the African Union (AU) in March, will have a 8,700-strong force drawn from the Lake Chad countries of Cameroon, Chad, Niger, Nigeria and Benin, and will be financed partly by the international community.

- New figures released by the World Health Organization (WHO) on Tuesday indicate that an epidemic of meningitis in Niger has killed 545 people, out of 8,234 people who caught the disease, noting that the epidemic has now peaked. WHO officials have indicated that the epidemic was worrying and unprecedented as it was a strain not normally found in Africa, adding that the appropriate vaccine was in short supply. In early May, cases were tripling every two weeks, however the number of new cases began to slow in the second half of May amidst a vaccination campaign launched in the affected areas. According to WHO spokesman Cory Couillard, the spread of the disease peaked in the week to 10 May, when there were 2,189 cases and 132 deaths, adding that in the last week of the month, there were 264 cases and 8 deaths.

Domestic News

- **4 June 2015** – Niger’s President Mahamadou Issoufou, who is facing a fragmented opposition, has indicated that he wants to ensure that next year’s presidential and parliamentary elections are “...transparent, free, honest and credible.” The president’s statement to public television on Wednesday evening came after he launched a new voter registration process. While Niger has a population of 17 million, only 6.7 people were registered to vote in the 2011 elections. According to the president, the new registration process, which will take three weeks to complete and is backed by the ruling and opposition parties as well as independent groups, lays “the foundation for a credible election.” Legislative and presidential polls are due to be held in the first half of 2016. Since former parliamentary speaker Hama Amadou abandoned the regime and joined the opposition in 2013, effectively becoming the president’s main rival, the political climate in the West African nation has been tense. Amadou has since become one of some twenty people who have been accused of trafficking newborn babies. While Amadou maintains that these charges are politically motivated, the president’s regime has denied this allegation.
- **25 May 2015** – On Monday, Niger’s parliament revised the country’s 2015 budge to 1,732.4 billion CFA francs (US \$2.90 billion) from 1,707 billion, which was approved in December, in order to meet high defense expenses as the country’s troops continue to battle Nigerian-based Boko Haram. Amadou Salifou, president of the National Assembly, indicated on state radio that “the amended finance law of the 2015 budget, balanced in revenue and expenses at 1,732.4 billion CFA francs, received 77 votes for and 22 votes against, and has been adopted. According to Salifou, additional financing was needed in order to improve military equipment, adding that some 33 billion CFA francs in the budget will be allocated to defense and security.

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.

On the Ground Reporting

- **4 June 2015** – Two blasts rocked northeastern Nigeria on Thursday, killing at least six people, just hours before President Muhammadu Buhari urged closer regional cooperation to defeat Boko Haram. According to officials, the first explosion occurred in the Borno state capital Maiduguri, which has been hit by a spate of bombings in recent days. The incident occurred when a truck carrying firewood rammed into a checkpoint outside a military barracks. Police and locals have reported that at least four soldiers were killed in this explosion, which one resident called a “suicide attack.” The second blast occurred at a busy market in Yola, the capital of neighboring Adamawa state. At least two people were killed in the second incident and some 30 others were injured. While there was no claim of responsibility, both incidents will likely be blamed on Boko Haram. Just hours before these latest attacks, President Buhari arrived in Chad's capital N'Djamena, for talks with his counterpart Idriss Deby on tackling Boko Haram. According to a statement from the office of the Chadian President, Deby has “reaffirmed Chad's involvement and availability” to work with Nigeria. **Update (5 June)** – The National Emergency Management Agency's coordinator in the city of Yola, Sa'ad Bello, indicated Friday that at least 31 people were killed in Thursday's attack in the city and another 38 people injured.
 - Nigerian police on Thursday confirmed that a French tourist was shot dead while his wife was injured in a suspected robbery that occurred in the country's Ebonyi State. National police spokesperson Emmanuel Ojukwu confirmed that the incident happened two days ago in the southern state, indicating, “the couple were French tourists and they were camped in the bush when attacked.”

- **3 June 2015** – Three senior officials from the country's central bank, along with two others from a commercial bank, have been remanded in custody after appearing in court where they were charged with currency fraud. In a statement released by Wilson Uwujaren, spokesman for the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the five were charged with “defrauding the apex bank and two other banks.” The defendants have plead not guilty to an 11-count indictment, which included conspiracy, fraud and theft, at the court in Ibadan, southwest Nigeria. Judge Ayo Emmanuel adjourned the case until 9 June for a bail application. The five are amongst 22 bankers who were arrested across the country after failing to carry out instructions to destroy old banknotes totaling billions of naira. In a statement, the Central Bank of Nigeria, which handed over the suspects for prosecution, indicated that “anomalies” came to light during a routine internal audit at its branch in Ibadan in September 2014, adding, “it was discovered that a systematic scheme, which has been on for several years, was being run in which mutilated higher denomination notes originally meant for destruction were sapped with lower denomination currencies.”
 - Amnesty International disclosed Wednesday that there was sufficient evidence for the International Criminal Court (ICC) to probe senior Nigerian military officers for war crimes in the battle against Boko Haram. The rights group stated the case against five senior officers in a new 133-page report, which is based on hundreds of interviews, including with military sources and using leaked defense ministry documents. The allegations center on thousands of people, which Amnesty claims were extrajudicially murdered by security forces and its civilian vigilante allies, as well as crimes against those who were held in military custody. According to the report, “in the course of security operations against Boko Haram in north-east Nigeria, Nigerian military forces have extrajudicially executed more than 1,200 people; they have arbitrarily arrested at least 20,000 people, mostly young men and boys,” adding that Nigerian forces “have committed countless acts of torture; hundreds, if not thousands, of Nigerians have become victims of enforced disappearance; and at least 7,000 people have died in military detention as a result of starvation, extreme overcrowding and denial of medical assistance.” Amnesty officials further disclosed that commanders based in the northeastern region of the country “should be investigated for potential responsibility for war crimes of murder, enforced disappearances and torture,” adding that top service chiefs in the capital Abuja “should be investigated for their potential command responsibility for crimes committed by their subordinates given that they knew or should have known about the commission of the crimes, and failed to take adequate action.” The ICC has previously opened a preliminary investigation into the Boko Haram conflict, which Amnesty indicates has killed at least 17,000 people since 2009. While the tribunal however has stated that there was insufficient evidence tying Nigeria's military to systematic and orchestrated atrocities targeting civilians, in the newly released report, “Amnesty International believes that the evidence contained in this report and submitted separately to the (ICC) Office of the Prosecutor is sufficient to reopen this issue.”
 - At least eleven people were killed Wednesday in an explosion in Maiduguri. According to Danlami Ajaokuta, a civilian vigilante assisting that military against Boko Haram in the Baga Road area, “we have so far recovered six dead bodies. We are still working at the scene, so the casualties may rise.” Ajaokuta indicated that the blast, which occurred at 5:30 PM (1630 GMT), happened at a garage opposite a military unit and it appeared to have been caused by explosives that were left nearby. Since last Friday, Maiduguri, which has been a regular target for Boko Haram Islamists, has been hit four times.
 - The military in Abuja announced that a Nigerian officer has taken charge of the new African Union-backed Multi-National Joint Task Force, which is based in the capital of neighboring Chad. The

8,700-strong unit, which is made up of military personnel, police and civilians from Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria, had been due to be deployed last November. According to President Muhammadu Buhari, the new fighting force “will be able to secure and stabilize all the areas affected by Boko Haram insurgency” and will help bring an end to the bloodshed. The Nigerian president has also ordered that the military’s command center be moved from the capital, Abuja, to Maiduguri.

- **2 June 2015** – On Tuesday, suspected Boko Haram militants launched a renewed attack on Maiduguri, just days after the military repelled an assault on the key city. At least thirteen people were killed Tuesday in a suicide attack at a busy cattle market in the northeastern city of Maiduguri. According to Red Cross officials and locals, the blast in the Borno state capital occurred at around 1:00PM (1200 GMT) as traders were wrapping up business for the day. The northeast spokesman of the Nigerian Red Cross, Umar Sadiq, indicated that there were 13 dead and 24 injured who were taken to two city hospitals for treatment. While there was no immediate claim of responsibility for the latest attack, it bore the hallmarks of the group, with one official indicated that the victims were “carefully targeted,” adding “the bomber chose the most crowded part of the market and set off his bombs.” The attack came after Boko Haram militants again targeted Maiduguri with rocket-propelled grenades in the early hours of Tuesday after hitting the city in a similar attack on Saturday. Residents reported that the militants arrived in the Moronti area of the city by river during the early hours of Tuesday however they were unable to advance further because of wide ditches and embankments that were dug by soldiers around the city limits. According to locals, the militants then began shelling Ajillari Cross, which is located about three kilometres (2 miles) away. One local stated, “we were bombarded by RPG’s (rocket-propelled grenades) by Boko Haram from Moronti...We all left our homes for fear of being hit inside. It was dark so we could see the trajectory of the RPG’s, which were red with heat... Soon afterwards, we saw troops in trucks moving towards Moronti and then a fighter jet also deployed not long afterwards.”
 - Boko Haram has released a new video, its first since February and the first time the group is using the logo “Islamic State in West Africa” – after the group’s leader in March pledged allegiance to Islamic State (IS). In the video, the militant group rejected claims that they have been routed in a four-nation offensive. The 10-minute message, which was released on YouTube does not show leader Abubakar Shekau. While Shekau has appeared in most of the insurgents’ messages over the past three years, his absence will likely raise immediate questions concerning his whereabouts. Instead, an unidentified man pictured in front of two pick-up trucks with his face obscured by a headscarf and with an AK-47 rifle resting on his chest states, “most of our territory is still under our control,” dismissing claims of the coalition’s sweeping victories. Shekau was not referenced at any point, which is a major departure from past Boko Haram statements.
 - A spokesman disclosed Tuesday that former governor of the state of Adamawa, Murtala Nyako, has turned himself in for questioning at the country’s anti-graft agency following claims of money laundering. According to Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) spokesman Wilson Uwujaren, “he reported yesterday (Monday) in our office for questioning. He was allowed to go home around 6:30 PM (1730 GMT). The interrogation continues today (Tuesday).” According to Uwujaren, his interrogation “has to do with financial transactions when he was governor of Adamawa state” from 2008 until July 2014, when he was impeached. No further details on the substance of the allegations were given, including whether Nyako was scheduled to be charged in court. Nyako, 72 was impeached by lawmakers in the northeastern state last year after he announced his defection from the then-ruling People’s Democratic Party (PDP) to the All Progressives Congress (APC) party led by newly elected President Muhammadu Buhari. The EFCC had declared him wanted earlier this year.

- **1 June 2015** – A spokesman announced Monday that the country's anti-corruption agency has arrested six senior officials from Nigeria's central bank and 16 from commercial banks over an alleged US \$33m (£21m) currency fraud. According to Wilson Uwujaren, "six senior officials of the CBN (Central Bank of Nigeria) and 16 others from various commercial banks across the country were arrested over currency fraud." The arrests come just days after new President Muhammadu Buhari, who has pledged to crack down on corruption in government at the highest levels, took office. Uwujaren, from the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), further disclosed that in the coming days, the body is expected to charge the suspects with offences relating to economic fraud, adding that the suspects stole "tonnes of defaced naira notes," which were meant to be destroyed.
 - A man condemned to hang when he was 16 because of confessions that were extracted under torture, has been pardoned after ten years on death row. In response to a campaign launched by human rights groups, Delta State Gov. Emmanuel Uduaghan signed a pardon for Moses Akatugba and three other death row inmates as one of his final acts prior to leaving office last week. According to activists, Akatugba was a schoolboy when soldiers arrested him for allegedly stealing three cellphones. He was delivered to police officers who tortured him until he signed confessions admitting to armed robbery. While in Nigeria, armed robbery carries a mandatory death sentence, minors are supposed to be exempt. According to the latest US State Department report on human rights in Nigeria, police often use torture in order to extract confessions, which are used in courts despite laws prohibiting both. The report has further disclosed that torture in prisons is also common. Nigerian and international human rights activists, who have indicated that his sentencing was illegal, describe his case as one of many examples of the injustices placed on Nigerians by a system that has been tainted by corruption. Newly elected President Muhammadu Buhari has promised to reform the justice system.
- **31 May 2015** – Officials have reported that more than sixty people have died in southeastern Nigeria after a fuel tanker crashed into a busy bus station and caught fire. According to eyewitnesses, the driver lost control of the tanker as it was going downhill in the city of Onisha. Rescue workers have indicated that twelve other vehicles caught fire in Sunday's incident, which police officials have indicated was an accident.
 - Boko Haram militants raided two towns in northeastern Nigeria, torching public buildings and looting food and fuel stores. According to residents and a police officer, gunmen in pick-up trucks and on motorcycles stormed the towns of Galda and Fika in Yobe state late Saturday, firing wildly and forcing residents indoors. After repelling a military offensive, Boko Haram militants stormed the town of Fika, which is located 150 kilometres (95 miles) from the state capital Damaturu, where they burned a police station and public buildings, including a law court, a local administration building and a primary school. One resident of Fika disclosed, "Boko Haram gunmen came in two pick-up trucks and on several motorcycles around 9:00 PM (200 GMT) and kept firing shots haphazardly and firing RPG's on the police station where they forced the policemen to flee and residents to run indoors." The local also reported that the militants torched a cluster of government-built homes for civil servants and 13 vehicles parked outside people's houses, with another local stating, "they burnt all the telecom masts in the town and we have to go to hill tops in the bush where we can get phone signals to make calls." No information pertaining to casualties has been available because communications in the area remain down. Troops who mobilized from Potiskum, which is located 50 kilometres (30 miles) away, to combat the militants were outgunned and forced to withdraw after intense fighting. Boko Haram militants also attacked the town of Galda, which is located around 20 kilometres (12 miles) from Fika.

- **30 May 2015** – According to witnesses and security sources, Nigeria's military on Saturday repelled a Boko Haram attack on the key northeastern city of Maiduguri, which saw rocket-propelled grenades fired into homes. According to local residents, shortly after midnight Friday, residents in the Dala suburb south of the city woke to the sound of RPG's being fired in succession. Witnesses reported that hundreds of militant gunmen were trying to advance on the city, which is now home to hundreds of thousands of people displaced by unrest in other parts of Borno state. Three senior security sources in Maiduguri confirmed that the attack had been repelled, with one of the sources disclosing, "all is under control. There is no cause for alarm." The militant group's latest assault on the Borno state capital comes just a day after President Muhammadu Buhari's inauguration, with the new leader vowing to re-enforce Maiduguri with a new command and control center aimed at better coordinating the counter-insurgency effort. While it is unlikely that Boko Haram currently has the capacity to seize Maiduguri, a major attack inside the city would likely be disastrous for civilians. **Update (31 May)** – On Saturday, a suicide bombing killed 26 people inside a mosque in the city of Maiduguri, just hours after Boko Haram militants launched a separate attack on the first full day of President Muhammadu Buhari's term. According to police and eyewitnesses, the mosque bombing in the Borno state capital was carried out by an assailant who pretended to be a worshipper joining afternoon prayers. Borno police chief Aderemi Opadokun confirmed the attack, stating that the bomber blew himself up inside the Alhaji Haruna mosque next to Maiduguri's Monday Market just after afternoon prayers began at roughly 3:30 PM. At least 26 people were killed and 28 others were injured.
- **29 May 2015** – The winner of Nigeria's presidential election in March, Muhammadu Buhari, has been sworn in as leader of Africa's most populous country. President Buhari is the first opposition figure to win a presidential election in Nigeria since independence in 1960. He defeated Goodluck Jonathan, who had been in office since 2010, by 15.4 million votes to 12.9 million. At the inauguration ceremony at Abuja's Eagle Square, Mr Jonathan handed over the constitution and national flags before Mr Buhari took his oath of office. Mr Jonathan also urged his successor to unite the country in the face of the continued threat from Boko Haram. Speaking to cheering crowds, President Buhari stated, "I will discharge my duties to the best of my ability, faithfully and in accordance with the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the law." President Buhari comes to power as the country is facing significant economic as well as security challenges, with the ongoing Boko Haram insurgency, which has devastated towns and villages in northeastern Nigeria. President Buhari has also promised to stamp out corruption.
 - According to a military spokesman, clashes between Chad's army and Boko Haram militants on an island located on Lake Chad have killed four soldiers and thirty-three militants. On Friday, military spokesman Colonel Azem Bermandoa Agouna disclosed that "Boko Haram elements on Wednesday attacked our forces in Choua," referring to an island on the lake in Chadian territory. Col. Agouna further indicated, "the Chadian army violently repelled the attack. We killed 33 Boko Haram members and recovered several light arms and anti-tank grenades. We regret the loss of four soldiers and also recorded four wounded," adding that Chadian military planes had been targeting Boko Haram positions on the lake since Thursday and had destroyed food, fuel and munitions belonging to the militant group.
- **28 May 2015** - Security was increased in and around the capital Abuja on Thursday, as final preparations are underway for the inauguration of Muhammadu Buhari as president. On Friday, the 72-year-old, who defeated incumbent Goodluck Jonathan in elections, will be sworn in at a ceremony at 9AM before world leaders and other dignitaries. Amongst those confirmed to attend are South African President Jacob Zuma, US Secretary of State John Kerry and French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius. On the ground sources have reported that soldiers were out in force on the streets of the capital, including at the main entry points

into the city. There was also a visible police presence at key locations across Abuja, including at hotels and government buildings. Roads have been closed around the Eagle Square inauguration venue, where dozens of international flags have been hoisted alongside the Nigerian flag. Nigeria's federal police chief Solomon Arase has indicated that the measures have been imposed in order "to ward off possible plans by insurgents to carry out widespread violence and coordinated attacks." He has urged members of the public to remain vigilant and to cooperate with the security services "to stamp out crimes, including (the) war against terror...to ensure (a) hitch-free inauguration." Such threats include a possible attack by Boko Haram militants, who in the past have hit Abuja, including twice in the space of a month last April and May, when nearly 100 people were killed. On those occasions, the bombings targeted a bus station located on the outskirts of the city. In June last year, 21 people were killed when a bomb targeted a shopping mall located near the city center. In 2010, twin car bombings claimed by militants from the oil-producing southern Delta region killed ten people near ceremonies in the capital marking fifty years of independence.

- **27 May 2015** – On Wednesday a community group in the country's oil-producing Niger delta indicated that it had shut down an oil facility operated by Eni's Agip in Bayelsa state's Nembe 5 region following a dispute with the company. The group, which has called itself the Agrisaba Oil and Gas Committee, indicated that production was shut down on Tuesday evening after it failed to resolve a number of disputes with the firm, including over the provision of jobs for locals. A statement released further disclosed, "the community has therefore decided that the facility will be shut down till further notice until such a time that all these knotty issues have been resolved."
 - Nigeria's army has dismissed at least 200 soldiers for cowardice and failure to fight against Boko Haram. According to several soldiers, up to 4,500 other rank and file soldiers could be dismissed. A Nigerian military source has confirmed the dismissals however he has not provided an exact figure. Many of the dismissals are believed to be connected to the fall of Mubi, the second largest town in Adamawa state, which was captured by Boko Haram insurgents in October after clashes with government forces. According to one of the soldiers who was dismissed, and who was present at the fall of Mubi, troops were simply following orders from their commanders, who had told them to retreat from the town because they lacked adequate weapons to take on the militants. It is expected that the soldiers who have been dismissed will not receive any extra payment or pension because of their low rank and are not entitled to defend themselves in a military court.
- **26 May 2015** – A union leader disclosed Tuesday that a crippling strike over fuel, which brought Nigeria to a near standstill, has been called off "in the national interest." According to Tokunbo Korodo, southwest chairman of petrol tanker drivers at the National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG), "we suspended the strike in the national interest... Nigerians have suffered enough because of the scarcity. The pains and anguish the people were going through were too much." On Monday, an agreement was reached to end the weeks-long crisis, which saw banks close early in order to save fuel, and mobile phone operators warning of an imminent shutdown in services and flights grounded. Unions, including NUPENG, and industrial groups responsible for supplying and distributing fuel in Nigeria, reached an agreement during a meeting held in the capital Abuja. While no details pertaining to why the situation was resolved have been released, Korodo has indicated that it was "an in house arrangement among the stake holders which they did not want to make public." Nigeria's Finance Minister Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala has accused fuel importers and marketers of holding the country to ransom after they shut depots, claiming that they were owed some US \$1 billion (900 million euros) in subsidy payments. **Update (27 May)** – According to oil suppliers, Nigeria's outgoing government has agreed to pay a debt of US \$800 million in order to resolve

months-long fuel crisis that has crippled the economy. The move comes just days before the inauguration of a new president.

- The UN children's agency warned Tuesday of an "alarming spike" in suicide bombings carried out by women and girls, warning that this has placed children in danger of being seen as potential threats. According to the agency, the number of reported suicide attacks has increased to 27 in the first five months of this year, compared to 26 for all of last year. In its report, UNICEF indicated that women and children carried out three-quarters of all such attacks, with girls aged between approximately 7 and 17 years blamed for nine suicide bombings since July. According to Jean Gough, UNICEF representative in Nigeria, "children are not instigating these suicide attacks; they are used intentionally by adults in the most horrific way." The UN agency is now concerned that children will increasingly be perceived as "potential threats," effectively putting them in danger of retaliation and jeopardizing their return home.
- According to police, suspected Fulani herdsmen have killed at least 23 people in central Nigeria, in what is the latest clash in a long-running battle with farming communities in the region. Referring to Saturday's violence, police spokesman Austin Ezeani disclosed, "there was an attack by unknown gunmen suspected to be Fulani herdsmen on three villages in Logo local government area, (Benue) state...As of yesterday, 23 people were (confirmed) killed." The motive for the latest attack remains unknown and officers have been deployed to the targeted villages. Benue state is part of the country's so-called Middle Belt, where the mainly Christian south meets the predominately Muslim north. The Fulani, who are mostly Muslim, have been blamed for waves of attacks on largely Christian agrarian groups.
- Witnesses reported Tuesday that Boko Haram militants have killed at least 43 people in a five-hour assault on the town of Gubio in the northeastern state of Borno. The latest attack, which a military source indicated involved a convoy of around fifty Boko Haram militants storming the town, occurred on Saturday afternoon and lasted for around five hours, with locals disclosing that the militants left the town around 9:30 PM. According to a local resident, more than 400 houses had been burned by the insurgents, adding, "they came, shooting, threatening to kill everybody. They set fire on many houses, burnt down our peoples' vehicles and motorcycles. We lost 43 people including two children."
- **25 May 2015** - According to a local government official, Boko Haram fighters hacked to death ten people in a remote village in northeastern Nigeria. Maina Ularamu, local government chairman of Madagali, in the northern state of Adamawa, indicated that the attack occurred early on Friday morning in Pambula-Kwamda village, stating, "the attackers went into the village around 4:00 AM (0300 GMT) while residents were still asleep and used machetes to attack their victims." News of the attack however only emerged on Monday as the location where the incident took place is remote and communications remain difficult. Despite the military declaring in March that the state of Adamawa was "clear" of insurgents, a number of villages in the area have recently been targeted as troops continue to flush out rebels from the stronghold in Sambisa Forest, which is located just across the border in neighboring Borno state.
- On Monday, Nigeria's federal high court ordered drug agents to release a newly elected senator and suspend its extradition proceedings on 20-year-old drug charges. It also ordered the withdrawal of armed agents, who have besieged the home of Senator-elect Buruji Kashamu since Saturday. According to sources, Judge I.N. Buba ordered the federal attorney general and the chairman of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency to appear in court before noon Tuesday in order to show why he should not charge them with contempt of court, adding that all parties should desist from any

action until a court ruling scheduled Wednesday on a previous suit by Kashamu to prevent his extradition. According to Kashamu's spokesman, the drug agents did not have an arrest warrant, however the agency maintains that it does have one. In a statement, the agency's spokesman Ofoyeju Mitchell stated, "the extradition move by the NDLEA for Kashamu to answer drug trafficking charges is legal," adding "the Agency has not violated his rights and will continue to work within the confines of the law." On Saturday, drug agents surrounded Kashamu's home, just days before senators are due to be sworn into the new legislature on Friday. According to Nigeria's drug agency, after years of inaction, the US has requested Kashamu's extradition. In 1998, a Chicago grand jury indicted Kashamu for conspiracy to import and distribute heroin in the US. Prosecutors charge that he was the kingpin of a heroin trafficking ring there in the 1990's.

Domestic News

- **1 June 2015** – On Monday, a spokesman for President Muhammadu Buhari announced that the newly elected president will this week make his first foreign trip since taking office. He is due to travel to neighboring Niger on Wednesday and to Chad on Thursday. Niger shares a border with Borno and Yobe states while Chad borders Borno state in Nigeria's extreme northeast. According to Shehu Garba, the two-day trip will focus on "matters of security," with the cooperation of Nigeria's neighbors seen as being critical to ending the militant uprising, which since 2009 has claimed more than 15,000 lives. President Buhari was sworn in last Friday and during his inaugural speech, he vowed to crush the insurgent group, which he described as "mindless" and "godless." Despite this vow, Boko Haram carried out an attack some twelve hours after the new president took the oath of office, targeting homes in the key northeastern city of Maiduguri. Overnight on Saturday, the militants stormed the city, launching rocket-propelled grenades. Later, a suicide attack at a mosque in the city, which is the Borno state capital, killed at least twenty-six people and injured dozens others. On Sunday, the militants raided two towns in Borno's neighboring state of Yobe, where they torched public buildings and looted food and fuel stores. While former president Goodluck Jonathan's administration had previously complained that Nigeria's neighbors were not doing enough in order to contain Boko Haram, as in some instances, the militants were able to flee military pursuit by crossing porous borders, a four-nation offensive launched in February, and which includes troops from Cameroon, has won significant victories, however there are growing fears that Boko Haram may be regrouping, particularly in the remote border areas which are difficult to patrol. In turn, both Chad and Niger have complained of a lack of cooperation from Nigeria, which has strained relations with all its neighbors. Chadian troops have also had to retake some towns from Boko Haram several times as Nigerian troops haven't arrived in order to secure them.

Regional Reporting

- **4 June 2015** – On Thursday, a senior US diplomat disclosed that the US will deploy a team to Nigeria in the next few weeks in order to discuss with the new government ways to renew cooperation in the fight against Boko Haram. Washington has quickly reached out to newly elected President Muhammadu Buhari. Last week, it sent US Secretary of State John Kerry to his inauguration in a bid to underscore US interest in working with his government. Last year, tensions emerged between the former government of President Goodluck Jonathan and the Obama administration over corruption and human rights abuses by the Nigerian military in its campaign to end Boko Haram's six-year insurgency. According to US Assistant

Secretary of State for Africa, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, “with the new government we are optimistic we can reset the relationship,” adding, “we want to work with him and have expressed that to him.” Ms Thomas-Greenfield also indicated that President Buhari has committed both publicly and privately to “do everything possible to address the situation in terms of resources and staff” to tackle Boko Haram. US officials have indicated that the US could send more advisers to Nigeria in order to train its military and to help boost the economy through more investment in its oil and gas sector. The US seems to be encouraged by President Buhari’s first trips to neighboring Niger and Chad, which are part of the multinational force being set up to fight Boko Haram in the Lake Chad region.

- **3 June 2015** – During a visit to Niger’s capital on Wednesday, Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari stated that he was seeking help from neighboring countries to eradicate Boko Haram before they do “more serious damage.” During his first official trip abroad, the recently-elected president stated, “I’m coming to seek support of our neighbors. I came first to Niger, tomorrow I will go to N’Djamena and I will also talk with the president of Cameroon, to seek out ways and means to reinforce our efforts.” During a joint press conference with Nigerien President Mahamadou Issoufou, Buhari further indicated “with our neighbors, we will see how to deal with Boko Haram before they commit more serious damage.” In terms of military strategy, Buhari indicated that the Nigerian military must gain the advantage of approaching the “Theater of conflict.” The president also spoke about the upcoming summit of the Lake Chad Basin Commission, where leaders from Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria will meet to discuss how to fight against the violent Islamist group.”

Senegal

No Travel Restrictions



Security Summary

On 17 October 2014, the World Health Organization declared Senegal Ebola-free. An Ebola outbreak has been confirmed in Sierra Leone and Guinea. 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.

International Developments

- **3 June 2015** – A draft report has indicated that a UN panel accused Senegalese authorities of arbitrarily detaining the son of former president Abdoulaye Wade and have called on the government to hand over unspecified compensation. According to the document, which was dated 7 May from the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, “the working group asks Senegal’s government to take the necessary measures to remedy the prejudice inflicted by ensuring full compensation.” The document from the group, which operates under the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, did not go into details on what form the compensation should take, however it did state that it should be made under a UN human rights covenant that orders compensation for victims of unlawful arrest or detention. In response to this, Senegal’s Justice Minister Sidiki Kaba stated that the UN did not have any authorities over domestic rulings.

Speaking on private radio RFM, Kaba stated, “Senegal is a sovereign state and it is Senegal's judiciary institutions that make rulings. A decision has been given and we are awaiting a final ruling by a higher court.” Karim Wade’s defense lawyer, Sidy Diagne, who is part of a legal team appealing the arrest in a higher court, has welcomed the UN recommendation, stating “this is the victory of law over power, the victory of law over the arbitrary.” Karim Wade, formerly the head of four ministries and now presidential candidate for the main opposition party SDP, was jailed in March for six years for illicit enrichment and ordered to pay a 138 billion CFA franc (US \$233.99 million) fine. While Senegalese President Macky Sall has stated that the trial was part of a broader crackdown on corruption, the opposition and other critics have dismissed it as a politically motivated bid to stamp out dissent.

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. 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

- **1 June 2015** – Police disclosed Monday that a lawmaker is in police custody after being arrested on suspicion of flouting the country's anti-Ebola laws by washing the body of his dead father. According to Assistant Inspector-General Fuk Daboh, Alie Badara, from the northern district of Kambia, has been accused of taking part in a traditional burial ceremony on Friday last week without informing the authorities of the death. Speaking to reporters in the capital Freetown,

the officer stated, “he is a lawmaker and he is supposed to have kept within the code of the by-laws. He will be charged (in) court soon.”

- The United Nations Ebola Chief has indicated that he believes that it is only a matter of weeks before the Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone will end. Dr David Nabarro however warned that stopping the deadly disease in Guinea will take more time because in some areas, unsafe traditions continue to affect the spread of Ebola. In an interview on Monday, Dr Nabarro indicated that the Ebola epidemic “absolutely isn’t over” though he did note that Liberia being declared Ebola-free on 9 May was a positive development. He further indicated that “we have cases occurring, not in huge numbers but enough to be very disturbing in Sierra Leone and in Guinea,” noting that the situation in Guinea is especially troubling because surprise cases have been popping up that are not part of known chains of transmission.

Togo

No Travel Restrictions



Security Summary

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

- **2 June 2015** – Togo's authorities announced Tuesday that African leaders will meet in Togo later this year in order to discuss drawing up a continental charter against maritime piracy. According to Foreign Minister Robert Dussey, heads of state and government from the African Union (AU) would be in the capital Lomé in November to discuss the problem. Speaking to reporters, Dussey indicated "the Lomé summit aims at defining a common strategy against maritime insecurity in Africa," adding "at least 205 attacks on ships were registered in the Gulf of Guinea between 2005 and May 2015. Togo's coasts saw eight attacks, of which seven were foiled by the country's navy." The minister also disclosed that the successful adoption of Africa's first ever strategy against pirates would be put before the United Nations Security Council. Currently, only a handful of national, bilateral and regional initiatives are in place to fight piracy, which has increased in the Gulf of Guinea in recent years. In June 2013, Central and West African leaders agreed on a regional strategy against pirates to tackle the problem. In August that year, military chiefs from Benin, Niger, Nigeria and Togo decided to set up a center for maritime coordination.



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

24 hr Global Contact: +44 207 754 3555
www.msrisk.com

Directors

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