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West Africa Report

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

April 27 – May 10, 2015



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 - Due diligence and investigations.
- Project Management
 - Interim security
 - Training
 - Special assignments
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 - Business continuity management
 - Hostile operations support to commercial interests
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Summary

April 27 – May 10, 2015



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Sahel Region

- **6 May 2015** – New figures released by the World Health Organization (WHO) on Wednesday indicate that the number of deaths from the Ebola epidemic now exceeds 11,000 figures.
- **29 April 2015** – President Obama is increasing the emergency Pentagon funding in order to help France fight terrorists in northwestern Africa.

Benin

On the Ground Reporting

- **5 May 2015** – Protests have erupted in the commercial capital Cotonou after security forces attempted to arrest opposition lawmaker Candide Azanai, who is a critic of President Thomas Boni Yayi.

Domestic News

- **4 May 2015** – President Thomas Boni Yayi's party has won the country's parliamentary elections, however the party has failed to secure an absolute majority.
- **28 April 2015** – The head of the African Union (AU) election observer mission to Benin, Prof. Dioncounda Traore, has disclosed that despite organizational challenges, the country's 26 April parliamentary elections were transparent.

Burkina Faso

On the Ground Reporting

- **8 May 2015** – According to a source close to the investigation, the head of one of Burkina Faso's largest banks has been arrested on suspicion of having embezzled billions CFA francs.
- **6 May 2015** – On Wednesday, the country's constitutional court rejected an appeal that was filed by ten parliamentarians from the former ruling party over the electoral code that prevents confidants of former President Blaise Compaore from running in the October elections.
- **4 May 2015** – According to on the ground sources, at least thirty people have been trapped for five days in a gold mine in Djibo, in the northern region of the country, since a cave-in, which occurred on Thursday.

Regional Reporting

- **9 May 2015** – Burkina Faso and Niger have agreed to exchange eighteen towns in a bid to settle a long-running border dispute and end years of litigation.

Guinea

On the Ground Reporting

- **9 May 2015** – On Saturday, Guinea's opposition cancelled a protest set for next week, stating that it wanted to give "frank and sincere dialogue" a chance.
- **8 May 2015** – On Friday, the country's opposition leader pulled out of a meeting with President Alpha Conde, following a day of violent protests in the capital.
- **7 May 2015** – At least six people were injured in the capital on Thursday in clashes that erupted between protesters, security forces and government supporters.
- **6 May 2015** – A court in southeastern Guinea has found thirteen men guilty of murder, rape and other crimes for their part in the killing of dozens of people in the town of N'Zerekore in 2013.
- **4 May 2015** – On Monday, Guinea deployed security forces across the country in a bid to police new anti-government protests.
- **28 April 2015** – Guinea's opposition has announced that it will delay a demonstration against the country's disputed election timetable in a bid to widen the rally into a nationwide show of defiance.

Domestic News

- **5 May 2015** – An opposition spokesman disclosed Tuesday that the head of the country's political opposition will meet with President Alpha Conde in a bid to ease tensions following weeks of violent clashes that have erupted between protesters and security forces.
- **29 April 2015** – On Wednesday, President Alpha Conde appointed a moderate opposition leader to head the country's industry ministry.

Guinea-Bissau

- **6 May 2015** – According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Guinea-Bissau has made enough progress on economic reforms since the election of its new president last year, and it is eligible for a US \$23.9 million loan.
- **5 May 2015** – Guinea-Bissau is reviewing contracts that were signed by previous governments as it seeks to ensure that miners have sufficient means to kick-start its US \$2 billion economy.

Ivory Coast

- **2 May 2015** – On Friday, President Alassane Ouattara announced that civil servant salaries can finally increase, after more than two decades.

Liberia

- **9 May 2015** – On Saturday, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared Liberia Ebola-free as 42 days have passed since the last confirmed case was buried.
- **30 April 2015** – With Liberia set to be declared Ebola-free within two weeks, if no new cases are reported, on Thursday the United States decommissioned its treatment unit for Liberian healthcare workers infected with the deadly disease.
- **28 April 2015** – Protesters gathered in front of the US Embassy in Monrovia on Tuesday, asking the American government to put pressure on Liberian officials to bring back some sixty Liberian young women who were allegedly trafficked into Lebanon between 2011 and 2012.

Mali

- **5 May 2015** – According to military sources and a local official, soldiers exchanged fire with fighters from the main rebel alliance in Mali on Tuesday.
 - According to a source, secret footage shows a Rwandan policeman from the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali earlier this year carefully take aim at a civilian protesters, squeeze the trigger and shoot.
- **4 May 2015** – Witnesses reported Monday that jihadists have destroyed a mausoleum in central Mali that had been submitted as a UN World Heritage site, adding that the rebels left behind a warning that they will come after all those who don't follow their strict version of Islam.
- **2 May 2015** – Officials disclosed Friday that dozens of gunmen stormed a northern Malian town, killing one and taking six other people hostage in an attack that has been blamed on Tuareg rebels.
 - On Friday, a resident in the town of Dire reported an attack by Tuareg rebels.
- **30 April 2015** – At least three civilians were killed and twenty-eight wounded Thursday when their minibus set off a landmine in northern Mali.

- At least ten militants and nine soldiers have been killed after clashes erupted between the Malian army and a Tuareg rebel alliance on Thursday.
- **29 April 2015** – Security sources have reported that militants opened fire on troops at a national guard camp in northern Mali on Wednesday, killing two soldiers and a child.
 - Armed insurgents exchanged fire with soldiers in Mali on Wednesday. According to a Malian army colonel, fighters from the Tuareg-led Coordination for the Movements of Azawad (CMA) ambushed military positions in the town of Lere, located near the Mauritanian border.
- **28 April 2015** – Officials from the UN mission in Mali disclosed Tuesday that Tuareg rebels shot at peacekeepers outside the city of Timbuktu.
- **27 April 2015** – Late on Sunday, rebels from northern Mali told mediators that next month, they will initial a long-delayed UN brokered peace agreement on the future of the country's north.
 - On Monday, a pro-government militia seized key positions in northern Mali from separatists, effectively breaking a fragile regional ceasefire and increasing fears that major fighting may break out.

Niger

- **4 May 2015** – A meningitis outbreak in Niger has claimed 252 lives since January, with the country's health officials warning that Niger is short of vaccines to fight the outbreak.
- **1 May 2015** – Nigerien authorities have urged those living on islands in Lake Chad to leave in order to avoid new attacks by Boko Haram.
- **27 April 2015** – Witnesses reported Monday that Boko Haram gunmen massacred residents who tried to jump into Lake Chad in a bid to seek safety and burnt others alive after overpowering soldiers in a weekend attack.

Nigeria

On the Ground Reporting

- **8 May 2015** – On Friday, a gunman opened fire outside a school in the northeastern Nigerian city of Potiskum, seriously wounding twelve students in an area that has repeatedly been targeted by Boko Haram militants.
- **6 May 2015** – Nigerian troops have rescued 25 more women and children from Boko Haram's northeastern stronghold in the Sambisa Forest with military officials disclosing Wednesday that troops also killed a number of insurgents and destroyed Islamist camps.
- troops have raided communities suspected of harboring militiamen in central Plateau state, killing several people.
- **1 May 2015** – The military reported Friday that Nigerian troops have freed another 234 women and children from Boko Haram's stronghold in the Sambisa forest.
- **29 April 2015** – Relief workers in northeastern Nigeria reported Thursday that deteriorating sanitary conditions have resulted in an increasing risk of disease in camps for people displaced by Boko Haram violence.
 - Nigeria's army has vowed to free more hostages held captive by Boko Haram after nearly 500 were released this week after being held in atrocious conditions in the group's Sambisa Forest stronghold.
- **28 April 2015** - Hundreds of people, believed to be victims of Boko Haram's insurgency, have been found dead in the northeastern Nigerian town of Damasak.

- According to the military, Nigerian troops have rescued nearly 300 women and girls during an offensive carried out Tuesday against Boko Haram militants in the northeastern Sambisa Forest, however officials have warned that those rescued likely do not include any of the schoolgirls kidnapped from Chibok a year ago.
- **27 April 2015** – A local health commissioner disclosed Monday that a total of 23 people have now died from ethanol poisoning that has been blamed on locally brewed gin in southwestern Nigeria.

Domestic News

- **6 May 2015** - Officials disclosed Wednesday that a cash shortage caused by low oil prices has forced the country to borrow heavily through the early part of 2015, with the government struggling to pay public workers.
- **28 April 2015** – An audit has found that Nigeria's state oil company overpaid the government US \$750m (£490) however it noted that it had not properly accounted for US \$1.4bn.
- **27 April 2015** – While Aisha Jummai Alhassan lost her bid to become the first woman to be elected governor in a Nigerian state, her party indicated Monday that it will challenge the results of the election in court.
 - On Monday, Nigeria's foreign minister attempted to calm South African anger pertaining to the recall for consultations of its top two diplomats over the recent wave of anti-immigrant attacks, stating that the decision is nothing out of the ordinary.

Senegal

- **4 May 2015** – On Monday, Senegalese officials announced that at the request of Saudi King Salman, Senegal will deploy 2,100 soldiers to Saudi Arabia to join Riyadh's military coalition battling rebels in Yemen.
- **28 April 2015** – As pressure is mounting on European nations to take action over the recent sinking's in the Mediterranean that have resulted in the deaths of hundreds of migrants, on Tuesday officials from the Senegalese and Malian governments disclosed that more than 300 of their nationals have died in the sinking's.

Sierra Leone

- **27 April 2015** – On Monday, Sierra Leone marked its 54th anniversary of independence by setting out a four point "post-Ebola plan" that aims to put the country on the road to recovery in the wake of the deadly epidemic.

Togo

- **3 May 2015** – Togo's constitutional court on Sunday confirmed the victory of incumbent President Faure Gnassingbe in last week's elections, officially declaring that he won with just over 58 percent of the vote.
- **1 May 2015** – On Friday, Togo's opposition announced that it will not go to court to challenge incumbent Faure Gnassingbe's victory in the weekend presidential vote, which it claimed was rigged.
- **29 April 2015** – On Wednesday, despite the electoral commission pronouncing victory for incumbent Faure Gnassingbe, Togo's opposition leader Jean-Pierre Fabre claimed victory in the weekend presidential elections. Fabre has denounced the results, stating that they are "fraudulent," and a "crime against national sovereignty."

- **27 April 2015** – According to election commission figures released Monday, incumbent President Faure Gnassingbe appeared set to win a third term in office, as partial results from weekend elections gave him a strong lead.
 - Togo's main opposition candidate has complained of widespread irregularities in Saturday's presidential election and has called for the announcement of the results to be halted.

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The Gambia

There is no travel advisory for Gambia, however MS Risk advises all travellers to avoid travel by road from The Gambia to the Casamance, in the southern region of Senegal. The Gambian government has reopened the country's border with those nations currently affected by the Ebola outbreak. Health officials will continue to screen people entering the country from Ebola affected countries. There are currently no confirmed Ebola cases in the Gambia.

The Casamance region of south-western Senegal remains affected by incidents involving presumed separatist groups and by incidents of banditry. An outbreak of the Ebola virus has been confirmed in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. While there have been no confirmed cases of the virus in The Gambia, as part of efforts to prevent the deadly virus from spreading into the country, Gambia's Ministry of Health and Social Welfare has set up a task force to control the border areas. MS Risk is currently advising all travellers to the country to maintain a high level of vigilance. There is an underlying threat from terrorism. Travellers to the country are warned to remain vigilant as attacks can take place at anytime and anywhere.

Ghana

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

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

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

March to November. We advise that you monitor the local weather reports and expect difficulties when travelling to affected areas during this season.

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Sahel Region



Security Summary

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

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

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

On the Ground Reporting

- **6 May 2015** – New figures released by the World Health Organization (WHO) on Wednesday indicate that the number of deaths from the Ebola epidemic now exceeds 11,000 figures. According to the WHO, in the three worst affected countries – Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone - 26,593 people were infected and 11,005 have died. Liberia has recorded the most deaths, with 4,716, while 3,903 have died in Sierra Leone and 2,386 have died in Guinea. Unless there are any new cases reported in Liberia in the coming days, on 9 May, the WHO will officially declare the West African country Ebola-free. The number of new infections continues to decrease in both Guinea and Sierra Leone. Over the last week, only nine new cases were recorded in each country, effectively the lowest figures for almost a year.
- **29 April 2015** – President Obama is increasing the emergency Pentagon funding in order to help France fight terrorists in northwestern Africa. On Wednesday, the US president ordered the release of up to US \$35 million in defense services that will go towards combatting extremists in Chad, Mali and Niger. The direction follows President Obama's US \$10 million order for France's effort in August. France has deployed 3,000 troops to fight Islamic groups that operate in Africa's Sahel region.

Benin

No Travel Restrictions



Security Summary

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

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

On the Ground Reporting

- **5 May 2015** – Protests have erupted in the commercial capital Cotonou after security forces attempted to arrest opposition lawmaker Candide Azanai, who is a critic of President Thomas Boni Yayi. On the ground sources reported that thousands of people took to the streets, burning tires and setting alight a fire-brigade truck, after armed gendarmes went to the home of Mr Azanai. On Monday, the country's public prosecutor, Mordechee Kilanyossi, said on state television that he has summoned Mr Azanai for questioning following a complaint by the president about "insults" during last month's legislative elections.

Domestic News

- **4 May 2015** – President Thomas Boni Yayi's party has won the country's parliamentary elections, however the party has failed to secure an absolute majority. On Sunday evening, the Constitutional Court confirmed that the Emerging Benin Party (FCBE) had won 33 seats out of 83, adding that the two principal opposition parties, The Union Makes the Nation and the Democratic Renewal Party, secured 13 and 10 seats respectively. While the FCBE did not secure an expected absolute majority, many believe that because the opposition is so fragmented and unstructured, it will have to form alliances in a bid to carry any weight in the national assembly. Beninese nationals went to the polls on 26 April for elections that were widely regarded as a popularity test for the president, who has been accused by the opposition of wanting to "tinker" with the

constitution in a bid to seek a third term in office in the 2016 presidential elections. However after voting last Sunday, President Boni Yayi stated that he would not longer be “a candidate for anything” in the future. In total, twenty parties contested the elections.

- **28 April 2015** – The head of the African Union (AU) election observer mission to Benin, Prof. Dioncounda Traore, has disclosed that despite organizational challenges, the country's 26 April parliamentary elections were transparent. According to Traore, some of the challenges included the late arrival of electoral materials and officials in some polling stations, however he noted that this did not affect the reliability of the poll. The AU mission comprised of 32 observers who were deployed in 175 polling stations distributed across Benin's 12 administrative departments.

Burkina Faso

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

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



Security Summary

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



Threats and Concerns

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

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

Kidnapping Threats

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

Crime

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

MS RISK Guidance to Organizations in Burkina Faso:

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

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

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

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

On the Ground Reporting

- **8 May 2015** – According to a source close to the investigation, the head of one of Burkina Faso's largest banks has been arrested on suspicion of having embezzled billions CFA francs. The security source disclosed that "the director general of the Banque de l'Habitat du Burkina Faso (BHBF), Pierre Zerbo, was arrested yesterday and remanded in custody today (Friday). According to the source, Zerbo is being questioned over allegations that he embezzled "several billion CFA francs" (several million euros). Since the beginning of April, a dozen supporters of former president Blaise Compaore, including five of his former ministers, have been arrested and then released by the security services.
- **6 May 2015** – On Wednesday, the country's constitutional court rejected an appeal that was filed by ten parliamentarians from the former ruling party over the electoral code that prevents confidants of former President Blaise Compaore from running in the October elections. According to the court ruling, the appeal was rejected "because of lack of signatures of those appealing." The West African nation is due to hold presidential and legislative elections on 11 October. The new electoral code, which was signed by transitional President Michel Kafando in April, effectively forbids those who supported last year's proposed constitutional changes to extend Compaore's 27-year rule, to contest the elections. Civil society organizations affiliated with the former government have denounced the new electoral code and have threatened to stage protests across the country.
- **4 May 2015** – According to on the ground sources, at least thirty people have been trapped for five days in a gold mine in Djibo, in the northern region of the country, since a cave-in, which occurred on Thursday. Sources have indicated that two bodies have so far been removed from the site, where an estimated 40 miners were working before the collapse.

Regional Reporting

- **9 May 2015** – Burkina Faso and Niger have agreed to exchange eighteen towns in a bid to settle a long-running border dispute and end years of litigation. According to the permanent secretary of the Burkina Faso national border commission, Josephine Kouara Apiou, Burkina Faso will gain fourteen towns while Niger will receive four between now and the end of next year. Burkina Faso and Niger share a frontier of roughly 998 km (620 miles), in which about a third has been mapped out on the ground. The rest of the border, which has been contested by both countries, was redefined in a 2013 decision by the international court of justice in The Hague, which ruled that the countries exchange swaths of territory between them. While the ruling ordered that 786 sq km (303 sq miles) be handed to Burkina Faso and 277 sq km (107 sq km) be given to Niger, the countries have only now agreed to implement that decision. According to Kouara Apiou, once the land has been exchanged, the authorities will perform a census in the affected areas and locals will be allowed to choose which nationality they would like to hold, adding that "they will have five years to make their choice."

Guinea

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



Security Summary

MS Risk currently advises against all but essential travel to Guinea, except for those who are involved in the direct response to the Ebola outbreak. Over the past several weeks, there have been a number of violent demonstrations that have occurred in the capital city Conakry and across the country. Violent demonstrations are likely to further take place, particularly in the run up to the Presidential elections, which are due to take place in October. MS Risk advises all travelers to Guinea to maintain extreme vigilance, to monitor the local media and to avoid large gatherings.

MS Risk advises all to carefully assess your need to travel to Guinea. If you do decide to travel, we advise that you make sure you have adequate arrangements in place for onward travel/exit and have adequate emergency health provisions. Due



to the Ebola outbreak, general medical facilities throughout the country are currently under particular strain. Dedicated healthcare facilities for Ebola can also be under pressure and many medical facilities expect to be paid up-front. Enhanced screening measures have been introduced for outbound passengers at Conakry airport. Delays are likely to be experienced at Guinea's land border crossings, particularly those with Liberia and Sierra Leone. This is due to enhanced screening measures.

There is currently a low threat from terrorism. Areas of Guinea that border Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, the Ivory Coast, Liberia and Sierra Leone are often tense and have an increased military presence. Therefore, MS Risk advises against all travel to the regions bordering the countries listed above. There have been regular reports of robberies on the routes Mamou,

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

are submitted to checks on documentation and baggage. It is advised that you approach such checkpoints with caution, as corruption and extortion are common at roadblocks. Occasionally, checkpoints can be a pretext for armed robbery. Road travel is hazardous during the rainy season, which occurs from May to October. Torrential rains can cause floods and landslides. MS Risk advises you to monitor the local weather reports and expect difficulties when travelling to affected areas during this season.

On the Ground Reporting

- **9 May 2015** – On Saturday, Guinea’s opposition cancelled a protest set for next week, stating that it wanted to give “frank and sincere dialogue” a chance. According to opposition leader Cellou Dalein Diallo, the move came “after broad consultation with the other opposition leaders to give a chance for consultation that will certainly lead to a frank and sincere dialogue between the opposition and the government.” The protest had been set for Monday after clashes between security forces and protesters in the capital city on Thursday resulted in Diallo pulling out of planned talks with President Alpha Conde. On Thursday, security forces surrounded the homes of opposition leaders before the clashes erupted. Colonel Ansouma Camara of the Guinean police has indicated that the move was aimed at minimizing violence in Conakry.
- **8 May 2015** – On Friday, the country’s opposition leader pulled out of a meeting with President Alpha Conde, following a day of violent protests in the capital. On Thursday, at least one person was killed and several others were injured, including some with gunshot wounds, in what is the latest in a series of clashes that have erupted between opposition supporters and security forces. While President Conde had invited Cellou Dalein Diallo to talks on Friday in a bid to ease the tensions, early on Friday, Souleymane Tianguel Bah, spokesman for Diallo’s UFDG Party, indicated that the opposition leader would not be attending the meeting. Responding to the cancellation of the meeting, government spokesman Damantang Albert Camara indicated that authorities would continue efforts to organize talks with the opposition.
- **7 May 2015** – At least six people were injured in the capital on Thursday in clashes that erupted between protesters, security forces and government supporters. Youths in Conakry blocked roads with burning tires and drove back police in some neighborhoods in what is the latest unrest over the timing of elections. On the ground sources reported hearing gunfire in the capital’s Sonfonia neighborhood. Witnesses also reported police using fire tear gas in the Bambeto and Cosa neighborhoods in a bid to disperse protesters. The clashes are threatening to derail a planned meeting between the president and the leader of the opposition.
- **6 May 2015** – A court in southeastern Guinea has found thirteen men guilty of murder, rape and other crimes for their part in the killing of dozens of people in the town of N’Zerekore in 2013. According to a judicial source, “of 18 defendants, 11 were sentenced to prison terms ranging from one to five years. One person was sentenced to 20 years in prison and another to life imprisonment.” The clashes had involved members of the indigenous Guerze group and ethnic Koniankes people who had moved into the area. They began in Koule town in July 2013 before spreading to N’Zerekore, which is located about 950 km from the capital Conakry. They later continued in Beyla town. The clashes ended after the army imposed a curfew. This is the first time in years that a tribunal in Guinea has handed down verdicts for crimes that resulted from inter-ethnic fighting.
- **4 May 2015** – On Monday, Guinea deployed security forces across the country in a bid to police new anti-government protests. While clashes broke out in the capital on Monday, on the ground sources reported that the provinces remained largely clam. Residents have disclosed that the streets emptied in opposition strongholds, including Labe in the north and the central towns of Mamou, Dalaba and Pita.

Protesters did however stage a rally at the opposition headquarters in the southeastern city of N'Zerekore. The Madina market in the capital Conakry was closed Monday, along with most businesses in the neighborhoods located near the airport. Residents in the suburb of Wanidara reported clashes breaking out between youths and police, while demonstrators burned tyres in the Koloma district, with some demonstrators throwing stones at police, who responded with tear gas. Witnesses also reported that several hundred women began a march in the central business district however they were dispersed by security forces. Police gathered in large numbers on Conakry's main roads, including the Prince highway, which leads from the suburbs through pro-opposition neighborhoods to the city center. Armored trucks and pick-ups manned by officers in riot gear with tear gas grenade launchers were stationed across the city. Government officials reported late Monday that fourteen people, including twelve security officers, were wounded in Monday's protests, however an opposition leader has disclosed that at least thirty people were wounded, including seven who were shot, one of whom is in critical condition.

- **28 April 2015** – Guinea's opposition has announced that it will delay a demonstration against the country's disputed election timetable in a bid to widen the rally into a nationwide show of defiance. According to a coalition statement, the "peaceful march," which was originally planned for Thursday and limited to the capital Conakry, will now take place across the country on Monday. The statement further urged activists to mount a large show of support "to express by their massive presence on roads and public places, their rejection of current practices in political, economic and social governance." Meanwhile Mohamed Ibn Chambas, the United Nations' chief envoy to Africa, disclosed Tuesday that he has held talks with Guinean politicians and has urged all sides to priorities dialogue "in the best interests of Guinea" to address the deadlock. In a statement, he indicated that Guineans had a responsibility to work together, given "the need to organize elections and the urgency of strengthening efforts to eradicate the Ebola epidemic."

Domestic News

- **5 May 2015** – An opposition spokesman disclosed Tuesday that the head of the country's political opposition will meet with President Alpha Conde in a bid to ease tensions following weeks of violent clashes that have erupted between protesters and security forces. According to a senior government official, the president issued a formal invitation to opposition leader Cellou Dalein Diallo after protests took place on Monday in the capital and in several other towns across the country over the timing of the elections. While the opposition has previously rejected overtures from President Conde calling for a return to dialogue, a spokesman for the party, Aboubacar Sylla, confirmed that Diallo will meet with the president, adding, "there's no reason why the head of the opposition wouldn't respond to an official invitation from the president to talk about questions of national interest." Sylla further indicated that the meeting, which according to the government is likely to take place by the end of the week, would effectively allow the opposition to gauge the government's goodwill. The opposition has maintained that the country's presidential election, announced by the electoral commission in March and due to be held on 11 October, broke a 2013 agreement to stage long-delayed local polls first. Many believe that holding the local polls first would effectively give the president's rivals more influence in organizing the presidential election.
- **29 April 2015** – On Wednesday, President Alpha Conde appointed a moderate opposition leader to head the country's industry ministry. The country's state television reported late Wednesday that Boubacar Barry, a former minister and candidate in the 2010 presidential elections, was appointed in a cabinet reshuffle, which saw several ministers change jobs. No reasons for the reshuffle were provided, however the changes come as the country's main opposition leaders have continued to launch protests throughout

this month in a bid to put pressure on the President to hold elections before the presidential polls, which are due to take place in October.

Guinea - Bissau

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



Security Summary

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

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

On the Ground Reporting

- **6 May 2015** – According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Guinea-Bissau has made enough progress on economic reforms since the election of its new president last year, and it is eligible for a US \$23.9 million loan. In a statement, the IMF's Guinea-Bissau mission chief Felix Fischer disclosed, "political unity, a more favorable external environment and initial measures taken by the new government have helped restore macroeconomic stability." A final decision on the financial support is due to take place in July. Potential support from the IMF comes after the European Union (EU) pledged 160 million euros (US \$175 million) in aid for Guinea-Bissau in March. The aid aims to bolster democracy and accelerate the country's economic recovery.
- **5 May 2015** – Guinea-Bissau is reviewing contracts that were signed by previous governments as it seeks to ensure that miners have sufficient means to kick-start its US \$2 billion economy. According to the country's Prime Minister Domingos Simoes Pereira, the review is also aimed at diversifying investment in services including maritime transport and telecoms, adding that fishing and timber contracts will also be analyzed in order to ensure sustainability for resources. While most of the country's roughly US \$250 million in exports come from fish and cashew nuts, the government is aiming to develop its bauxite and phosphate sectors.

Ivory Coast

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



Security Summary

An outbreak of the Ebola virus disease has been confirmed in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia. While there currently are no confirmed Ebola cases in the Ivory Coast, the country has taken preventative measures and is at a particularly high risk as it borders Guinea, and Liberia, two countries that have been severely affected by the current outbreak. A previous ban on all flights from countries that have been affected by the outbreak has now been lifted. MS Risk advises all travellers to the Ivory Coast to take the necessary precautions, including maintaining strict standards of hygiene and avoiding eating bush meat. There is an outbreak of cholera in the Abidjan area. As of December 2014, the epidemic has infected 264 people and resulted in 19 deaths. The most affected areas are: Attecoue, Koumassi, Port Bouet and Yapougon.

MS Risk advises against all but essential travel to the western regions of Dix-Huit Montagnes, Haut-Sassandra, Moyen-Cavally and Bas-Sassandra. Since August 2012, there have been a number of shootings around the capital of Abidjan. Attacks have mainly occurred at night with the targets usually being police and military officials. Further such incidents cannot be ruled out at this time, consequently MS Risk advises those in the capital city to remain vigilant at all times. As of 21 November 2014, there is a curfew in place from 10PM to 5AM in the town of Bondoukou, which is located in the northeastern region of the country. The curfew has been put in place in response to a high number of robberies that have been occurring at night. There is an underlying threat from terrorism. Attacks could be indiscriminate, including in places frequented by foreigners.

On the Ground Reporting

- **2 May 2015** – On Friday, President Alassane Ouattara announced that civil servant salaries can finally increase, after more than two decades. At a ceremony to mark the 1 May Labour Day holiday, the president told several hundred people that “the salaries of all civil servants will be unfrozen from today,” adding, “promotions can now take place every two years... This means that civil servants’ salaries will rise every two years.” His announcement comes at a time when the country’s schools have been paralyzed by a teachers’ strike, who will be amongst the beneficiaries of the new move. The new measure will affect 113,000 workers, including 92,000 teachers and 15,000 health workers. It will cost the state 77.6 billion CFA francs, equivalent to US \$134.5 million.” Civil servants’ pay has been frozen in the Ivory Coast since the mid 1980’s. Since Monday, state-run schools have been closed by a teachers’ strike over deductions from their salaries for April following a strike in March in which they called for salaries to be allowed to increase. On Friday, the president disclosed “to appease the situation, and in an exceptional move, I will tell the government to pay back the deductions.”

Liberia

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



Security Summary

On 9 May, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared Liberia Ebola-free. Officials however continue to caution all those in the country as the outbreak in neighboring Guinea and Sierra Leone continues.

MS Risk advises against all but essential travel to parts of Liberia, specifically those regions of the country that border with the Ivory Coast. There is a high level of crime in Monrovia, including armed robbery. The Liberian National Police has a very limited capability to prevent or detect crime, or to provide emergency response in any part of the country. Foreigners have been mugged in the Mamba Point and Sinkor areas of Monrovia (including Sinkor beach in broad daylight) where most international visitors stay. The roads from Monrovia to Roberts International Airport, the port town of Buchanan and to the border with Sierra Leone at Bo Waterside, and to the border with Guinea at Ganta, are mainly paved and in reasonable condition. Most other roads outside Monrovia are unpaved. Driving and road conditions will significantly deteriorate during the rainy season, which occurs from May to November. Many roads during this time become impassable. MS Risk advises against all travel at night outside of Monrovia, except to or from Roberts International Airport. This is because roads are treacherous and all the roads are unlit. Furthermore, vehicles often do not have any lights. As a result, travellers after dark are more vulnerable to being robbed at an illegal barricade. There is a low threat from terrorism.



On the Ground Reporting

- **9 May 2015** – On Saturday, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared Liberia Ebola-free as 42 days have passed since the last confirmed case was buried.
- **30 April 2015** – With Liberia set to be declared Ebola-free within two weeks, if no new cases are reported, on Thursday the United States decommissioned its treatment unit for Liberian healthcare workers infected with the deadly disease. Officers from the US Public Health Service Commissioned Corps staged a parade at the Monrovia Medical Unit (MMU) as President Ellen Sirleaf Johnson urged Liberians to learn lessons from the worst outbreak of the virus in history. The clinic, located 55 kilometres (35 miles) outside Monrovia at the international airport, treated 42 patients from nine nations, 18 of which tested positive for Ebola. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) three Ebola treatment units in Liberia closed this week, effectively leaving 13 clinics that are operational but empty. The West African nation is close to recovery, with 9 May earmarked as the day it will be declared Ebola-free as 42 days have past since the last known case was buried.
- **28 April 2015** – Protesters gathered in front of the US Embassy in Monrovia on Tuesday, asking the American government to put pressure on Liberian officials to bring back some sixty Liberian young women who were allegedly trafficked into Lebanon between 2011 and 2012. According to the protesters, the women, aged between 22 – 34, were reportedly lured to Lebanon in the belief that they were going to attain good-paying jobs, however they ended up being housemaids and “slaves” for Lebanese landlords. A statement released by the protesters further disclosed, “it is our hope that the government of the great United States of America will act on this petition and save our girls from the nightmare they are going through in Lebanon.” US Embassy Public Affairs director Sally Hodgson confirmed Tuesday that the embassy had received the petition, adding that officials were already engaged with Liberian authorities on the matter. The Liberian government has indicated that some of the girls have already been brought home.

Mali

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

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



Security Summary

Summary

MS Risk strongly advises against all travel to the northern parts of Mali and along the border with Mauritania. This is due to ongoing military operations in the region and the increasing threat of attacks and kidnappings targeting westerners. Despite ongoing military operations, Mali continues to face significant security challenges due to the presence of extremists and militant factions that continue to operation in the northern region of the country.

On 15 January 2015, the Malian Ministry for Health, in co-operation with the World Health Organization (WHO), declared Mali free from Ebola.

MS Risk advises against all travel to Bamako. We also advise against all travel to the rest of Mali, especially to the northern regions of the country. Although Bamako is generally calm, the situation throughout the rest of the country is still volatile.

If you are in Bamako, MS Risk advises you to maintain a high level of vigilance, to keep a low profile and to stay alert to the local political developments. We also advise that you avoid sensitive areas, including military installations and large gatherings of people. Night time checkpoints continue to operate in Bamako, largely controlling access



to military and government facilities. Checkpoints are in place from approximately 9PM until dawn.

During the rainy season, which runs from May until October, torrential rains can cause floods and landslides, and may result in houses collapsing. In late August, there were reports of flash flooding that occurred in Bamako. The neighborhoods of Bankoni, Taliko, Lafiabougou, Djicoroni Woyowayanko, Lafiabougou Bougouba and Bougoudani were all hit by floods during the rains storms which lasted most of the day. MS Risk advises anyone in the capital city to monitor the local weather reports and to expect difficulties when travelling to affected areas during this season.

Terrorism

There still remains a high threat from terrorism in Mali. No curfew is currently in place however MS Risk advises those in the country to monitor the local media for reports of any new measures.

Attacks could be indiscriminate, including in places that are frequented by expatriates and foreign travellers. There is also a high threat of kidnapping in Mali by al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and by the splinter group, the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJWA). Although AQIM uses the northern region of Mali as an operating base, it has proven its capability of travelling long distances in order to carry out attacks, some of which have occurred in neighboring countries. As such the kidnap threat cannot be isolated within the northern regional stronghold. In turn, criminal gangs have previously been engaged to carry out kidnappings for terrorist groups in return for financial rewards. Subsequently attacks can take place throughout Mali.

There have been incidents of armed banditry, car-jacking, and kidnap in the northern regions of Mali. Bandits and smugglers are particularly active across the Mali-Algeria, Mali-Burkina Faso, Mali-Mauritania and Mali-Niger borders and pose a threat to travellers, especially after dark. Authorities in Mali have provided the following numbers in case of emergencies:

- 80 00 11 14
- 80 00 11 15
- 20 22 13 35
- 20 23 95 15
- 20 23 95 11

Kidnapping

In the past, a number of Westerners have been kidnapped by terrorists in Mali and in the Sahel region. Since 2008, over 25 Westerners have been kidnapped in the Sahel. Victims have included tourists, NGO workers and diplomats of a variety of nationalities, primarily European. These attacks have on occasion resulted in the murder of the hostages. The recent kidnapping of a French citizen in the western region of the country has come as a shock as the area where he was taken has been perceived as being stable and under governmental control. In the past, kidnap threats have typically emanated from the Azawad region in the north and east part of the county, as such this incident in the west has caused great concern. MS Risk forecasts that there will be an increased and sustained kidnap threat across Mali and in certain border-regions for some time to come. Incidents of kidnap are likely to occur for three primary reasons:

- For Ransom - insurgents will raise finances for future operations. With the impending ECOWAS operation, this is accelerating as a concern.

- Human Shields - Insurgents will kidnap persons in order to deter/reduce the risk of direct action by governmental forces against them.
- Ideological - Kidnappings will occur for political purposes.

Since the coup in March 2012, and due to the ongoing political unrest, MS RISK judges that there is a continued heightened threat of kidnap for ransom in Mali and as such further attacks and kidnappings are highly likely to occur. Furthermore, although it is difficult to forecast how severe this threat will emerge, all affected organizations are recommended to review their current operations and contingencies which is in line with the previous advice which has been given. MS RISK currently advises against all travel to Mali.

Local Travel

Although the military intervention has regained control of the major northern cities in Mali, the situation remains tense in the region and there continues to be a high risk of retaliatory action by terrorist groups. MS Risk advises against all travel to the northern region of Mali, especially to the cities/towns of Gao, In Khalil, Kidal, and Timbuktu as well as the surrounding areas. Landmines have been used by groups operating in the north and northeast of Mali.

Night-time checkpoints continue to operate in Bamako. These checkpoints largely control access to military and Government facilities. Checkpoints are in place from approximately 9PM until dawn. MS Risk advises to keep vehicle and personal identification documents with you at all times while travelling by road. Furthermore, approach security checkpoints slowly and comply with instructions that are given.

MS RISK Guidance to Organizations in Mali:

With western diplomatic missions all warning against unnecessary travel to Mali, those companies with fixed interests in the country need to take measured precautions if they have not done so already. This is especially an issue for organizations with any interest in the so-called Azawad region - that portion of the country, which is under insurgent control. Preparations should include the following:

- Thinning out non-essential staff and dependents
- Restricting expat and local national internal travel
- Seeking advice from the security forces
- Ensuring journey management systems are in place and work
- Reviewing crisis management contingencies and carrying out exercises of these plans
- Registration of expatriates with relevant diplomatic missions and seeking advice on what support will be forthcoming (if any) if conditions deteriorate
- Liaison with insurers to know any exclusions or limits to existing cover

On the Ground Reporting

- **5 May 2015** – According to military sources and a local official, soldiers exchanged fire with fighters from the main rebel alliance in Mali on Tuesday. A local councilor disclosed that the fighting broke out around 5:00 AM (0500 GMT) in the central market town of Tenenkou, identifying the insurgents as members of the Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA). A statement released by the CMA disclosed that the rebels had taken control of the town however this was denied by the councilor and the Malian army, with a military source stating, “the rebels have no control whatsoever over Tenenkou. Its just bluster. We took steps to strengthen our positions in the center,” adding “the Malian army should soon take control of the terrain. The fighting is ongoing.” A civilian member of the international mediation team involved in Mali’s peace process has called for an immediate end to the fighting. Since Monday last week, Tuareg rebel groups have clashed with Malian forces and pro-government militias in the northern region of the country. The latest clash comes after the UN Security Council demanded an immediate end to the recent upsurge in fighting in Mali and threatened to impose sanctions against those responsible for the violence. On Friday, the 15-member council further disclosed that last week’s renewed fighting threatened to undermine the peace process.
 - According to a source, secret footage shows a Rwandan policeman from the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali earlier this year carefully take aim at a civilian protesters, squeeze the trigger and shoot. The videotape, which was taken by a Chinese UN peacekeeper, who was also at the scene of the violent demonstration, is part of evidence that was presented at a UN inquiry into the 27 January demonstration in Gao, which resulted in the Rwandan contingent returning home. While the UN announced the inquiry’s overall conclusions into the incident last month, stating that they had found that members of a UN police unit “used unauthorized and excessive force” that killed three protesters, there was no mention of the video. The full report has not been made public.
- **4 May 2015** – Witnesses reported Monday that jihadists have destroyed a mausoleum in central Mali that had been submitted as a UN World Heritage site, adding that the rebels left behind a warning that they will come after all those who don’t follow their strict version of Islam. Officials confirmed that the site, located in the village of Hamdallahi, had been partially destroyed on Sunday night, adding that the jihadists left a note where “they also threatened France and the UN peacekeepers and all those who work with them.” The dynamite attack on the mausoleum of Cheick Amadou Barry mirrors similar attacks that were carried in northern Mali in 2012, when jihadists seized control of the major towns in the region. The destruction of the mausoleum also comes at a time of growing concern over the emergence of a new extremist group that is increasingly becoming active further south and closer to the capital city. The mausoleum was part of a historic village that is a national heritage site. In 2009, it was nominated to be recognized by UNESCO, the UN cultural agency.
- **2 May 2015** – Officials disclosed Friday that dozens of gunmen stormed a northern Malian town, killing one and taking six other people hostage in an attack that has been blamed on Tuareg rebels. According to Hama Aboubacrine, mayor of the town, which is located 90 kilometres west of Timbuktu, “more than 50 armed men from the Coordination for the Movements of Azawad (CMA) came Thursday to sow terror in Bintagoungou. They killed a man and took six hostages with them.” The gunmen also pillaged several shops and a pharmacy before making off with two vehicles. While CMA officials have not commented on the incident, a UN peacekeeping source in Mali confirmed the attack.
 - On Friday, a resident in the town of Dire reported an attack by Tuareg rebels. According to Souleymane Amadou, fighters from the Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA) surprised

residents and Malian soldiers in the town, which is located 135 kilometres (85 miles) west of Timbuktu, on Saturday. An official with the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali confirmed the attack. On Friday in the capital city Bamako, thousands of people marched calling for peace in the north.

- **30 April 2015** – At least three civilians were killed and twenty-eight wounded Thursday when their minibus set off a landmine in northern Mali. According to a source, the bus had been on its way to a weekly market, located 25 kilometres (16 miles) from Gao, when the landmine exploded. The Coordination of Azawad Movement (CMA) has indicated that one of its members staged the attack.
 - At least ten militants and nine soldiers have been killed after clashes erupted between the Malian army and a Tuareg rebel alliance on Thursday. Mali's defense ministry confirmed the incident, which came a day after fighters from the Tuareg-led CMA ambushed military positions in the central town of Lere. A statement released by the ministry disclosed "the provisional toll of the clashes is: armed forces – nine dead, six injured, six hostages, on damaged vehicle. Enemy side: 10 dead and 16 injured, two vehicles destroyed; one vehicles, arms and ammunition recovered." Defense Minister Tieman Hubert Coulibaly has confirmed that Lere was under control. A foreign security source also confirmed that fighting had ended, adding that the rebels controlled the south of the town while the army was in control of their positions elsewhere.
- **29 April 2015** – Security sources have reported that militants opened fire on troops at a national guard camp in northern Mali on Wednesday, killing two soldiers and a child. According to a Malian security source, the gunmen launched the attack at 5:00 AM and targeted the town of Goundam, which is located 80 kilometres (50 miles) from Timbuktu. No group has claimed responsibility. A source from MINUSMA, the UN mission in Mali, confirmed Wednesday's attack, stating that the militants appeared to have come from the east.
 - Armed insurgents exchanged fire with soldiers in Mali on Wednesday. According to a Malian army colonel, fighters from the Tuareg-led Coordination for the Movements of Azawad (CMA) ambushed military positions in the town of Lere, located near the Mauritanian border. The attack occurred around 4:00 PM, with troops fighting back and defending their positions. A statement released by the CMA warned that after it came under attack from a pro-government militia on Tuesday, it had "no other choice than to use its right to exercise legitimate self-defense to protect civilians, its people and its positions." An army source has disclosed that the militants arrived in several vehicles from the west of the town. This week's violence comes amidst assurances by the CMA that it is committed to a peace agreement that would bring stability to Mali.
- **28 April 2015** – Officials from the UN mission in Mali disclosed Tuesday that Tuareg rebels shot at peacekeepers outside the city of Timbuktu. In a statement, Mongi Hamdi, UN special envoy in Mali, disclosed, "early this morning near Timbuktu, MINUSMA vehicles were targeted by the CMA (Coordination of Azawad Movements). There are no victims. The CMA says it was a mistake and is calling for the departure of the army." According to a local resident, Malian government forces also came under gunfire outside Timbuktu. These two events are becoming worrying for officials as they may endanger the peace process. France's foreign ministry has urged all parties to respect the ceasefire agreement.
- **27 April 2015** – Late on Sunday, rebels from northern Mali told mediators that next month, they will initial a long-delayed UN brokered peace agreement on the future of the country's north. According to the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) spokesman Moussa Ag Acharatoumane, "we have finally given our agreement to initial the document following efforts employed by international institutions and powers." He however noted that a final deal would only be possible if immediate negotiations resume on

the rebel coalition's additional demands that were listed during a meeting that was held last month in the stronghold of Kidal. A meeting is due to take place in Algiers on 15 May.

- On Monday, a pro-government militia seized key positions in northern Mali from separatists, effectively breaking a fragile regional ceasefire and increasing fears that major fighting may break out. According to an official with the UN mission in Mali, the Imghad and Allies Tuareg Self-Defense Group (GATIA) took over parts of the desert town of Menaka from fleeing rebel fighters. The source disclosed, "there wasn't any fighting... Currently UN peacekeepers still occupy their camp in Menaka and the Malian army is stationed in its barracks, but GATIA has taken all the positions of the fleeing" fighters. The incident comes shortly after the main Tuareg rebel alliance, known as the Coordination for the Movements of Azawad (CMA) announced that it was committed to signing a peace agreement aimed at bringing stability to the region. It currently remains unclear if GATIA's action in Menaka will jeopardise progress in the peace process.

Mauritania

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

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



Security Summary

Summary

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

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



Terrorism

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

Kidnapping

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

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

Niger

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

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



Security Summary

On 6 February 2015, Nigerien and Chadian military forces were attacked by Boko Haram militants in the towns of Bosso and Diffa, which are located along the border with Nigeria. On 8 February 2015, there was an explosion in the town of Diffa, which resulted in several deaths and injuries. The Nigerien government has declared a 15-day state of emergency in the region of Diffa, beginning at midnight on Tuesday 10 February. On 26 February, the government extended the state of emergency however officials have not stated how long the measure will be in place. The curfew will force residents to stay indoors between 20:00 and 06:00 local time (19:00 and 05:00 GMT). Officials have banned the use of motorcycles, which is a common mode of transport, in order to prevent infiltration by Boko Haram militants.

Violent protests have erupted in the capital city Niamey and in Zinder, Niger's second largest city. The protests, over the depiction of the Prophet Muhammad in the French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo, have resulted in the deaths of at least four civilians. Further protests are likely to occur in the coming days. MS Risk advises all travellers to remain vigilant and to avoid large demonstrations.



MS Risk advises against all travel to the following parts of Niger: all areas of the country north of the city of Abalak, including the Air Massif region; the province of Agadez (including the road linking Assamakato Agadez and the city of Agadez); areas of Tahoua province north of the city of Tahoua, including the city itself; the area of Tillabéri province north of Niamey, including the road from Niamey to Gao and the road from Niamey to Menaka; areas within 40 km of the border with Nigeria in Diffa, Zinder and Maradi provinces.

On the Ground Reporting

- **4 May 2015** – A meningitis outbreak in Niger has claimed 252 lives since January, with the country's health officials warning that Niger is short of vaccines to fight the outbreak. On Monday, Niger's epidemics surveillance and response director Goumbi Kadade reported that "as of May 3, 252 people died out of a total of 3,304 cases," adding "the number of cases has risen in the past three weeks. This worries us, because they aren't enough vaccines. Our orders are arriving in dribs and drabs." Less than two weeks ago, the government had reported that the death toll stood at 129 out of 1,150 cases. The meningitis outbreak has been declared in eight districts of Niger, while three others are in a state of alert. Currently, the whole of Niger is under quarantine in an effort to contain the highly contagious disease. Some 300,000 vaccine doses have arrived in Niger and are currently being distributed however this is less than half the amount the authorities ordered and according to Kadade, it is far below the 1.8 million doses that are actually needed in order to stop the epidemic.
- **1 May 2015** – Nigerien authorities have urged those living on islands in Lake Chad to leave in order to avoid new attacks by Boko Haram. The warning from authorities comes after the militants launched an attack last weekend that left at least 74 dead. A statement release Thursday disclosed that "the governor of Diffa invites people living on the islands in Lake Chad to rejoin the mainland," adding "measures will be taken to ensure their safety and resettlement." Niger has several islands in Lake Chad, which is a vast body of water between Cameroon, Chad and Nigeria. Last weekend, the West African nation suffered its heaviest loss since joining a regional offense against Boko Haram. Niger lost at least 46 soldiers and 28 civilians when Boko Haram attacked the island of Karamga on Saturday. On Wednesday, Interior Minister Hassoumi Massaoudou disclosed that "156 terrorists" were also killed in the assault on an army base on the island and that 32 troops were missing. He further indicated that Niger had since retaken control of Karamga.
- **27 April 2015** – Witnesses reported Monday that Boko Haram gunmen massacred residents who tried to jump into Lake Chad in a bid to seek safety and burnt others alive after overpowering soldiers in a weekend attack. On Sunday, the military and a local official in Niger confirmed the 25 April raid on Lake Chad's Karamga Island. While an official in the town of Diffa disclosed that the Nigerien army had suffered "very heavy" casualties, precise figures have not been release. After launching the attack shortly before sunrise, the militants remained on a rampage until roughly midday, only withdrawing when a military jet began bombing the area. **Update (28 April)** – On Tuesday, the Nigerien government disclosed that around 230 people were killed, including at least 74 from Niger, at the weekend in what is the country's heaviest loss since it joined the regional offensive against Boko Haram. According to Interior Minister Hassoumi Massaoudou, "on the side of our forces: 46 dead, 9 injured, 32 missing. On the enemy's side, 156 terrorists were killed. In addition, 28 residents of the island were assassinated by the terrorist." Nigerien authorities have declared three days of national mourning, which is due to begin Wednesday.

Nigeria

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

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



Security Summary

Summary

MS Risk advises against all travel to Adamawa State, Borno State, Yobe State, Gombe State and Bauchi State. This is due to the frequent violent attacks, which have been occurring over the past months. We advise against all but essential travel to Kano state, Kaduna State, Jigwa State, Katsina State, Sokoto State, Zamfara State, Kebbi State, Jos City, Riyom and Barkin Ladi Local Government Areas in Plateau State; Okene Region of Kogi State. These areas have witnessed an increase in

violent attacks. We also advise against all but essential travel to Mubi Town in Adamawa State and the area north of Mubi Town that borders Borno State where there has also been a rise in violent attacks. We also advise against all but essential travel to the non-riverine areas of Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers and Akwa Ibom States, Abia State, Kaduna City, Zaria City.

There is currently a high threat from terrorism. Over the past few weeks there have been a number of explosive attacks in Damaturu, Kano, Jos, Kaduna, Abuja and Lagos. Further such attacks are highly likely to occur. MS Risk currently advises all travellers in Nigeria to avoid public places, especially where crowds gather.



Northern Nigeria

Travelling anywhere in the northern region of Nigeria is extremely dangerous as there is a high risk of travellers being kidnapped or caught up in a terrorist or other violent incident. While taking the right precautions will aid in reducing the risks, this will not eliminate them all together. MS Risk advises all travellers to the northern region of the country to not maintain regular patterns of travel or movement.

If you live in northern Nigeria, you are advised to review your security regularly and to strengthen it accordingly. Due to the risks, particularly of terrorism, having increased in the past few years, good security two years ago is unlikely to be adequate now.

Companies with workers in northern Nigeria, even in areas which are not subject to specific advice against travel, will require a high level of security. In light of the recent kidnappings of Westerners, employers are advised to review their security arrangements and to ensure that compounds are protected.

Kidnapping

Although recent incidents of kidnapping have mostly occurred in northern Nigeria, MS Risk advises that such kidnappings can take place anywhere in the country

Threats and Terrorism

Attacks by Islamist groups in northern Nigeria have become the biggest threat to stability in Africa's top oil producing country. This has been exacerbated by the fact that Western governments are currently concerned that militants may link up with groups elsewhere in the region, including al-Qaeda's North African wing, AQIM. These concerns have been further intensified by the conflict and military intervention in nearby Mali.

On the Ground Reporting

- **8 May 2015** – On Friday, a gunman opened fire outside a school in the northeastern Nigerian city of Potiskum, seriously wounding twelve students in an area that has repeatedly been targeted by Boko Haram militants. According to a number of students at the College of Administrative and Business Studies (CABS) in Potiskum, Yobe state, the attacks had explosives that were strapped to his body. He blew himself up when he ran out of ammunition. Following a series of attacks in the city, which involved militants targeting schools and colleges, students at CABS must pass through security screening before entering the campus. According to witnesses, the gunman fired on a crowd that was waiting at the gate to be screened shortly past 8:00 AM (0700 GMT). While there was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack, the city has frequently been targeted by Boko Haram. Last movement, at least 58 people were killed and another 17 injured when a suicide bomber attacked a student assembly ground inside the Government Comprehensive Secondary School, which is located next to CABS. That attack was blamed on Boko Haram.
- **6 May 2015** – Nigerian troops have rescued 25 more women and children from Boko Haram's northeastern stronghold in the Sambisa Forest with military officials disclosing Wednesday that troops also killed a number of insurgents and destroyed Islamist camps. A statement released by the defense headquarters disclosed, "seven additional terrorists camps were yesterday destroyed as more terrorists also died in the ongoing onslaught to flush them out of Sambisa forest," adding "an additional 25 women and children were rescued in the process." In the latest operation, military officials disclosed that soldiers had to evade landmines laid by the rebels before storming the camps, with officials indicating, "various weapons including Rocket Propelled Grenades, anti-aircraft guns and a number of vehicles were either captured or destroyed

during the operation. Four soldiers were wounded and have been evacuated for treatment,” adding that troops will continue “to search the forests for terrorists, arms and hostages.” According to the military, more than 700 women and children have been saved from captivity during a weeks long assault on the notorious forest, which is located in Borno state. At least 275 have been taken for rehabilitation to hospitals and camp in Yola, which is the capital of neighboring Adamawa state.

- **3 May 2015** – On Sunday, a military spokesman reported that Nigerian troops have raided communities suspected of harboring militiamen in central Plateau state, killing several people. Captain Ikedichi Iweha of the special task force disclosed that “following frequent attacks on communities around the Plateau-Taraba border by some militiamen, we carried out an operation to flush out members of these murderous gangs.” He further indicated that the soldiers engaged the gunmen in a fierce battle, which left several people dead. Iweha however denied that civilians were killed after local media reported that at least thirty people died when soldiers stormed into Kadarko, Kurmi and Wadata areas on Friday and Saturday in 40 trucks, burning houses and shooting indiscriminately. At the time, media reports disclosed that soldiers had stormed the communities in order to avenge the death of four soldiers by some militiamen near the border with neighbouring Taraba state.
- **1 May 2015** – The military reported Friday that Nigerian troops have freed another 234 women and children from Boko Haram’s stronghold in the Sambisa forest. In a statement, the defense headquarters disclosed that the hostages were rescued on Thursday through the Kawuri and Konduga end of Sambisa forest. The statement further disclosed that the hostages have “...been evacuated to join others at the place of ongoing screening,” and that the “assault on the forest is continuing from various fronts and efforts are concentrated on rescuing hostages of civilians and destroying all terrorists camps and facilities in the forest.” In the wake of hundreds of hostages being rescued earlier this week, the military has pledged to continue to free any remaining hostages. Over the past week, Nigerian troops have freed some 700 women and children from Boko Haram’s stronghold in the Sambisa forest however uncertainty remains over the fate of the 219 girls seized from their school in Chibok last year.
- **29 April 2015** – Relief workers in northeastern Nigeria reported Thursday that deteriorating sanitary conditions have resulted in an increasing risk of disease in camps for people displaced by Boko Haram violence. According to Abba Yerima, who runs a camp in Borno’s state capital Maiduguri, more than 6,500 people are currently living at the facility, which is meant to house only 2,000.” Speaking at a meeting with the national emergency agency, which called for urgent action to prevent a potentially deadly disease outbreak, Yerima stated that officials are appealing the government for an increase in supplies. Boko Haram’s conflict has forced 1.5 million people from their homes, with hundreds of thousands forced to seek refuge in several camps that have been set up in the northeastern region of the country. While the military has liberated scores of towns and has called on people to begin returning home, local leaders maintain that the security situation across the region remains fragile, and have cautioned people to wait before trying to resettle. As a result, overpopulation in some camps in the region is likely to continue for the next several months.
 - Nigeria’s army has vowed to free more hostages held captive by Boko Haram after nearly 500 were released this week after being held in atrocious conditions in the group’s Sambisa Forest stronghold. Speaking to reporters in Abuja Thursday, defense spokesman Chris Olukolade stated that the army would “comprehensively” clean out the forest, adding, “there is great hope for recovery of more hostages of the terrorists.” On Thursday, the army disclosed that about 160 hostages were rescued from the forest just days after 200 girls and 93 women were freed. Former female hostages have described being subjected to forced labour, sexual and psychological abuse as well as being forced to

fight on the frontline alongside the militants. The rescues this week had raised hope that some of the 219 girls who were kidnapped from a school in Chibok last year would be amongst those freed, however ambry spokesman Sani Usman has indicated that those girls were not part of the group.

- **28 April 2015** - Hundreds of people, believed to be victims of Boko Haram's insurgency, have been found dead in the northeastern Nigerian town of Damasak. According to local government spokesman Babagana Mustapha, a committee sent to Damasak at the weekend found the town littered with bodies of women, children and some adult men, adding that the men appear to be Boko Haram fighters who were killed when troops from neighboring Chad and Niger reclaimed the town in March. Speaking to reporters on Monday, Mustapha stated that Chadian forces had told him that hundreds more bodies of insurgents remain in surrounding bush.
 - According to the military, Nigerian troops have rescued nearly 300 women and girls during an offensive carried out Tuesday against Boko Haram militants in the northeastern Sambisa Forest, however officials have warned that those rescued likely do not include any of the schoolgirls kidnapped from Chibok a year ago. The army made the announcement on Twitter and stated that officials were screening and interviewing the abducted girls and women. Army spokesman Col. Sani Usman confirmed that Nigerian troops destroyed and cleared four militant camps and rescued 200 abducted girls and 93 women "but they are not the Chibok girls." In April 2014, Boko Haram militants kidnapped nearly 300 schoolgirls from the northeastern town of Chibok. Officials have indicated that the militants took the schoolgirls in trucks into the Sambisa Forest. While dozens managed to escape, 219 are still missing. Since last year's mass kidnapping, Boko Haram militants have continued to kidnap girls, women and young men, in a bid to use them as fighters. In the wake of a multinational offensive launched in January, Boko Haram has increasingly been using these hostages as human shields, effectively using them as their first line of defense. Boko Haram has also used women and girls as suicide bombers, sending them into crowded market places and bus stations. Amnesty International has reported that some 2,000 women and girls have been kidnapped by Boko Haram militants since the start of last year.
- **27 April 2015** – A local health commissioner disclosed Monday that a total of 23 people have now died from ethanol poisoning that has been blamed on locally brewed gin in southwestern Nigeria. Ondo state health commissioner Dayo Adeyanju confirmed, "the total number of deaths is 23," up from eighteen that were reported last Monday. According to Adeyanju, the five additional deaths were those taken to hospital when all the victims fell ill in the town of Ode-Irele earlier this month, adding that there are no new cases. The state government is currently investigating the source of the batch of gin as well as trying to improve the production of locally made alcohol in a bid to improve the safety of consumers.

Domestic News

- **6 May 2015** - Officials disclosed Wednesday that a cash shortage caused by low oil prices has forced the country to borrow heavily through the early part of 2015, with the government struggling to pay public workers. According to Finance Minister Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, "we have serious challenges. Things have been tough since the beginning of the year and they are likely to remain so till the end of the year," adding that more than half of this year's borrowing allowance had already been exhausted. Nigeria, which is Africa's largest oil producer and top economy, has been affected by the 50 percent decline in oil prices as crude sales account for more than 70 percent of the government's revenue. According to Imo state Governor Rochas Okorocha, "as it stands today, most states of the federation have not been able to pay

salaries and even the federal government has not paid (April) salary and that is very worrisome. The governor further disclosed that while the federal government had projected a borrowing allowance for 2015 of 882 billion naira (US \$4.4 billion), 473 billion naira had already been used up to meet recurrent expenditures, including the salaries of public employees. According to the Central Bank (CBN), Nigeria currently has US \$29.6 billion in foreign reserves, however analysts have warned that depleting those funds in a bid to offset revenue shortfalls could further undermine global confidence in the country's economy.

- **28 April 2015** – An audit has found that Nigeria's state oil company overpaid the government US \$750m (£490) however it noted that it had not properly accounted for US \$1.4bn. The financial report follows allegations in 2013 made by then-central bank chief Lamido Sanusi who at the time stated that the firm had failed to account for about US \$20bn. The accusations led to President Goodluck Jonathan ordering an independent audit. The audit into the accounts of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) was carried out by PwC, which stated, "it could not vouch for the integrity of the information it was given when it conducted the audit." PwC further indicated that the oil company should be overhauled and pay the government about US \$1.5bn arising from duplicate claims and accounting errors. While sources have indicated that the findings suggest that Mr Sanusi's claims were exaggerated, many Nigerians believe that corruption in the oil sector industry runs deep. President Goodluck Jonathan's office has released the findings as he prepares to step down at the end of next month.
- **27 April 2015** – While Aisha Jummai Alhassan lost her bid to become the first woman to be elected governor in a Nigerian state, her party indicated Monday that it will challenge the results of the election in court. Election officials in the eastern state of Taraba declared Darius Dickson Ishaku of the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) the winner, with 369,318 votes. The first election on 11 April was cancelled because of widespread irregularities and in Saturday's re-run vote, Ms Lahassan, the candidate for the party of Nigeria's incoming president Muhammadu Buhari, won 275,984 votes. On Monday, Abubakar Gambo Umar, the returning officer in Taraba for Buhari's All Progressives Congress (APC) party stated "we don't accept the results declared by INEC (Independent National Electoral Commission) which is why I refused to sign the results sheet," adding "there were numerous cases of fraud and irregularities in many polling centers when the re-run election was conducted... We recorded many incidents of violence and intimidation." The APC has won several historic victories in the 2015 elections, including Buhari's win over President Goodluck Jonathan last month. The APC has also claimed a majority of governorship seats in the country's 36 states, and the party had hoped that Ms Alhassan's win could have broken a gender barrier. While a number of women currently hold powerful posts within government, including the positions of ministers of finance and oil, there is an absence of female leaders at the executive level.
 - On Monday, Nigeria's foreign minister attempted to calm South African anger pertaining to the recall for consultations of its top two diplomats over the recent wave of anti-immigrant attacks, stating that the decision is nothing out of the ordinary. On Sunday, just one day after Abuja announced that it had summoned its acting high commissioner to Pretoria and consul-general in Johannesburg for talks on the issue, South Africa issued an angry statement. However on Monday, Foreign Minister Aminu Wali said in a statement, "this is a usual practice in the conduct of diplomacy." He further disclosed "for the avoidance of doubt, we wish to reiterate that the two senior diplomats have been invited to come for consultation after which they would return to their duty posts," adding "they have, therefore, not been recalled, as erroneously portrayed in the media." Over the past several weeks, at least seven people have been killed in violence targeting immigrants in South Africa. The violence has forced many to flee their homes and has resulted in the South African government to deploy its army in a bid to calm the situation. While Nigerian officials have indicated that they are "deploy concerned" about the

situation, they noted that there were “satisfactory indications that the South African authorities have taken firm measures to stem the tide of attacks.”

Senegal

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



Security Summary

On 17 October 2014, the World Health Organization declared Senegal Ebola-free. An Ebola outbreak has been confirmed in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia. While Senegal has been declared Ebola-free, due to the intensity of the ongoing outbreak, a second outbreak of Ebola in Senegal cannot be ruled out. MS Risk advises all travellers to the region to remain cautious.

MS Risk advises all travellers to avoid all outdoor rallies and demonstrations as they may turn violent. Although there are currently no travel restrictions for Senegal, MS Risk advises avoiding road travel in the Casamance region, to the west of Kolda. The Casamance region of south-western Senegal (between the southern border of Gambia and the northern border of Guinea-Bissau) remains affected by incidents involving armed separatist groups and banditry, particularly in the regions of Bignona and Sindian. There has been an increase in clashes between the Senegalese army and suspected elements of the armed separatist group Movement of the Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC). MS Risk advises against all road travel in the Casamance region to the west of Kolda, other than on the main road from Ziguinchor to Cap Skiring (which is often used by groups of tourists during daylight hours) and on the road north of the Guinea-Bissau/Senegal border, from Sao Domingos to Ziguinchor (N4 bis). If you travel on either of these roads, you should do so only during daylight hours and monitor the local security situation before travelling. Severe water shortages in Dakar have led to a number of demonstrations in the suburbs. Youths have blocked some roads with burning tyres and have clashed with police. MS Risk advises travellers to avoid all demonstrations and to leave any affected areas at the first sign that unrest may develop. There have been a number of deaths and injuries. There is currently an underlying threat from terrorism. Attacks could be indiscriminate, including in places frequented by expatriates and foreign travellers. With the ongoing French military intervention in Mali, authorities in Senegal have increased security in the capital city as well as along the border with Mali. MS Risk advises that al-Qaeda militants may cross the border into Senegal and they may target Western interests as well as foreigners.

On the Ground Reporting

- **4 May 2015** – On Monday, Senegalese officials announced that at the request of Saudi King Salman, Senegal will deploy 2,100 soldiers to Saudi Arabia to join Riyadh's military coalition battling rebels in Yemen. Sources have disclosed that Senegalese Foreign Minister Mankeur Ndiaye made the announcement in a speech to the National Assembly. While he did not specify when the troops would be deployed, and officials have not provided any further details, he did indicate that Riyadh had originally asked Dakar to contribute to the Saudi-led coalition at the beginning of April. The Saudi-led coalition launched air strikes against the Huthi rebels and their allies on 26 March after they seized control of large

parts of the country and advanced on the main southern city of Aden, where President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi had taken refuge. While he later fled to Saudi Arabia, the Huthis have refused to concede territory or down arms despite growing international pressure.

- **28 April 2015** – As pressure is mounting on European nations to take action over the recent sinking's in the Mediterranean that have resulted in the deaths of hundreds of migrants, on Tuesday officials from the Senegalese and Malian governments disclosed that more than 300 of their nationals have died in the sinking's. In a statement released by the Malian ministry for overseas nationals, 156 Malians have perished in recent Mediterranean accidents, noting that most were from the western region of Kayes, which is located near the border with Senegal. Senegalese officials have disclosed that they are setting up a crisis center and a hotline to enable families to get in touch with the authorities who are "working hard to give people reliable and credible information." This year, some 1,750 migrants have died while attempting to cross the Mediterranean to reach Europe. This figure is thirty times more than during the same period last year. On 19 April, at least 700 migrants died after their trawler sank between Libya and southern Italy however the number of migrants continuing to cross from Africa to southern Europe has shown little sign of easing since the disaster.

Sierra Leone

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



Security Summary

MS Risk advises against all but essential travel to Sierra Leone. This is due to the current Ebola outbreak in the country. Violent incidents have taken place under cover of crowds in the streets of Freetown. Over the weekend of 25 – 27 July, there were reports of demonstrations and local disturbances occurring in Kenema and Freetown. These events were related to the Ebola outbreak. Further such demonstrations and disturbances cannot be ruled out. MS Risk advises all travellers to Sierra

Leone to follow local news reports, be alert to any developments and void all large crowds and demonstrations as they may turn violent. There are also occasional small riots between rival groups of youths in the central and eastern areas of Freetown. If you encounter such an incident, you should leave the area immediately. There is a low threat from terrorism. There is a possibility that retaliatory attacks may be carried out in Sierra Leone. This is due to the country's participation in the intervention in Mali. During the rainy season, May to October, roads can become extremely difficult, even for off-road vehicles. MS Risk therefore advises all travellers in the country to exercise due caution when travelling by road throughout the season.



On the Ground Reporting

- **27 April 2015** – On Monday, Sierra Leone marked its 54th anniversary of independence by setting out a four point “post-Ebola plan” that aims to put the country on the road to recovery in the wake of the deadly epidemic. In a nationwide televised address to mark the

anniversary, President Ernest Bai Koroma stated that the government's strategy will focus on "health, education, social protection and economic recovery through private sector development" to drive the country's rehabilitation. He added that the government would also set aside a national day of "thanksgiving" to honor the victims of the epidemic. While almost 4,000 deaths have been registered in Sierra Leone since the epidemic spread from Guinea a year ago, health authorities have admitted that the real toll is likely significantly higher.

Togo

No Travel Restrictions



Security Summary

There is currently no travel advisory for Togo. Crime is on the rise in the capital city Lomé. Local authorities warn of a rise in violent robberies and car-jacking incidents that target both foreigners and Togolese alike. Togolese authorities have also warned motorists to only stop for individuals in uniform, particularly after dark. You should avoid travelling alone where possible even within Lomé city limits, especially after dark.

Domestic News

- **3 May 2015** – Togo’s constitutional court on Sunday confirmed the victory of incumbent President Faure Gnassingbe in last week’s elections, officially declaring that he won with just over 58 percent of the vote. In a statement broadcast live from the court in Lomé on national television, the president of the court Aboudou Assouma confirmed that the president won 58.77 percent of the vote, with his rival, Jean-Pierre Fabre, winning 35.19 percent. Gnassingbe will be sworn in as president for a third five-year term on Monday.
- **1 May 2015** – On Friday, Togo’s opposition announced that it will not go to court to challenge incumbent Faure Gnassingbe’s victory in the weekend presidential vote, which it claimed was rigged. Opposition leader Jean-Pierre Fabre’s spokesman, Eric Dupuy, confirmed, “we have not taken legal action, as we believe the Constitutional Court serves” the Togolese government, adding, “if the Constitutional Court did its work, it would have automatically taken action.” The opposition had until Thursday at midnight to contest the result before the court.
- **29 April 2015** – On Wednesday, despite the electoral commission pronouncing victory for incumbent Faure Gnassingbe, Togo’s opposition leader Jean-Pierre Fabre claimed victory in the weekend presidential elections. Fabre has denounced the results, stating that they are “fraudulent,” and a “crime against national sovereignty.” His party, the Combat for Political Change (CAP 2015), has stated that it “categorically” rejects the results, adding that they bore “no resemblance to those compiled from reports collected in polling stations by its representatives.” While the election results, which were announced on Tuesday, are provisional and still subject to confirmation by the Constitutional court, the CAP 2015’s campaign director Patrick Lawson-Banku has called for protests, asking people to turn out in force “using all legal means to ensure that this latest takeover fails.”
- **27 April 2015** – According to election commission figures released Monday, incumbent President Faure Gnassingbe appeared set to win a third term in office, as partial results from weekend elections gave him a strong lead. The Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) indicated that Gnassingbe had won

62 percent of the vote, far ahead of his nearest rival Jean-Pierre Fabre, who gained 32 percent however more votes need to be counted. If Gnassingbe win's Saturday's election, this will extend his family's almost 50-year rule over the West African Nation. The head of the ECOWAS election observation mission, which deployed 100 observers to monitor the polls nationwide, indicated that there had been no major incident "likely to affect the integrity of the voting process." Speaking to reporters, the West Africa bloc's Amos Sawyer disclosed, "overall, the election of 25 April 2015 was free, transparent and organized in an acceptable manner." In a statement, the spokesman for United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon stated that the Secretary welcomed the smooth vote and urged "all political leaders and segments of society to continue to maintain the peaceful atmosphere that has prevailed throughout the electoral process." Currently there are not limits to the number of times a president can stand for re-election in Togo. **Update (29 April)** – The electoral commission announced late Tuesday that President Faure Gnassingbe has won a third term with 58.75 percent of the vote in Saturday's election, with his main rival Jean-Pierre Fabre taking 34.95 percent. According to the commission's head Taïfa Tabiou, "the national electoral commission states that Faure Essozimna Gnassingbe has been elected based on provisional results, which are subject to confirmation by the Constitutional Court."

- Togo's main opposition candidate has complained of widespread irregularities in Saturday's presidential election and has called for the announcement of the results to be halted. Results that were issued earlier on Monday from six of the 42 voting districts showed that President Faure Gnassingbe was ahead with 64 percent of the vote and that Jean-Pierre Fabre, his nearest rival, had 33 percent. The remaining votes were shared between the other three candidates. While officials have not released the finalized results, Jean-Pierre Fabre's Combat for Political Change (CAP 2015) coalition sent a letter to the head of the election commission, Issoufou Taïfa Tabiou, highlighting a series of complaints pertaining to the electoral process. According to the letter, the initial figures produced by the election commission did not match the results CAP 2015 members had recorded at polling stations. According to Fabre's party, the number of votes cast exceeded the number of registered votes in at least nine constituencies – Binah, Tone, Cinkasse, Kozah, Bassar, Tchamba, Blitta, Sotouboua and Plaine de Moin – in the northern region of the country, which is a stronghold for the president. The letter also indicated that voters were being intimidated and that many people were voting without election cards. Fabre stated, "all these irregularities are serious enough to undermine the credibility of the results in the (districts) mentioned above. As a result, I call on the election commission to cancel the results in the districts where fraud is proven," adding that any further publication of results would be a provocation.



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