



The West Africa Report

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

The West Africa Report ~ SUMMARY

May 27 – June 9, 2013



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[Libya Becoming the New Mali? Islamist Threat Begins to Shift in the Sahara](#)

Central African Republic

On Land

- **29 May 2013** - The United Nations children's agency has stated that forty-one children have been released from armed groups in the CAR.
- **27 May 2013** - A Red Cross worker has indicated that rebel attacks on villages in the Central African Republic's western region have killed at least 25 people.

International Developments

- **3 June 2013** - Ousted Central African Republic President (CAR) Francois Bozize has left Cameroon, where he fled in March after rebels seized power.
- **29 May 2013** - Officials in South Africa have indicated that the death toll arising from its deployment to the CAR has risen to fifteen.

[Cote d'Ivoire](#)

- **3 June 2013** - The International Criminal Court (ICC) has indicated that it wants more evidence before it will decide whether to try Ivorian ex-president Laurent Gbagbo for crimes against humanity for his role in a bloody election standoff that occurred two years ago.

Equatorial Guinea

- **4 June 2013** - Equatorial Guinea's main opposition party has cried foul after the President's party announced that it had won all but two seats in last month's parliamentary elections.

Ghana

- **6 June 2013** - At least 124 Chinese nationals suspected of illegal gold mining have been detained in Ghana.
- **5 June 2013** - The ex-security chief of Ghana's international airport has been charged in the United States with conspiring to smuggle Afghan heroin into New York.

Guinea

On Land

- **27 May 2013** - The government has indicated that at least twelve people have been killed in Guinea during five days of protests over preparations for a legislative election.

Domestic News

- **8 June 2013** - Guinean President Alpha Conde has indicated that he could delay this month's legislative elections if authorities found technical problems, a possible concession to opposition groups who have demonstrated against alleged flaws in the vote.
- **29 May 2013** - Guinea's president unilaterally decreed on Wednesday the start of campaigning for a contested legislative elections which has been repeatedly delayed due to opposition complaints.
 - Meanwhile in what appears to be an apparent effort to defuse protests against preparations for the long-delayed elections, the President has ordered a judicial inquiry into the unrest that has resulted in the deaths of at least twelve people in the past week.
- **28 May 2013** - President Alpha Conde has replaced his security minister with a career policeman in order to tackle the sustained unrest over the preparations of a legislative election the opposition fears will be rigged.

Mali

Domestic News:

- **4 June 2013** - Mali's foreign minister has indicated that Malian authorities are insisting on a military presence in the northern city of Kidal before the country can hold presidential elections next month.
 - For the third time, the Malian government has extended the state of emergency which was originally declared in the country in January 2013.
- **29 May 2013** - Although Malians have welcomed the news that presidential elections will be held on 28 July, serious concern remains about the possibility of a free and fair vote in Kidal, a key northern city which remains to be occupied by separatist rebels.
- **27 May 2013** - Mali's interim government announced that the much-anticipated presidential elections will be held on July 28.

Regional Reporting:

- **30 May 2013** - One of al-Qaeda's spin-offs has taken responsibility for the deadly attacks which were carried out last week on a military garrison and a French-operated uranium plant in Niger, indicating that it wanted to force the mine to shut down and cause economic damage to France.

International Developments:

- **30 May 2013** - A top UN official has indicated that the United Nations is struggling to get African troops in Mali up to UN standards in order to join a full-fledged peacekeeping force.
- **29 May 2013** - An al-Qaeda letter found in an abandoned building in Mali has indicated that the extremist group was paid US \$1.1 million in 2009 for the release of two Canadian diplomats Robert Fowler and Louis Guay.

Mauritania

- **1 June 2013** - Officials in Mauritania have indicated that US authorities have transferred Younis al-Mauritani, a suspected senior member of al-Qaeda who was previously held in Afghanistan, to Mauritania.

- **7 June 2013** - The health of President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz has triggered a debate in Mauritania, as opposition parties in the country have been questioning his stay in France, which has lasted more than three weeks for what his party officials have indicated has been a “routine medical checkup.”

[Niger](#)

- **2 June 2013** - In what appears to be a third attack carried out by suspected Islamist militants, officials in Niger have confirmed that twenty-two inmates escaped from the main prison in Niger’s capital on Saturday. This latest attack comes just days after Islamist militants claimed responsibility for two suicide attacks that were carried out on a military base and a uranium mine in northern Niger on May 23.

[Nigeria](#)

On Land

- **6 June 2013** - Nigeria’s military has claimed that US-designated “global terrorist” Abubakar Adam Kamar was killed in an operation last year.
- **5 June 2013** - Nigeria’s military indicated on Wednesday that it has arrested forty-nine Boko Haram Islamists across a northeastern state where insurgents are abandoning their camps and fleeing north towards Niger.
- **1 June 2013** - Security services in Nigeria have indicated that they have discovered a home in the northern city of Kano where Lebanese nationals have stored weapons which were intended to be used in order to attack Israeli and Western targets in Nigeria.
- **31 May 2013** - Nigeria’s military has released fifty-eight women and children who were being held in connection with the Islamist insurgency in the country’s northeast.
 - Meanwhile Nigeria’s military has indicated that it has arrested fifty-six more Islamist insurgents as part of its ongoing offensive in the country’s northeastern regions.

Domestic News:

- **4 June 2013** - A presidential statement has indicated that Nigeria has formally declared the Boko Haram Islamist sect and Ansaru, its suspected offshoot, as “terrorist” groups and has issued a law to ban them.

International Developments:

- **4 June 2013** - For the first time, the United States has offered rewards for information in Islamist militants in North and West Africa.

Senegal

- **27 May 2013** - A political official in Senegal has confirmed that three of the twelve employees of a South African bomb disposal company who were kidnapped by rebels in southern Senegal on May 3 have been released.

Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea

Unsuccessful Attacks/Boardings/Robberies

- **4 June 2013** - Pirates boarded a St Vincent and Grenadines-flagged offshore supply ship, Bourbon Arethuse, while underway at 2300 UTC in position 04:14.9N - 007:45.7E, Usari Field, Nigeria.
- **3 June 2013** - An underway chemical tanker was fired upon while in position 04:42 N - 008:19E, approximately 2.5 nautical miles north of James Town in the Calabar River.

Hijackings

- **28 May 2013** - Security sources have indicated that armed pirates attacked an oil products tanker off the coast of Nigeria and have abducted an unknown number of crew members.

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Libya Becoming the New Mali? Islamist Threat Begins to Shift in the Sahara

The recent suicide attacks on a French-run mine and a military base in northern Niger have demonstrated how the Islamist threat is spreading across the weak nations that are located within the Sahara. What does this mean for France? The country and its troops may be tied down in the region for years to come. In turn, regional rivalries are aggravating the problem for the French government and its Western allies as a lack of greater cooperation amongst the countries located in the Sahara is only aiding the militants in regrouping in quieter parts of the vast desert. One of these quieter territories is the lawless regions of southern Libya, which security officials have indicated is becoming the latest haven for al-Qaeda-linked fighters after French-led forces drove them from their strongholds in northern Mali earlier this year.

According to a senior adviser to Mali's interim President Dioncounda Traore, "the south of Libya is what the north of Mali was like before." This remark comes just days after Niger announced that last week's suicide raids, which killed twenty-five people at the army base and desert uranium mine run by France's Areva, were launched from Libya. Libya however has denied these allegations.

Smugglers have long used Libya's poorly controlled south - a crossroads of routes to Chad, Algeria and Niger - for trafficking drugs, contraband cigarettes and people to Europe. However the overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi in 2011 resulted in a flood of weapons and ammunition being brought into the Sahara. Tuareg separatists used them in order to seize power in northern Mali, only to be ousted by even better-armed Islamists who set up training camps and imposed a harsh form of Islamic law until French forces arrived. In turn, the Islamists have also exploited Libya's weakness. It is known that former al-Qaeda commander Mokhtar Belmokhtar had purchased weapons there after Gaddafi's fall and his fighters passed through southern Libya to carry out a mass hostage-taking at an Algerian gas plant in January, in which 37 foreigners died.

With no effective national army, Libya relies on local brigades in order to police its southern border region, where at least one hundred people died in ethnic violence last year. Tripoli's failure to restore security in the region may only encourage Islamist militants to set up permanent camps and weapons stores in the area. Since the attack on Areva, France has urged regional powers to cooperate in order to tackle the threat that is coming from Libya as the country relies on Niger for one fifth of the uranium in order to power its nuclear reactors. Niger's long border with Mali, tough line on tackling militants and its role as a supplier of uranium to France have long made the country a target. Since the attacks, US troops have begun to train the army while the government in Niamey has stepped up its security in the northern regions of the country, where French Special Forces went in earlier this year in order to protect the mines. Four French mine workers who were taken hostage in Arlit in 2010 are still being held.

While Paris is keen on decreasing its troop numbers in the region, the persistent arguing and mistrust amongst the regional powers continues to be an issue, with President Francois Hollande admitting last week that French forces may be used elsewhere in the Sahel. European governments, alarmed with the developments, also approved a 110-man mission this week that will focus on improving border security by training Libyan police and security forces.

In a region that mainly comprises of vast desert regions, borders often have little meaning, and militants can blend in with nomads. Consequently hunting Islamist militants requires states riven by mutual suspicion to work together. Officials in the United States have indicated that efforts to tackle the spreading influence of al-Qaeda's ideology throughout the Sahara has been beset by long-

standing rivalries, notably between Morocco and Algeria, coupled with a lack of trust and communication amongst the regional capitals.

Algeria, the Sahara's main military power, has long bristled at the idea of outside intervention in the region, particularly one led by its former colonial ruler, France. Although the Algerian government allowed French warplanes operating in Mali to fly over its territory, Malian officials have indicated that Algeria should be more active, whether by arresting militants or preventing the flow of fuel that allows them to cover vast desert distance. The northern Malian town of Gao lies about 1,500 km (930 miles) from the border of southern Libya.

Mauritania also needs to place more of an effort on this issue. This is mainly due to the country's strategic location on the western edge of the Sahara coupled with a high number of its citizens who are senior militants and with its experience in tackling Islamist militants at home.

The rapidly changing face of Islamist militancy also creates problems for the local governments. For years, al-Qaeda's North African wing, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), relied largely on Algerians. However last year, the militant group was composed of gunmen from across northern Africa along with citizens from West Africa - militants who are more experienced and have a greater knowledge of the territory.

In Mali, drone surveillance and on the ground counter-terrorism teams have put a lot of effort in order to suppress the militants. Suicide attacks around the northern towns of Gao and Menaka this month claimed no victims apart from the bombers themselves. According to officials in France, around 600 Islamists have been killed since Operation Serval was launched in January. In turn, about 200 tonnes of ammunition and dozens of vehicles were seized in operations that scoured the desert regions and mountain bases. This disrupted arms and fuel dumps that militants had prepared during their nine-month occupation of northern Mali. According to a French officer in Mali, "they don't seem to have the ability to coordinate attacks in Mali anymore...we assume that they will try and regroup but it will take time for them and it is risky as they know we are watching." The French campaign in Mali has been backed by a British spy plane while the US has drones operating from Niger alongside an established monitoring base in Burkina Faso. But while Islamist militants once traveled in large convoys, they have since adapted and are keeping a low profile. A trend which will likely be seen over the next few years, as militants continue to adapt themselves to not only the territory, but to the techniques that the West uses in order to track them down.

Central African Republic



Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

Travel Summary

MS Risk advises against all travel to the Central African Republic (CAR). The armed rebel coalition Seleka has renewed their offensive against President Francois Bozize’s government and they have taken control of the capital city of Bangui. The security situation throughout the country continues to rapidly deteriorate. There has also been gunfire, violence and widespread looting throughout the capital city, which may occur again.

Armed rebels took control of a number of towns in the northern and central areas of the country in December 2012 and January 2013, stopping 75 km from the capital of Bangui. While a ceasefire agreement was made in Libreville, Gabon on 11 January 2013, the situation remains fragile and unpredictable. The rebels restarted their offensive in mid-March and took control of Bangui on 24 March.



There are reports of rebel activity, banditry and hostage-taking across the country. Currently the government has very limited control over much of the country. In the capital city of Bangui, there has been looting, clashes and gun fire. Reports have also surfaced that hospitals throughout the capital city are running dangerously low on supplies. The situation in Bangui remains to be fragile, with reports of continued looting and gunfire. A curfew is in place from midnight to 4am. You should avoid being on the streets during this time. At other times, MS Risk advises you to take extreme care, and to travel in groups if possible. There are armed patrols at night in Bangui and you may encounter several roadblocks - both official and unofficial - that are likely to be manned by armed personnel. Take particular care when approaching these.

Any individuals in the country are advised to leave now. Those who remain should take all the necessary precautions in order to stay in a safe place with sufficient stocks of food and water. If the situation deteriorates further, leaving the country by commercial means will likely become increasingly difficult. Currently regional country flights have been suspended. We advise those remaining in the country to keep up to date with local political developments and to avoid all political rallies, demonstrations or large public gatherings.

On Land:

- **29 May 2013** - The United Nations children's agency has stated that forty-one children have been released from armed groups in the CAR. UNICEF has indicated that recent fighting has caused a sharp increase in the recruitment of child soldiers, who were used in some of the heaviest fighting as rebels battled to take over the capital in March. The agency further noted that forty-one children were released on Monday and Tuesday and that they are currently at a transition center which will help them to reintegrate back into society. UNICEF is working with the government in the CAR and more children are expected to be released in the coming days and weeks. Even before the latest rebellion, UNICEF highlighted that more than 2,000 children in the CAR were with the myriad of armed groups that were destabilizing the country's northern regions.
- **27 May 2013** - A Red Cross worker has indicated that rebel attacks on villages in the Central African Republic's western region have killed at least 25 people. Namssene Paulin, a Red Cross worker in the region near Bossangoa has stated that elements of the Seleka rebel alliance are spreading fear in the area with such attacks, causing villagers to flee in order to find safety. According to reports, rebels arrived in the village of Poulisi on Friday in three vehicles and began killing residents there. At least 25 people were killed in attacks on various villages near Bossango that day.

International Developments:

- **3 June 2013** - Ousted Central African Republic President (CAR) Francois Bozize has left Cameroon, where he fled in March after rebels seized power. Reports have indicated that he has since fled to Kenya and may be bound for South Africa however it is unclear whether he has left Cameroon for good. His departure from Cameroon comes days after the CAR issued an international arrest warrant for Mr. Bozize last week. The former leader has been accused of kidnappings, murder, crimes against humanity and economic crimes. Mr. Bozize (66) took power in 2003 following a coup. He later won two elections that were widely seen as fraudulent. He fled as rebels from the Seleka alliance advanced on the capital of Bangui. He later accused Chad of backing the rebels a charge which has been denied by the government in Ndjamen. An interim government headed by Seleka leader Michel Djotodi has pledged to hold elections after an eighteen-month transition. Meanwhile violence in the CAR has continued, with a deadly attack being carried out by Seleka rebels in the central town of Bouca
- **29 May 2013** - Officials in South Africa have indicated that the death toll arising from its deployment to the CAR has risen to fifteen. According to sources, thirteen soldiers were killed and twenty-seven wounded as rebels moved on Bangui which fell on March 24 of this year. However two others have since succumbed to their injuries, with the latest dying at a Pretoria military hospital on Monday. Another soldier died last month. The deaths marked South Africa's worst military loss since the fall of apartheid. South Africa's government has faced a backlash over the deployment of troops to the CAR, amidst accusations of deals with ousted leader Francois Bozize and ruling party business interests.

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



MS RISK advises against all but essential travel to the western regions of Dix-Huit Montagnes, Haut- Sassandra, Moyen-Cavally and Bas-Sassandra as the situation in these regions remains unstable due to the intercommunity tensions as well as the presence of armed groups. All air, land and sea borders with Ghana have now re-opened following their closure on 22 September 2012. There have been a number of widely-reported shootings which occurred around Abidjan in August 2012. Although these attacks occurred mainly at night and targeted police and military installations, further incidents cannot be ruled out. Consequently the security situation in Abidjan could deteriorate at short notice. There recently was an attack that occurred in the Boufla CI concession, in which a group of armed men, numbering about ten, engaged in a banditry attack. According to on the ground sources, the attack lasted for a period of fifteen minutes in which the victims personal belongings were stolen from him. However no injuries were reported. The attack occurred during daylight hours. Consequently any individuals in this particular region are reminded to be extremely vigilant.

International Developments:

- 3 June 2013** - The International Criminal Court (ICC) has indicated that it wants more evidence before it will decide whether to try Ivorian ex-president Laurent Gbagbo for crimes against humanity for his role in a bloody election standoff that occurred two years ago. A statement that was released by the court in The Hague indicated that “the pre-trial chamber adjourned the hearing on the confirmation of charges and requested the prosecutor to consider providing further evidence or conducting a further investigation” into the charges presented against Gbagbo. This latest issue comes months after judges at the ICC, the world’s first permanent court to try the worst crimes such as genocide and war crimes, held an eight-day hearing in February in order to see whether or not there was enough evidence to take Gbagbo, 68, to trial. After the hearing, the judges had to either confirm or drop the charges, or ask for prosecutors to give more evidence, or ask them to amend the charge sheet before a final decision could be made. At the time, the judges indicated that the prosecution’s evidence “viewed as a whole, apparently insufficient,” was not so weak that the bench decided to altogether drop the charges against the former Ivorian president. However the judges indicated that the majority of the incidents in some five months of post-poll violence in the world’s largest cocoa grower in 2010 - 2011 on which the prosecution’s case is based “are proven solely with anonymous hearsay from NGO reports, UN reports and press articles.” The judges have since indicated that “as explained above, the chamber is unable to attribute much...value to these materials.” They have ordered the prosecutor to file a new charge sheet and provide new evidence by no later than 15 November 2013. Gbagbo is accused of fomenting a wave of violence that swept the West African nation after he refused to concede defeat during the

2010 presidential elections. Four months of fighting followed, ravaging the Cote d'Ivoire and, according to the United Nations, left some 3,000 people dead. Many of them were perceived to have been supporters of election winner and current President Alassane Ouattara. Gbagbo was captured in mid-April 2011 when Ouattara's forces, along with French and UN backing, overran his heavily fortified compound which was located in Abidjan. He was then transferred into the custody of the ICC - which had issued an arrest warrant against him. He has been held in the ICC's detention unit, which is located in The Hague. At the confirmation of charges hearing which ended on February 28, prosecutors indicated that Gbagbo had spearheaded a plan to "stay in power by all means... Through carefully planned, sustained and deadly attacks" against Ouattara supporters. The panel stated that between 28 November 2010 and 8 May 2011, Gbagbo's forces had killed between 706 and 1,059 people and had raped more than 35 women. The evidence relates to four main incidents: the brutal crushing of an opposition march on Ivorian state television in Abidjan in December 2010; the putting down of a women's march in Abobo; an attack on market in Abidjan; and reprisals carried out by Gbagbo supporters in Yopougon, also in Abidjan, between April and May 2011. In turn, Gbagbo, who has accused former colonial power France of being behind a political plot to oust him, has denied the charges and has indicated to judges that he has always been pro-democracy. His supporters have accused Ouattara's camp of practicing "victor's justice" as many of the former president's backers are now behind bars, including his wife Simone Gbagbo, who is also wanted for prosecution by the ICC. None of those close to the Ouattara regime have been arrested despite human rights abuses. This included a call by Human Rights Watch last month for Ivorian authorities to carry out a "credible investigation" into militia chief Amede Ouremi, whom rights groups suspect of playing a key role in the massacre of hundreds of pro-Gbagbo supporters in western Duekoue. The 2010 - 2011 post-election violence capped a decade of tension in the cote d'Ivoire where a civil war in the early 2000's divided the country into a rebel-controlled north and a south which was controlled by pro-Gbagbo forces.



No restrictions
in this travel
advice

Although there are currently no travel restrictions for Equatorial Guinea, MS Risk advises to remain alert and to take sensible personal security precautions. Roadblocks and unannounced identification checks are likely to occur. As such, you are advised to carry the appropriate form of identification (such as a passport or residence card) with you at all times.

Domestic News:

- 4 June 2013** - Equatorial Guinea's main opposition party has cried foul after the President's party announced that it had won all but two seats in last month's parliamentary elections. President Teodoro Nguema Obiang's ruling Democratic Party of Equatorial Guinea (PDGE) won 99 of the 100 seats in the lower house of assembly and 54 of 55 senate seats in the May 26 vote. The Convergence for Social Democracy (CPDS) party will be the only opposition party represented in parliament, with one seat in the lower house and one seat in the senate. Placido Mico, secretary-general of the CPDS has indicated that "these results have nothing to do with the votes of people actually cast... We completely reject these results... This is a real fraud, in total violation of the law." So far, the government has not responded to the claims of the CPDS. President Obiang has ruled the former Spanish colony since 1979, when he ousted his uncle in a military coup, effectively making him Africa's longest-serving leader. An African Union (AU) election observers mission indicated that the May 26 vote was carried out peacefully, however the mission noted the lack of national observers and representatives of opposition parties in many voting stations. On Monday, the United States voiced serious concerns over the election process, pointing to arbitrary detentions, limits on freedoms of assembly and speech, and severely restricted media access for the opposition. At least four members of the opposition were detained for trying to organize a protest March ahead of the election. A statement released by the US State Department noted that "we urge the government to maintain an open dialogue with opposition parties, and to address the legitimate concerns that they have about this and other electoral issues." Prior to the elections taking place, three rights groups - Amnesty International, EG Justice and Human Rights Watch - indicated that the government was not respecting its own laws and that the elections were unlikely to be free and fair.

No restrictions
in this travel
advice



Although there are currently no travel restrictions for Ghana, 2013 has seen an increase in violent robberies. In May of this year, an expatriate's vehicle was stopped by an armed individual who forced his way into the car demanding money. Upon being paid, the individual left the vehicle. In a separate incident, an expatriate was robbed of her wallet while trying to pay a taxi driver. There have also been reports of two westerners being shot while driving along at night and reports of a further two westerners being robbed at gunpoint at a restaurant. Both incidents occurred in the Accra area. There was also a report of a robbery occurring in the Tema area, which resulted in the fatality of a westerner. There have been other reports of foreigners being held at gun-point at their homes and while walking in the street. 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 imposed on the Hohoe community in the Volta region. This has been due to communal clashes over the exhumation of the Chief Imama of Hohoe.

On Land:

- **6 June 2013** - At least 124 Chinese nationals suspected of illegal gold mining have been detained in Ghana. The arrests, which took place in several locations around the country, follow a call by Ghanaian officials to end unauthorized mining by foreigners. They are part of a crackdown on foreign nationals who are working in small-scale gold mines which are reserved by law for Ghanians. Chinese officials have indicated that most of those who were detained were mining illegally without visas, work or residency permits. Officials in Ghana have stated that the detainees' release is currently being negotiated. Ghana is expected to repatriate the miners who are currently being held at an immigration centre in Accra. Yu Jie, spokesman for the Chinese embassy in Ghana has indicated that they "have cautioned all the Chinese people in Ghana to strictly abide by the related laws and regulations." In April, Ghanaian authorities introduced a ban on Chinese engaging in illegal gold mining in the central region of Ashanti, as well as in the western and eastern regions in order to stop environmental damage. According to sources, most of the detained workers flocked to the "Ghana gold rush" from the impoverished county of Shanglin in China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.
- **5 June 2013** - The ex-security chief of Ghana's international airport has been charged in the United States with conspiring to smuggle Afghan heroin into New York. According to officials, Solomon Adelaquaye was arrested along with two Nigerians, Frank Muodoum and Clestine Ofor Orjinweke, and a Colombian, Samuel Antonia Pinedo-Rueda, in May of this year, following a joint US-Ghanaian investigation. According to reports, US agents disguised themselves as drug dealers, holding meetings last year with the accused to buy thousands of dollars worth of Afghan heroin to distribute

in Manhattan and the Bronx in New York city. At time of his arrest, Mr. Adelaquae was managing director of the privately owned Sohin Security Company, which was in charge of security at the Kotoka International Airport in Ghana's capital of Accra. News of the arrests comes just hours after Ghana's government ordered the airport's management to sever its dealings with the company. Mr. Adelaquaye is not the first high-profile Ghanaian to be arrested on drug-trafficking charges. In 2005, an MP, Eric Amoateng, was arrested. He is currently serving a jail term in the US for drug trafficking.



No restrictions
in this travel
advice

There is currently a low threat from terrorism. Due to the ongoing French military intervention in Mali, there is a possibility that retaliatory attacks targeting Western interests may be carried out in the region. Over the past several weeks, there has been extensive rioting and violence that has occurred in Conakry. Up to ten people are reported to have been killed in Conakry in the latest outbreaks of violence, on 25 and 25 May. The suburbs of Hamdallaye, Bambeto and Cosa have been especially affected. Elections are set to take place at the end of this month and further riots and spontaneous demonstrations will likely continue to occur. MS Risk advises to maintain extreme vigilance, and to monitor local media and to avoid large gatherings. Guinean authorities maintain police and local militia checkpoints throughout the entire country as such you are advised to carry the appropriate form of identification (such as a passport or residence card) with you at all times.

On Land:

- 27 May 2013** - The government has indicated that at least twelve people have been killed in Guinea during five days of protests over preparations for a legislative election. In total, more than fifty people have been killed and about 350 have been left wounded since the protests began. Opposition leaders temporarily suspended demonstrations this month in order to allow UN-brokered talks with the government to take place however they later called for the renewal of protests, accusing President Alpha Conde of sabotaging the negotiations. However the protests have degenerated into looting and ethnic clashes between Guinea's two main tribes: the Malinke supporters of Conde and the mostly Peul opposition backers. According to government spokesman Damantang Albert Camara, "since May 21, almost daily violence has been recorded in some Conakry suburbs, especially in Bambeto Coza-axis (an opposition stronghold)." Citing hospital and security officials, Mr. Camara indicated that twelve people had been confirmed dead since then, including seven shot dead when Guinean security forces clashed with opposition

protesters in the seaside capital of the world's top bauxite producing nation. He did not indicate how the other five died.

Domestic News:

- **8 June 2013** - Guinean President Alpha Conde has indicated that he could delay this month's legislative elections if authorities found technical problems, a possible concession to opposition groups who have demonstrated against alleged flaws in the vote. On Saturday, President Conde stated that "for me, the date is the right one but I have informed the CENI (the national electoral commission) that these elections must be completely without technical problems." he further indicated that "the only thing which could push back the election is if the CENI has not put everything in place, because I do not want elections where there is the slightest technical problem." This statement is the first time that President Conde has publicly acknowledged there could be a delay. He has dismissed all accusations of fraud.
- **29 May 2013** - Guinea's president unilaterally decreed on Wednesday the start of campaigning for a contested legislative elections which has been repeatedly delayed due to opposition complaints. The surprise move will likely further heighten tensions between the ruling party and the country's increasingly united opposition. In the decree, which was read on national television during the evening news, President Alpha Conde announced that campaigning will begin at midnight and would end at the same time on June 28. The move however comes as a surprise and comes at a time when the country's opposition leaders on Wednesday led a motorized funeral procession to put to rest six of the twelve opposition members who were killed during last week's protest. In turn, not a single opposition party member has submitted the necessary paperwork in order to compete in the elections which are set to take place on 30 June. If a deal is not brokered to avoid delaying the vote, it is likely that only candidates who are affiliated with the ruling party will compete in the ballot. Disagreement over the poll dates back to at least 2010 when Guinea held what is considered to be the country's first democratic presidential election. Although deemed transparent by international observers, the vote was both preceded and followed by numerous violent protests pitting the country's two largest ethnic groups - the Peul and the Malinke. Among the opposition's many complaints is that the voter list was changed after the 2010 elections. They also take issue with the South African company that has been chosen in order to revise the voter roll. The opposition group has indicated that Waymark's software can be used to rig the vote, an accusation which the company has denied. The legislative election is meant to complete Guinea's transition to civilian rule, which began in late 2009, when military strongman Capt. Moussa "Sadis" Camara was shot in the head by his rival in the junta which was then ruling the country, forcing him to leave the country for emergency treatment. In his absence, the junta's No. 2 seized the opportunity to arrange for the country's much-tarnished military to step aside and to allow for democratic elections to unfold. Guinea has been without a functioning legislature for years while its economy is at a standstill. Furthermore, the country's capital has been plagued by spasms of violence which has gripped the city every few weeks. Although Guinea is the planet's largest exporter of bauxite, a metal that is used to produce aluminum, it remains to be amongst the world's poorest nations. Investor confidence has been undermined by repeated clashes since March which have pitted the police and supporters of Conde against opposition demonstrators who fear the election outcome will be rigged.
- Meanwhile in what appears to be an apparent effort to defuse protests against preparations for the long-delayed elections, the President has ordered a judicial inquiry into the unrest that has resulted in the deaths of at least twelve people in the past week. This comes on the same day that President Conde replaced his security minister with a career policeman in an attempt to try and contain the violence in Conakry. In an address on state television, President Conde, who has been in Ethiopia attending an African Union (AU) summit during the most recent clashes,

indicated that he had cut his trip short in order to return to Guinea to deal with the crisis. During the address, Conde indicated that “I stress the fact that violence is unacceptable, highly irresponsible and reprehensible.” He further stated that “I have asked the justice minister to immediately take the necessary steps to set up a panel of judges exclusively tasked with shedding light on recent events and rendering justice for all the victims.” Former colonial power France, echoing growing concern within the international community, also indicated on Wednesday that it was “deeply worried” by the worsening violence. French Foreign Ministry spokesman Phillipe Lalliot indicated that “we call upon the Guinean authorities to show restraint and the leaders of the opposition to re-engage in dialogue so that Guinea can finally complete its democratic transition.”

- 28 May 2013** - President Alpha Conde has replaced his security minister with a career policeman in order to tackle the sustained unrest over the preparations of a legislative election the opposition fears will be rigged. Senior officials in Conde’s government have confirmed that the president dismissed Security Minister Mouramany Cisse in the face of worsening violence in opposition districts of Conakry. He will be replaced by Madifing Diane, a career policeman who is currently serving as Guinean ambassador to Senegal. He had previously served as security minister under president Lansana Conte, who ruled Guinea from 1984 to 2008. The replacement comes after protests resumed on Thursday, resulting in hundreds of policemen being deployed to neighborhoods in Conakry that are mainly inhabited by the Peul ethnic group which is loyal to the opposition. However they did not succeed in restoring calm. Residents reported witnessing clashes between gangs of Peuls and youths from the Malinke tribe which is loyal to Conde. Other witnesses indicated that opposition supporters blocked roads in some parts of the capital and attacked passersby.

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country



Mali

Travel Summary:

Terrorism

Currently there is a high threat from terrorism in Mali. The Government of Mali declared a State of Emergency across the whole country on 12 January 2013. This state of Emergency has now been extended until 5 July 2013. This effectively enables the government to take extraordinary measures to deal with the security situation in the north and elsewhere. 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 neighbouring 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 organisations are recommended to review their current operations and contingencies which is in line with the previous advice which has been given. MS RISK currently advises against all travel to Mali.

Local Travel

Although the ongoing 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 Organisations 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 organisations 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 working
- 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

The most extreme risks will be in the Azawad region. There is expected to be military clashes there between the various insurgent groupings against the ECOWAS-bolstered Mali army force in line with the UN Security Council authorization to use force. Despite the obvious threats in the Azawad, organisations in Mali should be braced for nuisance attacks and isolated terrorist attacks in the capital of Bamako. When al-Shabaab was weakened in Somalia, these types of attacks were experienced in

Uganda and Kenya. Although the two conflicts are not connected, it is logical to predict that similar tactics may evolve and be witnessed in Mali and inside contributing nations.

Breakdown of Events:

- **28 May** - A French soldier was lightly wounded when an unidentified gunmen opened fire on a French military patrol in the city of Kidal. The attack comes as French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius met with Mali's interim government in the capital city of Bamako, where he praised them for having set a July 28 date for the presidential elections. French military spokesman Col. Thierry Burkhard has indicated that the soldier was "lightly injured" during the shooting. He further indicated that it was not immediately clear who had shot him. The Deputy Mayor of Kidal, Abda Kazina, has stated that the incident occurred between 3:00 and 4:00 pm local time in the Aliou neighbourhood of Kidal. The shooter has not been identified yet.
- **30 May** - Thousands of people in Mali's northern city of Gao staged a protest, accusing France of favoring their rivals from the ethnic Tuareg group. The protesters stated that Paris was colluding in the continuing occupation of Kidal by the Tuaregs. Organizers of Thursday's protest indicated that up to 3,000 took part in the rally however officials have noted that the number was significantly less. The protest was staged by a coalition of the region's powerful civilian militia groups, who voiced their anger of being excluded from talks to bring peace to the north. The coalition pointed out that the Tuaregs had been invited to the talks which are being held in Burkina Faso. Many residents in Gao, along with most civilians living in the southern regions of the country, accuse the Tuareg, including the National Movement for the Liberation of the Azawad (MNLA), of being responsible for the war in Mali. In March of last year, the MNLA swept across the northern region of Mali, seizing a number of towns and proclaiming the birth of a new Tuareg nation. However they were soon pushed out by their former Islamist militant allies before France intervened.
- **4 June** - A suspected Islamist suicide bomber blew himself up however he caused no other casualties. The attack was carried out in Kidal, the bastion of Tuareg separatist MNLA rebels. The attack comes one day after the government accused the MNLA of ethnic violence in Kidal. It also comes just days after the Malian army indicated that its troops were moving towards the town. Islamist attacks in the northern region of the country have persists, and have usually targeted Malian soldiers and African forces that are deployed in the northern region of the country. Seven people were killed in a suicide bombing in Kidal in February and three Chadian soldiers died in another attack there in April.
- **5 June** - The Malian army attacked Tuareg rebels early on Wednesday and succeeded in taking the village of Anefis. This marks the army's first victory and territorial gain without the help of French forces since they were routed from the country's northern regions last year. According to the mayor of Anefis, the confrontation began at 6:30am just west of the town which is located 113 kilometers (70 miles) south of Kidal, the last locality before the provincial capital that serves as the base of the rebel National Movement for the Liberation of the Azawad (MNLA). For weeks, the army has been slowly moving towards Kidal, where the rebels have dug in and brought reinforcements, vowing to go to war if the military attempts to attack the strategic city. MNLA leader Ibrahim Ag Mohamed Assaleh confirmed that his fighters were forced to retreat from Anefis and that they had lost the town to the country's armed forces. He further indicated that two of his fighters were killed in the early morning clashes, and that one of their vehicles were destroyed. In a statement that was later posted on the group's website, the MNLA announced that the attack by the Malian military had prompted the group to end the cease fire they had declared earlier.
- **6 June** - Mali's army on Thursday reinforced its positions in the town of Anefis, a strategic access point for the rebel-held northeastern town of Kidal. The reinforcement comes just one day after heavy fighting occurred in the town. According to army spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel

Souleymane Maiga, “we are reinforcing and consolidating our positions at Anefis while waiting for favorable conditions to pursue the operation” towards Kidal. A region military source confirmed that “since yesterday (Wednesday), the whole Anefis sector has been under the total control of the army.” Colonel Thierry Burkhard, a spokesman for the French army general staff in Paris has indicated that a “liaison detachment” of 15 to 20 French soldiers and a “protective detachment,” for a total of 100 men, had arrived in Anefis on Wednesday evening, taking up positions near the Malian contingent. Wednesday’s fighting at Anefis erupted after more than 100 black inhabitants were expelled from Kidal, while many others were arrested by lighter-skinned Tuaregs of the MNLA in an act denounced by the Bamako government as “ethnic cleansing.” Mali has long been divided along racial and geographic lines between the country’s more populated south, where the seat of government is located and which is primarily inhabited by darker-skinned ethnic groups, and its north, the traditional homeland of the lighter-skinned Tuareg people.

- **7 June 2013** - According to a Human Rights Watch report, both Tuareg rebels and the army in Mali have committed abuses against civilians because of their ethnic origins. According to the report, the struggle of the mainly black-African army to retake the northern town of Kidal, which is being held by Tuareg rebels, has been key in reigniting racial tensions, along with plans to hold elections next month. The report further indicates that the Malian army has seriously abused a number of ethnic Tuareg villagers, threatening to kill them, beating them and using racial slurs. In turn, about 100 black Africans were arrested in Kidal, with many being robbed, beaten or expelled towards the south. Mali’s Foreign Minister Tieman Coulibaly has since condemned the Tuareg action.

Domestic News:

- **4 June 2013** - Mali’s foreign minister has indicated that Malian authorities are insisting on a military presence in the northern city of Kidal before the country can hold presidential elections next month. In an interview in Paris, Malian Foreign Minister Tieman Coulibaly stated that “we can’t leave Kidal in the hands of armed groups...so the Malian army must go to Kidal.” This position will undoubtedly make it more difficult to find a compromise with the Tuareg rebels who are ruling the city.
 - For the third time, the Malian government has extended the state of emergency which was originally declared in the country in January 2013. A press statement issued at the end of the council of ministers’ meeting indicated that the new state of emergency will end on 5 July, before the start of the electoral campaign for the presidential polls which are slated to occur on 28 July. The statement further indicated that the reason behind the extension was the fact that despite the liberation of almost all the areas occupied by the rebels, there was still pockets of insecurity and threats to the public order and social peace in the country.
- **29 May 2013** - Although Malians have welcomed the news that presidential elections will be held on 28 July, serious concern remains about the possibility of a free and fair vote in Kidal, a key northern city which remains to be occupied by separatist rebels.
- **27 May 2013** - Mali’s interim government announced that the much-anticipated presidential elections will be held on July 28. The communique also set the dates for the campaign period and the runoff election. The campaign for president will begin at midnight on July 7 and end at the same time on July 26. If no candidate wins an absolute majority, a runoff will be held on August 11. The move suggests that the West African country is serious about holding the ballot, despite the fact that the capital of one of the country’s northern provinces remains to be under the control of a rebel group. Besides the critical city of Kidal, which remains to be under the de facto rule of the rebel National Movement for the Liberation of the Azawad, numerous towns and villages are still not fully under the government’s control, making it unclear how the vote will be carried out. Additionally, hundreds of thousands of Malians have been displaced by the fighting and are living in refugee camps in neighbouring countries including Algeria, Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Niger, which creates a further logistical challenge for election organizers.

Regional Reporting:

- **30 May 2013** - One of al-Qaeda's spin-offs has taken responsibility for the deadly attacks which were carried out last week on a military garrison and a French-operated uranium plant in Niger, indicating that it wanted to force the mine to shut down and cause economic damage to France. The Mali-based Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) also released a statement, identifying the suicide bombers who carried out the attacks in the towns of Agadez and Arlit. They identify three suicide bombers: "Salman al-Sahrawi" in Agadez and "Jafar" and "Khubayb al-Timashki" in Arlit. The statement notes that the attacks were carried out jointly with a group loyal to Algerian terrorist Mokhtar Belmokhtar. Since the attacks, Niger has indicated that ten jihadists were killed in the operation, suggesting that seven of them came from Belmokhtar's brigade.

International Developments:

- **30 May 2013** - A top UN official has indicated that the United Nations is struggling to get African troops in Mali up to UN standards in order to join a full-fledged peacekeeping force. The UN peacekeeping chief Herve Ladsous has stated that it would be a "big challenge" for West African contingents to meet the UN norms. However he did express confidence that a UN force would start deployment on July 1 in order to take over from French forces who have been battling the violent extremists. Currently, there are about 6,500 West African troops in Mali however the UN must now get the African troops up to international standards for numbers, equipment and human rights training before they can be officially incorporated into the UN force, MINUSMA. Speaking at a press conference at the UN headquarters, Ladsous stated that "it varies from country to country," but a standard UN battalion is 850 troops however some countries "are a little below." The troops also have to bring minimum levels of equipment to UN missions in order to qualify for payments. UN experts are in the process of vetting the West African troops and their commanders for their human rights training. Chad, which has played a key role in Mali alongside France, has troubles as it has been blacklisted by the UN for using child troops in its army. Ladsous indicated that the UN would consider accepting Chadian troops however he stressed that "they will have to be completely impeccable in terms of human rights" and particularly on the use of child soldiers. He further indicated that up to four months would be given to contributing countries in order to get their contingents up to acceptable levels. The UN Security Council has approved a force of up to 12,600 troops that is slated to commence operations on July 1. The 15-nation council is set to meet on June 25 in order to decide whether a guerrilla campaign by the al-Qaeda-linked extremists has died down enough for a peacekeeping force to take over from French troops who have already started their withdrawal. The UN is looking for troops from other nations and diplomats have recently indicated that China has offered between 500 and 600 troops for MINUSMA.
- **29 May 2013** - An al-Qaeda letter found in an abandoned building in Mali has indicated that the extremist group was paid US \$1.1 million in 2009 for the release of two Canadian diplomats Robert Fowler and Louis Guay. Documents which have been obtained from a building that was once occupied by al-Qaeda fighters in Mali offers a glimpse into both the inner workings of the highly structured organization which requires its commanders to file monthly expense reports. This particular letter depicts an argument over the amount of money that was raised by the 2008 kidnapping of Fowler, the highest-ranking United Nations official in Niger, and Guay. The letter was the final one written to Mokhtar Belmokhtar. It states that "rather than walking alongside us in the plan we outlined, he managed the case as he liked." The letter further states that "here we must ask, who handled this important abduction poorly?...Does it come from the unilateral behavior along the lines of our brother Abu Abbas, which produced a blatant inadequacy: Trading the weightiest case (Canadian diplomats) for the most meager price (700,000 euros)" Fowler and Guay

were kidnapped in December 2008 and held until April 2009 however all involved denied that any payment was involved in their release. At the time, 700,000 euros was worth \$1.1 million CDN. Within months of the letter being written, Mokhtar Belmokhtar left al-Qaeda and formed his own militant group. Within months, he carried out two lethal operations that killed 101 people in all: one of the largest hostage-takings in history at a BP-operated gas plant in Algeria in January, and two simultaneous bombings at a military base and a French uranium mine in Niger last week.



Travel Summary:

Summary

MS Risk advises against all travel to the northern and eastern regions of the country - especially the desert areas north of the Oualata-Tichit-Ouadane-Zouerat line, as well as the border areas with Algeria, Mali and Morocco. We also advise you to avoid Tiris Zemmour, Adrar, Tagant and Hodh el Chargui. 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. We also advise against all travel to the western provinces of Dakhlet - Nouadhibou and Inchiri. This includes the road from the port of Nouadhibou to Nouakchott. We advise against all but essential travel to the rest of the country.

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. 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 Land:

- **1 June 2013** - Officials in Mauritania have indicated that US authorities have transferred Younis al-Mauritani, a suspected senior member of al-Qaeda who was previously held in Afghanistan, to Mauritania. According to sources, al-Mauritani was transferred from the US military base in Bagram, Afghanistan. Witnesses on Friday reported seeing a US military prisoner at the airport in Mauritania's capital city of Nouakchott. Although a Mauritanian judicial official specialized in terrorism cases also confirmed that the prisoner transferred on Friday was al-Mauritania, US embassy officials in Nouakchott have declined to comment. In 2011, Pakistan had indicated that it had arrested al-Mauritani, better known in his homeland Mauritania as Youssouf Al Mauritania, during a joint operation with US intelligence services. According to Pakistani military authorities, al-Mauritani was planning to attack US economic interests, including pipelines, hydro-electric dams and oil tankers, when he was captured. According to the authorities, he had been tasked by Osama bin Laden with hitting targets in Europe and Australia. Mauritanian authorities issued an international warrant for his arrest accusing him of participating in a 2005 attack on the Lemgheity army base, which killed seventeen soldiers as well as a deadly shoot-out with police in Nouakchott in 2008.

Domestic News:

- **7 June 2013** - The health of President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz has triggered a debate in Mauritania, as opposition parties in the country have been questioning his stay in France, which has lasted more than three weeks for what his party officials have indicated has been a "routine medical checkup." The Coordination of Mauritanian Democratic Opposition (COD), which comprises of twelve political parties, has expressed concern about the absence of the President. A statement that was released by the COD indicated that "President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz has been missing for three weeks now, lost in the corridors of French hospitals, where he is receiving medical treatment to his injury on 13 October last year, preventing the council of ministers from being held, disrupting the state affairs. To date, no explanation has been given to justify the absence, no health bulletin has been released." In response, President Aziz, who on Wednesday attended a function at the UNESCO headquarters at which the Houphouet-Boigny prize for Peace and Security was

awarded to French President Francois Hollande has stated that he is in good health, stating that “I am in good health, thank God. Mauritians will hold parliamentary and municipal elections shortly.” Those elections, which have been postponed a number of times, are scheduled to take place in October of this year. Late last year, President Aziz stayed in France for several weeks after he was accidentally shot by a checkpoint in the capital city.

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of

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



Niger

Travel Summary:

MS Risk advises against all travel to the following parts of Niger: Abalak, including the Air Massif region; the province of Agadez (including the road that links Assamakato Agadez and the city of Agadez); areas of Tahoua province north of the city of Tahoua, including the city itself; the area of Tillaberi province north of Niamey, including the road from Niamey to Gao and the road from Niamey to Menaka. We currently advise against all but essential travel to the remainder of the country, including the capital city Niamey.



On 1 June, three guards were killed and 22 inmates escaped from the main prison in Niamey during an attack that was carried out by suspected Islamist militants. Travellers currently in Niamey are

advised to continue to monitor the developments and to be alert to announcements and remain vigilant at all times.

On 23 May, terrorist attacks were carried out against a military barracks in the town of Agadez in northern Niger and at a uranium processing facility near the town of Arlit, which is located 150 miles north of Agadez. The attacks have since been claimed by a Malian terrorist group, the Movement for the Unity of Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO). Consequently MS Risk advises against all travel to the province of Agadez and to the surrounding areas. MUJAO has threatened to carry out further attacks in the region, which will focus on those countries who are supporting the on-going war in Mali.

On 14 May, the Government of Nigeria declared a state of emergency in three states in the northern region of the country: Adamawa, Borno and Yobe. The states of Borno and Yobe border southern Niger, as such there is a risk that the instability may spill over the border from Nigeria into Niger.

There is a high threat of terrorism occurring throughout the country. Attacks could be indiscriminate and can occur in places that are frequented by expatriates and foreign travellers. There is a high threat of kidnapping from terrorist groups such as AQIM and Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJWA). These terrorist groups have already kidnapped a number of Westerners in Niger and throughout the wider Sahel region, including in Niamey, and the northern and western regions of Niger. It is highly likely that further kidnap attacks will occur.

There is a high level of crime that exists throughout the country, especially in the capital city of Niamey. Thefts, robberies and residential break-ins can occur at any time. The areas located around the Gaweze Hotel, National Museum and Petit Marche in Niamey are particularly prone to muggings. It is advised that you not walk alone there, or cross the Kennedy Bridge on foot at any time. Bandits are thought to be operating in the border area with Nigeria, south of Zinder. MS Risk advises you to take special care and to avoid crossing the border with Nigeria during the night.

All companies that are currently operating in the north and north-west regions of the country should be aware of the increased security threats. Companies attempting road moves should coordinate them with local authorities. MS Risk does not recommend unescorted road moves east of Tahoua. There have been several military escorts operating from Tahoua to the north and north-eastern regions of the country which companies should liaise with for increased protection.

On Land:

- **2 June 2013** - In what appears to be a third attack carried out by suspected Islamist militants, officials in Niger have confirmed that twenty-two inmates escaped from the main prison in Niger's capital on Saturday. This latest attack comes just days after Islamist militants claimed responsibility for two suicide attacks that were carried out on a military base and a uranium mine in northern Niger on May 23. At least twenty-five people were killed in those attacks. The Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) and an al-Qaeda affiliated group, the Signed-in-Blood Battalion, which is led by Mokhtar Belmokhtar, have claimed responsibility for the two attacks, indicating that they were in retaliation for Niger's military intervention in Mali, which effectively drove them out of the northern regions of the country earlier this year. Justice Minister Marou Amadou has confirmed that during Saturday's prison break in Niamey, three guards were killed. Although there are conflicting reports pertaining to the events surrounding the prison incident, sources have indicated that weapons had been smuggled into the jail while some of the escapees were prisoners who were facing terrorism charges. According to Niger's Justice Minister, "it has emerged from initial

investigations at the site that the aggressors obviously benefited from outside complicity regarding the weapon introduced into the prison.” Officials have indicated that the attack began when a prisoner, believed to be a Sudanese member of MUJAO, grabbed a gun from a guard and proceeded to shoot three guards and a civilian. Members of the group who were stationed outside the prison then proceeded to open fire. Sources have indicated that four inmates inside the prison had participated in the attack. Residents reported seeing gunmen firing at guards at the entrance to the prison at around 15:00 local time. Nigerian gendarmes later arrived at the prison in order to help the guards, who remained under fire for about forty-five minutes, while police blocked off all roads leading to the facility. While little information about the prison escapees has been released, officials have confirmed that Malian national Cheibane Ould Hama, who was convicted of killing four Saudi tourists and a US citizen, was amongst those who escaped. Hama killed four Saudis in an attack on a convoy that was travelling near the border between Mali and Niger in 2009. He killed an American national in 2000 in front of a bar in Niger’s capital. Officials have confirmed that he is currently being “actively sought.” The escaped prisoners are a danger to the region and officials in Niger have called on the citizens of all countries in West Africa to “remain calm” and to exercise their “duty to be vigilant. Although Niger has seen a number of kidnappings and attacks occur on its territory in recent years, a number of which have been claimed by al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the latest string of attacks are directly linked with Niger’s participation in the ongoing war in Mali. Consequently, it is likely that such attacks will continue to be carried out and will likely target Westerners and Western interests. In a separate incident, officers from Niger’s anti-terror squad killed one person and wounded another on Sunday when they opened fire on what they have indicated was a suspicious-looking four-by-four with tinted windows that had been driving back and forth in front of their headquarters. According to Niger’s Justice Minister, the officers had given the “usual warnings” before firing the shots in order to stop the vehicle. He further indicated that the car’s two other occupants have been taken into custody. With three attacks occurring in Niger over the last two weeks, MS Risk advises against all travel to the following regions of the country: all areas of the country north of the city of Abalak, including the Air Massif region; the province of Agadez (including the road linking Assamakato Agadez and the city of Agadez); areas of Tahoua province north of the city of Tahoua, including the city itself; the area of Tillaberi province north of Niamey, including the road from Niamey to Gao and the road from Niamey to Menaka; areas within 40km of the border with Nigeria in the provinces of Diffa, Maradi and Zinder. There is a high threat of terrorism and kidnapping in Niger. Any companies and employees currently in Niger are advised to remain vigilant and to continue to monitor the developments.



Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

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

Travel Summary:

Summary

On 14 May, the Nigerian Government declared a State of Emergency in the states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe. Since the announcement, military operations have been going on in all three states and curfews have been put in place in parts of Maiduguri, Borno state and Adamawa state. Curfews can be imposed, amended and lifted at a short notice. Consequently you should be alert to announcements made by the respective State Governments and you are advised to monitor any developments in the affected states. There may be an increased threat of retaliatory attacks elsewhere in Nigeria following the commencement of military operations. MS Risk advises against all travel to: the Riverine areas of Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers, Akwa Ibom and Cross River States; Warri city, Kano city, Okene City.

We advise 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. More recent attacks have increasingly focussed on public places, including bars and restaurants. These attacks have resulted in a large number of



deaths and injuries. We also advise against all travel to Kano City and Okene City, which has also seen a frequent number of high levels of violence.

We advise against all but essential travel to Kano state, Kaduna State, Jigwa State, Katsina State, Sokoto 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.

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.

There is a high threat of terrorism occurring in Nigeria. A bomb attack that occurred at a bus station in Kano city on 18 March 2013 resulted in multiple casualties. Attacks could be indiscriminate, including government, security and educational institutions, international organisations as well as public venues and areas such as restaurants, bars, markets, hotels, shopping centers, places of worship and other areas that are frequented by expatriates, foreign tourists and business travelers. Terrorist attacks have been known to occur on religious and public holidays. There have been regular attacks on churches in northern Nigeria at times of worship. The US government has published an Emergency Message for US citizens, detailing information that Boko Haram may be planning attacks in Abuja. This information has been assessed as being credible and attacks could occur at any time, including against international hotels that are frequently visited by Westerners. There is also an increased level of kidnap threat in Nigeria in which foreign nationals have typically been the targets of such kidnaps.

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.

- On 16 February 2013, after storming the compound of Lebanese-owned construction firm Setraco in Bauchi state, gunmen killed a security guard and abducted a Briton, an Italian, a Greek, two Lebanese and two Syrian workers. The British construction worker is believed to have been killed along with the six other foreign nationals. This was the worst case of foreigners being kidnapped in the mostly Muslim north of Africa's most populous country since an insurgency by Islamist militants intensified two years ago.
- In December 2012, a French national was kidnapped by armed men in Katsina State in northern Nigeria, reportedly from a residential compound.
- In 2012, a Lebanese national was kidnapped in Kaduna State. His Lebanese colleague was killed during the abduction
- In January 2012, a German national was killed in Kano city. He was killed on 31 May 2012.
- In May 2011, a British national and an Italian national were kidnapped together in Kebbi State. Both hostages were killed in Sokoto on 8 March 2012.

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 Land:

- **6 June 2013** - Nigeria's military has claimed that US-designated "global terrorist" Abubakar Adam Kamar was killed in an operation last year. However these claims of his death have not been confirmed by officials in Washington. Lieutenant Colonel Mohammed Suleiman has indicated that Kamar, believed to have links to al-Qaeda's north African branch and to Nigeria's Boko Haram, was killed on 18 March 2012. This would have been before the United States listed him, along with two other Nigerian islamists, Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau and Khalid al-Barnawi, as "global terrorists," which was announced in June of last year. Defence spokesman Brigadier General Chris Olukolade has indicated that this discrepancy may have been because information had not been properly passed along, however he could not provide any further details. Another military spokesman, Lieutenant Colonel Sagir Musa, also confirmed the death but declined to give details as to why the US designation was issued after his death. Security sources had previously estimated that Kamar was in his mid-30's and a native of Borno state. He was said to have been an active member of Boko Haram at the time of a 2009 uprising in Maiduguri, which was crushed by the military. According to security sources, he later fled Nigeria after the uprising was put down however he eventually returned.
- **5 June 2013** - Nigeria's military indicated on Wednesday that it has arrested forty-nine Boko Haram Islamists across a northeastern state where insurgents are abandoning their camps and fleeing north towards Niger. A statement released by the defence ministry indicated that "a total of 49 suspected Boko Haram terrorists were apprehended in various locations in Yobe state." The statement added that "all the camps of the terrorists in the area have been dislodged as some of the insurgents fled towards Niger."
- **1 June 2013** - Security services in Nigeria have indicated that they have discovered a home in the northern cit of Kano where Lebanese nationals have stored weapons which were intended to be used in order to attack Israeli and Western targets in Nigeria. According to Kano state intelligence chief, Basse Etang, the compound has been described as hosting a "terrorist cell" tied to the powerful Lebanese Shiite movement Hezbollah. The home, which is located in the Bompai neighborhood of Kano, contained a bunker dug beneath a bedroom where weapons had allegedly been stored. According to a military statement, "the weapons included anti-tank weapons, rocket-propelled guns, anti tank and anti-personnel mines among other dangerous weapons." The Nigerian military has also indicated that three Lebanese nationals have been arrested in connection with the illegal arms cache while a fourth suspect remains at large. According to Etang area director of the Department of State Services, Nigeria's main intelligence branch, "this is the handiwork of Hezbollah. What has just been discovered in the cell of Hezbollah and what you have seen here is a Hezbollah armory." The area director further indicated that "these weapons are meant to be used to target Israeli and Western interests in Nigeria, while investigations are still ongoing to determine if the Lebanese nationals are really connected to Boko Haram." The first suspect, Mustafa Fawaz, was arrested on May 16, and his "confession unveiled other members of the foreign terrorists' network." A second suspect, Abdullah Tahini, was arrested several days later while trying to board a flight to Beirut from the Kano airport. The third detained Lebanese national, Talal Roda, was arrested at the Kano home on May 26 while Fauz Fawad has been identified as the fourth suspect, and remains to

be at large. Although Boko Haram is seen primarily as a domestic group that has possibly sought closer ties to al-Qaeda's west African franchise, other militant cells have been discovered in Nigeria. In February, the DSS indicated that it had discovered a militant cell receiving instructions from Iranian agents that had sought to attack Israeli and Western targets in Nigeria. DSS national spokesman Marilyn Ogar indicated that at the time the group was also planning to assassinate Nigeria's former military ruler Ibrahim Babangida. Reacting to the latest claims of a possible Hezbollah cell in Nigeria, a security official in Israel stated that Nigeria was a "destination station for Shiite terror and global Jihad groups, which are boosting their efforts in Africa as part of international terror efforts." The official further noted that "the cell exposed and arrested is part of a Shiite terror campaign against Western and Israeli targets around the world which has been taking place for a number of years. The possibility that members of the cell acted under Hezbollah's orders in other African states, such as Benin, Ghana, the Ivory Coast and Sierra Leone, is also being examined."

- Meanwhile Nigeria's military has dismissed claim's by Boko Haram's leaders that soldiers have retreated during an ongoing offensive. The military has indicated that these claims are "empty propaganda" and that the campaign has heavily damaged the Islamist insurgents. In a video released by Boko Haram, chief Abubakar Shekau states that soldiers have at times "turned and ran" when facing Islamist fighters and rejected military boasting about the success of the operation. In response to the release of the video, defence spokesman Brigadier General Chris Olukolade stated that "we consider it as empty propaganda. To the best of our understanding, at the moment the insurgents are in disarray. They are on the run and so many of them have been captured." Those arrested or killed militants comes from Chad, Sudan, Libya and Niger. However he declined to provide figures of those captured or killed in the operation which was launched on May 15 after President Goodluck Jonathan declared a state of emergency in three northeaster states which are considered to be Boko Haram strongholds. A statement later released by the military indicated that five Niger citizens and two Chadians were amongst those arrested in an operation that was carried out in Tumbu Gini, a town located near the border with Chad. Shekau's whereabouts, which could not be determined in the video, remain unknown.
- **31 May 2013** - Nigeria's military has released fifty-eight women and children who were being held in connection with the Islamist insurgency in the country's northeast. They were released under a peace gesture which was announced ten days ago. Twenty women and children were released in the state of Borno while another thirty-eight were released in neighbouring Yobe state. According to Lieutenant Colonel Sagir Musa, spokesman for the military in Borno, "we're releasing six women and fourteen young men to the Borno State government as directed by the defence headquarters." Nigeria has defended the detention of children in connection with the insurgency, stating that those held were directly involved in ways such as acting as lookouts and running errands. However the Nigerian military has come under heavy criticism in its fight against Boko Haram, including allegations of arbitrary arrests, unlawful detentions and extra-judicial killings. On May 15, the military launched a sweeping offensive in the northeastern regions of the country in a bid to end the four-year-old insurgency by Boko Haram. It announced on May 21 that it would release women and children held in connection with the insurgency as part of a peace gesture. The move came shortly after Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau claimed in a recent video that the group was holding women and children hostage in retaliation for the wives and children of its members who were being detained by the Nigerian military.
- Meanwhile Nigeria's military has indicated that it has arrested fifty-six more Islamist insurgents as part of its ongoing offensive in the country's northeastern regions. However few details have been provided. A military statement did indicate that the arrests were made in various locations however the statement did not specify where or when the arrests occurred. It did add that weapons, including homemade bombs, were seized. Since May 15, mobile phone service has been cut in much of the northeast and access to remote areas in the region has been restricted, making it impossible to verify claims from the military and from the Islamists. Furthermore, the military has declined to provide the total numbers of those arrested or killed since the offensive

began. The number of arrests mentioned in various military statements has so far amounted to around 200.

Domestic News:

- **4 June 2013** - A presidential statement has indicated that Nigeria has formally declared the Boko Haram Islamist sect and Ansaru, its suspected offshoot, as “terrorist” groups and has issued a law to ban them. A statement released by the presidential office noted that “President Goodluck Jonathan has formally approved the proscription of Boko Haram and authorized the gazetting of an order declaring the group’s activities illegal and acts of terrorism.” The statement added that this move officially brings the activities of both groups within the purview of the Terrorism Prevention Act and any persons associated with the two groups can now be legally prosecuted and sentenced to penalties specified in the law. The law prescribes a prison term of “not less than 20 years” for anybody who solicits or gives any form of support, including financial and logistics, to the groups. This latest moves comes nearly one month after President Jonathan declared a state of emergency in three northern states - Adamawa, Borno and Yobe - all strongholds of the sect. The country’s military has since launched ground and aerial attacks in order to flush out the insurgents.

International Developments:

- **4 June 2013** - For the first time, the United States has offered rewards for information in Islamist militants in North and West Africa. According to the State Department, the highest reward of up to US \$7m (£4.6m) is for information that will lead to the location of Boko Haram Leader Abubakar Shekau. Similar rewards are also being offered for leading figures in al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO). A reward of up to US \$5m is being offered for veteran militant Mokhtar Belmokhtar. His Signed-in-Blood Battalion is being held responsible for an attack on a gas plant in south-east Algeria in January in which at least thirty-seven hostages were killed, including three US citizens. A US \$5 m reward is also being offered for Yahya Abu el Hammam, a senior commander of AQIM, whom the state department has indicated was responsible for planning attacks and kidnappings throughout North and West Africa. Meanwhile up to US \$3m is available for information leading to the location of Malik Abou Abdelkarim of AQIM and MUJAO spokesman Oumar Ould Hamaha. The State



Department has indicated that Oumar Ould Hamaha had taken part in the kidnapping of foreigners for ransom, including taking a Canadian diplomat captive in Niger in 2008.

No restrictions
in this travel
advice



Although there are currently no travel restrictions for Senegal, MS Risk advises to avoid road travel in the Casamance region to the west of Kolda other than on the main road from Ziguinchor to Cap Skiring and the main road north of the Guinea-Bissau/Senegal border from Sao Domingos to Ziguinchor during daylight hours. If you travel on either of these two routes, you should do so only during daylight hours and monitor the local security situation before travelling. 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 Sindian. There has been an increase in clashes between the Senegalese army and suspected elements of the armed separatist group MFDC (Movement of the Democratic Forces of Casamance) resulting in injuries and deaths. Cars and local buses have been ambushed and their passengers robbed, sometimes violently, by armed men. There is currently an underlying threat from terrorism. Attacks could be indiscriminate, including in places frequented by expatriates and foreign travellers. The United States Embassy in Senegal recently issued a travel warning to the capital city of Dakar, stating that it has received information pertaining to a possible bomb threat. MS Risk currently advises against all travel to Dakar until further notice. 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 may target Western interests as well as foreigners.

On Land:

- 27 May 2013** - A political official in Senegal has confirmed that three of the twelve employees of a South African bomb disposal company who were kidnapped by rebels in southern Senegal on May 3 have been released. Robert Sagna, the ex-mayor of the city of Ziguinchor, who remains to be an influential political figure in the region, confirmed that the three female hostages were handed over in the nearby village of Kassolol, and were being driven to the capital of neighboring Guinea-Bissau. They were amongst a dozen employees working to clear mines for Denel Mechem, the South African company that began working in the area around Ziguinchor in July 2012. Mr. Sagna further indicated that negotiations were still ongoing in order to release the remaining nine other captives who are reportedly being held by Cesar Atoute Badiate, a rebel leader with the MFDC.



Unsuccessful Attacks/Boardings/Robberies

- **4 June 2013** - Pirates boarded a St Vincent and Grenadines-flagged offshore supply ship, Bourbon Arethuse, while underway at 2300 UTC in position 04:14.9N - 007:45.7E, Usari Field, Nigeria. Upon seeing the pirates, the crew members on board the vessel raised the alarm and retreated into the citadel. Other vessels in the area were alerted. On investigation, it was found that the ship's and crew members belongings were stolen. All crew members have been reported safe.
- **3 June 2013** - An underway chemical tanker was fired upon while in position 04:42 N - 008:19E, approximately 2.5 nautical miles north of James Town in the Calabar River. Ten armed robbers in two speed boats approached and fired upon the chemical tanker. Master raised the alarm and mustered all the crew members. The Master also reported the attack to the Nigerian authorities. The armed robbers aborted the attack and moved away when they saw that the Nigerian Marine Police had arrived at the scene. All crew members are safe however the vessel did sustain some minor damage due to firing.

Hijackings:

- **28 May 2013** - Security sources have indicated that armed pirates attacked an oil products tanker off the coast of Nigeria and have abducted an unknown number of crew members. The Nigerian-flagged tanker, the Matrix I, was enroute from Cotonour, Benin to Idoho field, Nigeria (south Akwa Ibom State) when it came under attack and was boarded by an unknown number of pirates at 0220 LT in position 03:45.2N - 005:34E, approximately 42 nautical miles west-southwest of Cap Formoso. The vessel's low freeboard, coupled with its slower speed inevitably made the ship vulnerable to being boarded. Pirates left the vessel later, kidnapping 7 members, all Pakistani nationals. Sources have also indicated that at the time of the attack, there were twelve Pakistani and five Nigerian crew members on board the vessel. A spokesman for ship operator Val Oil Trading confirmed that there had been an "incident" however no further details were provided.



About MS Risk

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

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

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

- Security Consulting
 - Risk assessments and intelligence reporting
 - Planning and management
 - Due diligence and investigations.

- Project Management
 - Interim security
 - Training
 - Special assignments

- Crisis Response
 - Crisis management
 - Business continuity management
 - Hostile operations support to commercial interests

- Virtual Security Director service for clients lacking a full time security executive.

References are always available.

More information is found at www.msrisk.com

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