



ML Strategies Update

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Africa Update

Leading the News

Burundi

On May 14th, United Nations (U.N.) Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called for calm and restraint in Burundi and condemned all attempts to oust elected governments by military force. Following reports of an attempted coup in Burundi, Secretary-General Ban also urged political and security leaders to reject the use of violence, refrain from acts of revenge, and reign in their militants. Secretary-General Ban's reaction to the situation in Burundi was noted [here](#).

On May 14th, the U.S. Department of State issued a travel warning for Burundi, advising all U.S. citizens against travel to the country and recommending that U.S. citizens currently in Burundi depart as soon as it is feasible to do so. In addition, in light of the deteriorating security situation, the State Department also ordered the departure of dependents of U.S. Government personnel and non-emergency personnel from Burundi and noted the U.S. Embassy in Bujumbura will only offer limited emergency services to U.S. citizens in Burundi. The travel warning was published [here](#).

On May 15th, President Pierre Nkurunziza returned to Burundi following a reported coup attempt led by General Godefroid Niyombare, the country's former intelligence chief. His return came as a number of alleged plotters of the coup were arrested, with General Niyombare still at large. A spokesperson for President Nkurunziza said the arrests represented the end of the failed coup and it was clear that General Niyombare only had the support of a small part of the military. He also indicated those arrested would face a military trial. The full story is available [here](#).

On May 15th, U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein voiced concern over developments in Burundi following the failed coup attempt and urged all armed forces and non-state actors to refrain from actions that may endanger civilians. High Commissioner Zeid's comments followed U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's call with Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta regarding the situation in Burundi. They agreed African leaders must join efforts to help resolve the crisis in Burundi. The U.N. response to the situation in Burundi was detailed [here](#).

On May 15th, the U.S. Department of State expressed alarm for reports of retaliatory attacks in Burundi following the attempted unlawful seizure of power on May 13th and the growing risk of greater violence

and atrocities. The U.S. called on President Pierre Nkurunziza to condemn and stop the use of violence by the police and the ruling party's Imbonerakure youth militias against those who participate in protests against a third term, which the U.S. views as disregard for the Arusha Agreement. The State Department also noted the U.S. had begun taking steps to impose visa ineligibilities on those responsible for violence and called on others to do the same. Finally, the State Department welcomed the U.N. decision to delay the next deployment of Burundian troops to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and expressed support for mediation efforts led by the U.N., the East African Community (EAC), the African Union (AU), and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR). Feedback from the State Department was posted [here](#).

On May 16th, 17 alleged coup leaders appeared before a prosecutor in Burundi. The group included General Cyrille Ndayirukiye and top police commissioners Zenon Ndabaneze and Hermenegilde Nimenya, who faced charges of attempting to overthrow the government. The leader of the coup, General Godefroid Niyombare, was still at large. According to a lawyer for the defendants, they were beaten after their arrest on Friday. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On May 17th, appearing on state television, Bujumbura Mayor Juma Saidi warned that demonstrators in Burundi will be considered part of the recent coup attempt and noted security forces have been ordered to treat them as such. In response, opposition leader Frederic Banvugiyuvira said the protestors had nothing to do with the plotted coup and those responsible are detained in prison. He also noted the protests began before the coup attempt and reiterated the demonstrations will not stop until President Pierre Nkurunziza renounces his decision to run for a third term. For details, click [here](#).

On May 17th, Burundian President Pierre Nkurunziza used his first public appearance since last week's coup attempt to warn of the threat posed by Al Shabaab to the country. Speaking at a news conference, President Nkurunziza noted that he was in talks with his counterparts in Uganda and Kenya on measures to be taken to protect Burundi against the Somalia-based extremist group. Excerpts from the press briefing were highlighted [here](#).

On May 18th, following the failed coup in Burundi, President Pierre Nkurunziza fired his defense and foreign affairs ministers, as anti-government demonstrations and street marches continued throughout Bujumbura. President Nkurunziza named Emmanuel Ntahonvukiye, a civilian, as the new Minister of Defense and Alain Aime Nyamitwe as the New Foreign Minister. The trade minister will also be replaced. More information can be seen [here](#).

On May 18th, State Department Press Office Director Jeff Rathke noted that following the May 14th ordered departure of non-emergency U.S. Government personnel from Burundi, the U.S. Government chartered three commercial flights to Kigali, Rwanda on May 17th. Those flights carried 20 American citizens, as well as other foreign citizens upon the request of several diplomatic missions in Bujumbura. Director Rathke confirmed all U.S. and foreign citizens who expressed interest in departing Burundi were assisted. More information was shared [here](#).

On May 19th, the U.N. World Health Organization (WHO) voiced concern about the worsening political tensions in Burundi and the health risks among Burundian refugee populations. The WHO observed the village of Kagunga in Tanzania has recently seen its population increase from 10,000 to 90,000 due to the influx of refugees. Refugee camps in Tanzania are quickly approaching capacity and crowding is creating challenges in promoting sanitation and hygiene to mitigate health risks. For details, click [here](#).

On May 19th, protests against President Pierre Nkurunziza's bid for a third term continued in Burundi, with police firing teargas and beating protestors. Separately, shots were fired at the offices of the European Union's (EU) representative in Bujumbura, prompting the mission to demand the government step up its security. An update on the situation in Burundi was provided [here](#).

On May 20th, Burundian President Pierre Nkurunziza decided to delay local and parliamentary elections scheduled for May 26th to June 2nd. The decision came after a recommendation by the election commission and following requests from opposition politicians and the international community for a postponement. As demonstrations continued in Bujumbura, resulting in the arrest of eight protestors on Tuesday, African leaders, including South African President Jacob Zuma and Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta, also urged President Nkurunziza to postpone the presidential election scheduled for June 26th.

Developments in Burundi were reported [here](#).

On May 20th, witnesses reported a soldier had been shot dead during demonstrations in Bujumbura, Burundi. While the army could not confirm the death, the soldier was allegedly hit in the chest by a round of police fire, which observers worry could only further the tensions between different wings of the security forces in the country. In addition, the Red Cross reported the death of another soldier and three protestors in the demonstrations, bringing the death toll to more than 20. An article on the deaths can be read [here](#).

On May 21st, street battles and gunfire erupted again in Bujumbura as protests continued, despite President Pierre Nkurunziza's call for calm in Burundi. According to the Red Cross, two more protestors were killed as soldiers and police fired tear gas and shots in the air in response to protestors throwing rocks and setting fire to barricades in the roads. The situation was described [here](#).

South Sudan

On May 14th, U. N. Special Representative and Head of the U.N. Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) Ellen Margrethe Loj briefed the U.N. Security Council on developments related to the security situation in the country. Special Representative Loj reported the security situation in South Sudan deteriorated further during late April and early May, resulting in greater displacement and vulnerability of civilians. Special Representative Loj highlighted fighting instigated by the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in Unity state, as well as fighting between Dinka and Shilluk militias in Upper Nile state. In total, more than two million people remain displaced and 2.5 million others face severe food insecurity. The briefing was summarized [here](#).

On May 18th, the U.N. Security Council issued a press statement noting grave concern for the ongoing violence in South Sudan and condemning both the renewed Government-led offensive in Unity state, as well as a recent large-scale attack by opposition forces in Malakal. The Security Council also reiterated its willingness to impose sanctions on those who threaten peace, security, and stability in South Sudan. The press statement can be read [here](#).

On May 18th, a rebel military spokesman said the South Sudanese opposition had killed many government soldiers in three days of fighting in Malakal. The rebel forces reportedly brought down a government helicopter gunship they believed had been sent to attack opposition positions in Upper Nile state over the weekend. The incident is the latest in a spate of clashes in which both the government and the opposition have accused the other side of violating earlier ceasefire agreements. More information can be found [here](#).

On May 19th, the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) observed that women and small children make up a disproportionate majority of the most recent casualties of the political conflict in South Sudan. According to UNICEF, dozens of children have been killed, raped, and abducted in Unity state over the past two weeks. UNICEF labeled the deliberate targeting of South Sudanese children an outrage and called for an immediate cessation of hostilities and full access for humanitarian workers. For more information, click [here](#).

On May 19th, South Sudanese rebels said they had captured a refinery near Paloch, South Sudan's largest oilfield, located in Upper Nile state. According to a spokesperson for the SPLA in Opposition, the rebels had ordered firms to shut down operations and evacuate their staff as fighting continued against government troops in the area. Details were reported [here](#).

On May 20th, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon condemned the escalation of hostilities between Government and opposition forces in Unity and Upper Nile states in South Sudan. Secretary-General Ban underscored that the renewed fighting between the SPLA and the SPLA in Opposition and allied groups is unacceptable, violates the cessation of hostilities agreement, and undermines the ongoing Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) efforts to find a political solution to the conflict. Further, Secretary-General Ban called on President Salva Kiir and former Vice President Riek Machar to immediately cease all military operations and reminded them of their obligations to protect civilians. Secretary-General Ban's position was articulated [here](#).

On May 20th, the U.S. Department of State condemned the intensified fighting and violence in Unity, Upper Nile, and Jonglei states in South Sudan by the SPLA, the armed opposition, and forces led by General Johnson Olony that have led to massive new displacements and had a devastating effect on civilians. The State Department reiterated its call for all armed groups to immediately halt offensive actions in violation of the January 2014 cessation of hostilities agreement and allow humanitarian workers free and unobstructed access to conflict-affected communities. The State Department also warned any damage to South Sudan's oil infrastructure could jeopardize South Sudan's development and rebuilding. A press statement was posted [here](#).

On May 20th, four people were killed and eight others wounded when two mortar bombs hit a UNMISS compound and a site housing civilians in the town of Melut, near the Paloch oilfields. The incident is believed to be a part of the escalating tensions between government troops and rebel forces. UNMISS reported the bombing as Upper Nile Information Minister Peter Hoth Puach said government officials had been evacuated from Paloch to Melut, where five soldiers had been wounded in continuing fighting. He also reported, contrary to statements by rebels, that nearby refinery sites remained in government control. The situation was detailed [here](#).

On May 21st, aid groups raised concern over escalating violence in South Sudan. According to the U.N. Humanitarian Coordinator in the country, thousands have fled their homes in recent days and 6,500 civilians lack access to aid. Doctors Without Borders (DWB) said over 11,000 newly displaced people had arrived at a U.N. base in Bentiu, while the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) reported, at current rates, South Sudan will likely outpace Syria as its largest operation by mid-June, when additional funding will be required. Feedback from aid groups was shared [here](#).

Nigeria

On May 16th, Nigerian authorities reported deporting 1,200 people who fled to Nigeria in order to carry out a military operation against Boko Haram. The latest 1,200 refugees are among more than 6,000 Niger has sent back to Nigeria as Boko Haram increasingly infiltrates Niger. Nigerian Borno state officials said militants had invaded the area where refugees were staying, necessitating the military operation, and more evacuations could be expected soon. The full story is available [here](#).

On May 16th, a girl believed to be 12 years old detonated explosives concealed under her clothes at a bus station in Damaturu, Nigeria, killing seven people and injuring 31 others. While there has been no official claim of responsibility for the attack, the Damaturu bus station has repeatedly been targeted in attacks by Boko haram suicide bombers. The suicide bombing was reported [here](#).

On May 17th, Nigeria's military destroyed ten Boko Haram camps in the northeastern part of the country as part of an offensive against the Islamist fighters. A military statement noted troops had killed many Boko Haram militants in the Sambisa forest and captured several armored vehicles and anti-aircraft guns. One soldier was reportedly killed by a landmine explosion. Developments related to the offensive against Boko Haram were shared [here](#).

On May 20th, the Chadian national assembly voted to indefinitely extend the mandate of its troops participating in a regional effort to combat Nigeria's Boko Haram. Chad has deployed roughly 2,500 troops to Nigeria, Cameroon, and Niger as part of an effort to stop attacks, primarily against civilians in northeastern Nigerian, and to take back land seized by the group. Chadian opposition parties unsuccessfully tried to block the bill, demanding further explanation from the government on the financial and human costs of the deployment. The vote was noted [here](#).

On May 21st, the ICRC said it was stepping up its work in the Lake Chad region, including in Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria, where more than a million people have been forced from their homes by the Boko Haram insurgency. The ICRC noted the region is the third most important humanitarian activity for the organization worldwide, with a combined value of \$118 million. The ICRC also said it was seeking an additional \$60 million to ramp up activities this year, with \$45 million of that sum to be allocated to Nigeria. The ICRC's new efforts to respond to Boko Haram were announced [here](#).

Mali

On May 15th, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon welcomed the signature of a peace agreement between the Government of Mali and members of the Plateforme coalition of armed groups as key step towards restoring stability and security in the country. Secretary-General Ban applauded the signing of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Bamako and congratulated the parties on the Algeria-led Mediation Team for producing a balanced deal. Additionally, Secretary-General Ban reminded all parties that earlier ceasefire agreements remain valid and urged them to honor their commitments. Feedback from Secretary-General Ban can be seen [here](#).

On May 15th, the U.S. Department of State welcomed the formal commitments made to advance lasting peace and reconciliation in Mali. The State Department urged all Malian parties to sign the Accord to underscore their concrete commitment to peace and to continue to engage constructively to implement the Accord. Despite the progress made in reaching a peace deal, the State Department also expressed concern for ongoing reports of fighting and called on all parties to respect the existing ceasefire agreements and commit to resolving differences through dialogue. A press statement was issued [here](#).

On May 18th, at least three Malian soldiers were killed and another wounded in a raid by rebels in Bambara Maounde. The attack was launched despite the partial signing of a peace deal last week. The Arab faction of the Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA) coalition claimed responsibility for the attack, claiming to have killed at least ten security personnel. Accounts of the incident were shared [here](#).

On May 20th, the U.N. Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) condemned an attack against a residential compound housing its military personnel in Bamako. According to the U.N., an unidentified armed assailant shot and wounded a local security guard during an attempt to set fire to a U.N. vehicle parked outside the compound. Two grenades were later found on site. MINUSMA stressed that attacks against U.N. staff and premises is a serious crime and reminded Malian authorities they remain responsible for the security of U.N. personnel. Additional feedback can be viewed [here](#).

On May 20th, the French Ministry of Defense confirmed that French troops had killed Abdelkarim al-Targui, the man believed to be the commander of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), in northern Mali. On May 17th-18th, French special forces carried out an operation that reportedly killed Targui and three other terrorists. Targui and his unit were thought to have been involved in several incidents involving the kidnapping of French citizens in Mali. The full story is available [here](#).

Egypt

On May 16th, a court in Cairo, Egypt sentenced ousted President Mohamed Morsi to death on charges of conspiring with foreign militants to break out of prison during Egypt's uprising. Security forces arrested Morsi, a member of the Muslim Brotherhood, during the 2011 rebellion and he escaped from prison several days later, only to be elected president the following year. Analysts believe the verdict, which can be appealed, sets a precedent for criminalizing actions taken during the revolt against former President Hosni Mubarak. More than 100 other defendants were also sentenced to death on the same charges. An article on the proceedings can be read [here](#).

On May 18th, U.S. Department of State Press Office Director Jeff Rathke expressed concern for another mass death sentence handed down by an Egyptian court to more than 100 defendants, including former President Mohamed Morsi. He said the practice of mass death sentencing is unjust and undermines confidence in the rule of law. Director Rathke also noted U.S. officials continue to have frank discussions with the Government of Egypt about human rights concerns. His reaction to the sentences was recorded [here](#).

African Migrant Crisis in the Mediterranean

On May 18th, the EU approved plans to use military force to take on migrant smugglers in the Mediterranean. The decision allows European governments to move ahead with plans for a naval operation to confront the increasing number of smuggler vessels transporting migrants from North Africa to Europe. The EU hopes its approval will prompt the U.N. to authorize the destruction of smuggler

vessels before they take on human cargo in the absence of a viable government in Libya. The situation was detailed [here](#).

On May 20th, France expressed its support for the EU plan to spread asylum-seekers out among EU states to deal with a growing surge of migrants from Africa. The French Government noted it could back a framework built around criteria that need through discussion, but insisted it could not accept quotas. The EU Commission plans to share a formal legislative proposal with EU governments later this month. France's position was articulated [here](#).

On May 21st, Italian coast guard patrol boats and a merchant ship saved 328 migrants from a boat in Maltese waters. Meanwhile, an Italian navy ship rescued 286 people and recovered one body. In addition, a French navy vessel participating in the EU's border control mission also rescued 297 people. The more than 900 migrants, all from North Africa, were brought to Italian ports. The rescues were announced [here](#).

West Africa Ebola Outbreak

On May 13th-20th, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Associate Administrator Eric Postel visited Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone with a focus on USAID's development assistance supporting post-Ebola recovery efforts in West Africa. During his visit, Associate Administrator Postel met with government officials, leaders from non-governmental organizations and the private sector, other donors, and implementing partners to learn about program impacts with a focus on preventing the loss of development gains and strengthening key institutions and infrastructure. Associate Administrator Postel was accompanied by USAID Africa Ebola Unit Senior Coordinator Denise Rollins, USAID Global Health Deputy Assistant Administrator Jennifer Adams, U.S. Global Development Lab Executive Director Ann Mei Change, and National Security Council (NSC) Senior Advisor Christopher Kirchoff. His travel was outlined [here](#).

On May 18th, kicking off a ten-day meeting of the World Health Assembly, WHO Director-General Dr. Margaret Chan said the WHO must act to ensure it will be better able to address future crises than it was to confront the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. During the meeting, Dr. Chan proposed an overhaul of the organization's emergency response system, with the aim of making it faster and more effective. She also advocated for creating a dedicated health emergency work force, establishing a \$100 million contingency fund, and streamlining hiring and procurement processes. Dr. Chan's remarks were captured [here](#).

On May 20th, the WHO issued updated statistics on the number of Ebola cases in West Africa. For the week ending on May 17th, West Africa saw the highest weekly total of confirmed cases of Ebola in over a month, with 35 cases reported from Guinea and Sierra Leone. This week, 27 cases were reported in Guinea and eight cases were reported in Sierra Leone. The WHO noted this is a substantial increase compared to the nine cases reported the previous week. The WHO also expressed concern the data suggests the geographical area of transmission has expanded within recent weeks. The data was analyzed [here](#).

On May 20th, public health experts expressed outrage that U.S.-based multinational mining company Peabody Energy took advantage of the Ebola crisis in West Africa to promote its products. Chief Executive Greg Boyce has promoted coal as a 21st century fuel that can help solve global poverty and suggested that more energy production in West African would have accelerated the distribution of a hypothetical Ebola vaccine. The Ebola response community criticized Peabody's suggestion that expanding energy access with coal generation could have helped to stop the spread of Ebola, especially as there is no approved vaccine. The full story is available [here](#).

On May 20th, U.S.-based environmental group Greenpeace issued a report finding that Chinese fishing fleets have taken advantage of the West African Ebola crisis to move in and quickly diminish the region's maritime resources. The report documents 183 cases of illegal fishing by Chinese companies. Among the Chinese companies identified in the report as having taken advantage of the Ebola epidemic was the state-owned China National Fisheries Corporation (CNFC). The report can be accessed [here](#).

United States – Africa Relations

White House

On May 15th, the White House issued a fact sheet on the President's Global Development Council's (GDC) second report, which outlined new recommendations on how to further advance President Barack Obama's Global Development Policy. The fact sheet highlights how the Power Africa initiative has leveraged more than \$20 billion in private sector commitments to expand access to electricity on the continent. The fact sheet also highlights additional U.S. initiatives to help spur development in Africa, including the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the Global Resilience Partnership, the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, the U.S.-Africa Clean Energy Finance Initiative (ACEF), the Partnership on Illicit Finance (PIF), the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI), and the African Women's Entrepreneurship Program (AWEP). The fact sheet can be downloaded [here](#).

On May 18th, President Barack Obama announced the designation of a presidential delegation to Nigeria to attend the inauguration of President-Elect Muhammadu Buhari on May 29th. Secretary of State John Kerry will lead the delegation, with other members of the delegation to be named at a future date. The presidential delegation to Nigeria was announced [here](#).

On May 21st, President Barack Obama met with Tunisian President Beji Caid Essebsi at the White House. President Obama was joined by Secretary of State John Kerry. The leaders were expected to discuss a range of issues pertaining to the continued consolidation of Tunisia's democracy, U.S.-Tunisian security cooperation, and Tunisia's efforts to advance important economic reforms. The meeting also addressed regional developments, including events in Libya and terrorist threats in the region. The meeting was highlighted [here](#).

State Department

On May 20th, Secretary of State John Kerry met with Tunisian President Beji Caid Essebsi at Blair House. He also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining a path forward for cooperation on security and economic issues with Tunisian Minister for Political Affairs Mohsen Marzouk. Secretary Kerry was accompanied by Director of Policy Planning David McKean. Both appointments were listed [here](#).

On May 20th, Secretary of State John Kerry issued a press statement congratulating the people of Cameroon on the celebration of their national day. Secretary Kerry noted since independence, Cameroonians have sought to build a stable, prosperous, and democratic society. He also noted U.S. investment in Cameroon continues to rise, create jobs, improve infrastructure, and contribute to economic diversification. Finally, Secretary Kerry commended Cameroon for its efforts to bolster regional stability, including as part of the fight against Boko Haram in Nigeria and in the Central African Republic (CAR). Secretary Kerry's full statement can be seen [here](#).

On May 20th, Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Tom Malinowski attended a working luncheon with Tunisian President Beji Caid Essebsi, hosted by the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP) in Washington, DC. Assistant Secretary Malinowski's participation was highlighted [here](#).

Department of Defense

On May 13th, U.S. military members joined with troops from several central African countries and the U.N. to participate in the opening ceremony of the Central Accord 2015 (CA-15) exercise in Libreville, Gabon. CA-15 is intended to practice maintaining peace, testing capabilities, and strengthening relationships of all 15 participating countries. The opening of CA-15 was noted [here](#).

On May 18th, U.S. military officials said leaders of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) have sent money, trainers, and fighters to Libya in increasing numbers as part of an effort to broaden its reach and influence. ISIL is now believed to have an operational presence in Libya and there is evidence to suggest the group aspires to make Libya its African hub. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On May 19th, in a DOD News Update, U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) Commander General David

Rodriguez said cooperative location is the key to safety for U.S. personnel in Africa in the case of a crisis. Commander Rodriguez described the role of AFRICOM personnel in responding to security incidents at U.S. diplomatic facilities in Africa and also pressed the need for cooperation with host governments to maximize security. The DOD News Update can be watched [here](#).

On May 19th, *Military Times* highlighted this year's African Lion exercise, which has brought more than 3,000 U.S. and partner-nation troops to Morocco to reinforce training engagements from previous African Lion exercises and create a foundation for future military-to-military cooperation. As part of African Lion, military personnel are participating in tactical field engagements such as live-fire ranges for small-arms weapons, nonlethal weapons, and basic patrolling skills. An article on the exercise can be read [here](#).

On May 20th, AFRICOM announced its plans to host the African Partnership Forum (APF) June 9th-11th at command headquarters in Stuttgart, Germany. The APF, hosted by AFRICOM's Strategic Outreach Directorate, will provide the opportunity to build mutually beneficial partnerships with commercial industry, NGOs, corporate social foundations, academia, professional associations, international organizations, and other private entities to share best practices for working in Africa and collaborate on mutual objectives for the continent. The APF was announced [here](#).

On May 21st, Secretary of Defense Ash Carter welcomed Tunisian President Beji Caid Essebsi to the Pentagon with an honor cordon. Prior to President Essebsi's travel to the U.S., Tunisian officials made clear their hopes the trip would result in an increase in U.S. military aid in the form of equipment and military training programs. According to Tunisian officials, U.S. officials were expected to approve as much as \$50 million in military assistance, up from just \$10 million in 2011. Secretary Carter's meeting with President Essebsi was noticed [here](#).

Department of Commerce

On May 20th, following her visit to Tunisia in March, Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker joined Tunisian President Beji Caid Essebsi, Tunisian government officials, and American business leaders for an open dialogue on how to strengthen Tunisia's economy and on how the country can translate its political transition into sustainable economic progress. Secretary Pritzker highlighted the importance of the Tunisian Government's efforts to adopt critical reforms that will increase commercial opportunities, enhance the investment climate, and improve the business environment. Tunisian officials discussed the status of reforms and offered a long-term vision for Tunisia's economic growth and success. More information was shared [here](#).

Millennium Challenge Corporation

On May 15th, the Millennium Challenge Corporation's (MCC) *Poverty Reduction Blog* featured a post on the MCC's work in Namibia to help communities decrease the pressure that livestock herds place on communal pasture land and prevent further land degradation through rangeland management interventions. In Namibia, most of the land in the northern regions is communal, cannot be privately owned, and is managed jointly by the government and traditional leaders. The MCC has provided support through mapping of communal areas and individual parcels, training and awareness-raising, and the identification of commonage areas to allow communities to secure their land tenure rights and improve land management. The blog can be accessed [here](#).

On May 19th, the MCC issued a fact sheet on "MCC and Power Africa." The fact sheet describes the MCC's role in the Power Africa initiative, noting the MCC expects to invest approximately \$2 billion to support Power Africa through compacts that improve the quality and reliability of electricity and promote climate-smart measures, such as energy efficiency and renewable energy. More specifically the fact sheet highlights relevant aspects of MCC compacts with Benin, Ghana, Malawi, Liberia, and Tanzania. The fact sheet can be downloaded [here](#).

Congress

On May 14th, the full Senate passed legislation to extend the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). The bill, which would extend duty-free access to the U.S. for sub-Saharan African countries for ten years, was passed by a vote of 97-1. The legislation also includes reforms to AGOA, including a

provision allowing products to integrate materials sourced from outside countries and language that promotes the role of women in social and economic development in sub-Saharan Africa. The vote was recorded [here](#).

On May 14th, the House Select Committee on Benghazi Chairman Trey Gowdy (R-SC) sent a letter to Secretary of State John Kerry on the State Department's failure to produce responsive emails and records for top State officials more than a half-year after they were first requested. Before former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton appears before the Committee, Congressman Gowdy said the record must be complete to make the hearing most productive. The letter can be downloaded [here](#).

On May 15th, in advance of Tunisian President Beji Caid Essebsi's official visit to the U.S., Senate Foreign Relations Committee Ranking Member Ben Cardin (D-MD) led a bipartisan letter to President Barack Obama expressing support for the people and the government of Tunisia as they transition to democracy and representative government. The letter was also signed by Senators Jim Risch (R-ID), Robert Menendez (D-NJ), Marco Rubio (R-FL), Chris Coons (D-DE), Jeff Flake (R-AZ), Tim Kaine (D-VA), David Perdue (R-GA), Chris Murphy (D-CT), and Johnny Isakson (R-GA). The letter can be read [here](#).

On May 15th, House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Ed Royce (R-CA) and Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney applauded House passage of their amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) to combat Boko Haram in Nigeria. The amendment states the sense of Congress that combating Boko Haram is in the national interest of the U.S. and the U.S. should support regional partners to strengthen operations against Boko Haram. It also requires the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense to report to Congress on the strategy to combat the Boko Haram threat. More information can be seen [here](#).

On May 19th, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee held a confirmation hearing for several nominees. Among the nominees considered was Marcia Denise Occomy to serve as U.S. Director of the African Development Bank (AfDB) for a term of five years. The confirmation hearing was noticed [here](#).

On May 19th, Senators Jim Inhofe (R-OK) and Chris Coons (D-DE) introduced the African Free Trade Initiative Act, which directs the president to establish a plan to negotiate and enter into Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) in sub-Saharan Africa and would require the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR), the MCC, and USAID to coordinate on how to implement the goals established in the FTA plan. The legislation was also introduced as an amendment to the Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) legislation currently under Senate consideration. A press release was issued [here](#).

On May 19th, Co-Chairman of the Congressional Tunisia Caucus David Schweikert (R-AZ) introduced a resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the U.S. should initiate negotiations to enter into a free trade agreement with Tunisia. The resolution has been referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means. More information was posted [here](#).

On May 20th, the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa held a hearing on "Egypt Two Years After Morsi." Witnesses included Eric Trager of The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Samuel Tadros of the Hudson Institute, and Nancy Okail of the Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy. A webcast of the hearing can be watched [here](#).

On May 20th, the House Foreign Affairs Africa Subcommittee held a hearing titled, "Developments in Rwanda." The Subcommittee received testimony from Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Robert Jackson and David Himbara and Major Robert Higiroy of Democracy in Rwanda Now. A recording of the hearing was archived [here](#).

On May 21st, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee held a business meeting to vote on several bills and nominations. During the markup, the Committee approved the nominations of Paul Folmsbee to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Mali and Mary Catherine Phee to serve as U.S. Ambassador to South Sudan. The agenda for the business meeting was posted [here](#).

North Africa

On May 15th, the U.N. Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) registered concern that armed groups across Libya are responsible for abductions of civilians and warned that hostage-taking, torture, and murder are war crimes. Further, UNSMIL threatened those responsible for commitment such acts or failing to prevent such crimes will be held criminally liable before the International Criminal Court (ICC). UNSMIL called on all those with control on the ground to refrain from abducting civilians, to immediately release all those held, and to ensure the well-being of anyone deprived of liberty. UNSMIL's warning was noted [here](#).

On May 18th, Egypt announced it will freeze plans for a 10 percent tax on capital gains, reversing a central component of its economic reform agenda criticized by investors. However, the government plans to keep in place a ten percent tax on stock dividends. According to Egyptian Investment Minister Ashraf Salman, the decision, which President Abdul Fattah Al-Sisi is expected to approve this week, is intended to improve liquidity in the stock market. For details, click [here](#).

On May 19th, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) announced the Executive Board's decision to support a seven-month extension of Tunisia's Stand-By Arrangement (SBA) to December 31st. The extension will provide time for the Tunisian authorities to implement the policy measures needed to deliver on forward-looking commitments to help reduce vulnerabilities and spur higher and more inclusive growth. An IMF mission is expected to visit Tunis in late May to conduct the Article IV discussions and the sixth review under the SBA. A press release was issued [here](#).

On May 19th, Egypt announced the opening of a 750 megawatt (MW) power plant in the northern outskirts of Cairo as part of its efforts to limit power cuts. The \$500 million plant, located in Qaliyubia governorate, is part of a plan to provide environmentally friendly electricity. The opening of the plant comes ahead of the summer season when power cuts in Egypt have traditionally peaked. More information can be seen [here](#).

On May 19th, the International Federation for Human Rights released a report finding that Egyptian security forces are using sexual violence against detainees on a massive scale as a tactic to try to eliminate public protest. According to the report, many detainees are subjected to virginity tests, rape, and gang rape after arrest. The victims primarily include student demonstrators, human rights activists, gay people, and children. The report's findings were summarized [here](#).

On May 20th, the Algerian Defense Ministry reported security forces killed three militants on the second day of a major offensive against AQIM and ISIL fighters in the country. Since the start of the offensive, 25 terrorists were killed in Bouira province. Algeria is viewed as a key partner to the West in a campaign to combat insurgencies in North Africa, including in Libya and Mali. The offensive was described [here](#).

On May 20th, Italian authorities said they had arrested Touil Abdelmajid, a Moroccan citizen suspected of involvement in the March 18th attack on the Bardo Museum in Tunisia, which killed 20 tourists. Tunisia has said it arrested the great majority of those responsible for the attack, carried out by a cell of 23 militants with overlapping allegiances to a number of Islamist extremist groups. According to Tunisian officials, the suspect played a role in smuggling weapons to be used in the attack. Abdelmajid's arrest was reported [here](#).

On May 20th, USIP hosted a briefing titled, "Beyond Security: Why a U.S.-Tunisian Strategic Partnership Matters." Tunisian President Beji Caïd Essebsi delivered keynote remarks and took questions as part of his first visit to the U.S. since taking office in December 2014. The event was highlighted [here](#).

On May 21st, the U.N. World Food Programme (WFP) reported that ten trucks carrying relief supplies had crossed the border between Tunisia and Libya, marking the resumption of assistance in support of people displaced by the ongoing conflict in Libya. Distribution of food relief had been suspended in March and April due to a lack of funding. The most recent deliveries included pasta, couscous, rice, and other food items expected to reach 51,000 Libyans. The WFP is hoping to provide assistance to roughly 243,000 displaced persons over the next six months. Details were shared [here](#).

On May 21st, ISIL militants in Libya took over the Sirte home of former Libyan dictator Muammar Gadhafi. Military leaders aligned with the General National Congress (GNC) reported the militants open fire at night on positions held by their forces. In recent months, ISIL fighters have gained a greater stronghold in Sirte, strategically located in the center of the country and alongside a highway that links eastern and western Libya. The full story is available [here](#).

On May 21st, Sinai Province, ISIL's affiliate in Egypt, posted an audio statement on a jihadist website calling for violence against judges. In the recording, the group's leader, Abu Osama al-Masry called for attacks on judges in retaliation for the jailing of group members. The recording was detailed [here](#).

On May 21st, two guards were killed when a suicide bomber in a car blew himself up at a checkpoint near Libya's Misrata city. The attack was against forces whose troops are allied with the self-declared Libyan government based in Tripoli. The incident was noted [here](#).

East Africa

On May 14th, U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres concluded a visit to Kenya and Somalia where he held successful meetings on issues related to refugees and returnees, including the hundreds of thousands of people in Dadaab camp. High Commissioner Guterres met with Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta and Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohammed and the leaders achieved common understanding on ensuring that return from Dadaab is voluntary, boosting security in Dadaab, and expanding additional areas for people to return to in Somalia. High Commissioner Guterres' trip to East Africa was outlined [here](#).

On May 18th, the U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) announced urgent measures to contain the spread of a severe diarrhea outbreak among newly arrived Burundian refugees in Tanzania, noting seven reported deaths. UNHCR reported it is working with the Ministry of Health and international partners to quickly establish a cholera treatment center in Kagunga. UNHCR is also flying in urgently needed medication to supplement supplies that are available locally. The situation was described [here](#).

On May 19th, U.N. Special Representative for Somalia and head of the U.N. Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) Nicholas Kay briefed the U.N. Security Council on progress and remaining challenges in the country. Special Representative Kay reported momentum had been regained on efforts to achieve political progress, pointing to work by federal, regional, and local leaders to build a State through dialogue and reconciliation. However, he also expressed concern about a lack of progress on the constitutional review process and the timetable for elections in Somaliland. The briefing was summarized [here](#).

On May 19th, Director of the Westgate Mall in Nairobi Kenya Alex Trachtenberg said the mall will reopen in July. The shopping center has been closed since the September 2013 Al Shabaab siege and massacre that left at least 67 dead. Speaking at a prayer service to honor those killed in the attack, mall officials noted tenants were beginning to return to the building to refit stores ahead of the scheduled reopening in July. An update was provided [here](#).

On May 19th, a British intelligence agency reported that renowned British terrorist Samantha Lewthwaite, also known as the White Widow, is now a trusted leader of Somalia-based terrorist group Al Shabaab. Lewthwaite, who allegedly had a role in last month's attack on Garissa University College in Kenya, is now thought to serve as a personal advisor to Al Shabaab leader Ahmad Umar. Her elevated position within the organization is credited to the deaths of several Al Shabaab leaders killed by U.S. drone strikes. More information was reported [here](#).

On May 20th, the World Bank announced the signing of a \$2.73 million grant provided by the Japan Social Development Fund for a new employment promotion program for youth and women in Djibouti. The program is expected to reach over 3,000 beneficiaries in the poorest areas of Djibouti and to increase access to life skills, livelihood skills training, and access to finance. The grant will also support the strengthening of the handicraft sector in Djibouti with a particular focus on women. For details, click [here](#).

On May 20th, ahead of the elections scheduled for May 24th, the leader of Ethiopia's three-year old opposition Blue Party, also known as Semayawi, Yilekal Getinent expressed optimism the party will win seats in urban areas, where young voters are discontent with the ruling People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). The EPRDF has been in power for almost a quarter of a century and the current parliament has just one opposition member. Fifty-seven opposition parties are taking part in the polls, but most analysts agree they pose no threat to the EPRDF's rule. Additional analysis can be viewed [here](#).

On May 21st, Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete issued a statement noting he has experienced repeated delays in aid payments from Western donors due to concerns about corruption, poor governance, and the slow pace of reform. President Kikwete warned the conditions to receive aid are degrading and there might ultimately be a point where Tanzania will reject foreign assistance. President Kikwete's comments were captured [here](#).

West Africa

On May 15th, the Climate Investment Funds (CIF) unanimously endorsed Ghana's ambitious investment plan to transform and promote its renewable energy sector. The plan, which is slated to receive \$40 million in funding from the CIF's Program for Scaling Up Renewable Energy in Low Income Countries (SREP), is structured around four key projects, including renewable energy micro-grids and stand-alone solar photovoltaic (PV) systems, solar PV-based metering with storage, utility scale solar PV/wind power generation, and technical assistance. A press release was issued [here](#).

On May 18th, in advance of a meeting scheduled with Guinean President Alpha Conde, opposition leader Cellou Daliel Diallo pledged to continue protests unless President Conde allows for prompt local elections. The opposition has accused President Conde of defying an agreement to organize overdue municipal polls before a presidential vote in October. In response to Diallo's comments, President Conde ruled out holding local elections before October, citing a decision by the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) that doing so would require postponing the presidential election. An article on the tensions was published [here](#).

On May 19th, leaders of countries belonging to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) convened a regional summit to discuss a proposal aimed at limited presidential mandates to two terms. Recently, leaders in Burundi and Burkina Faso have attempted to circumvent term limits, while other ECOWAS countries, such as Togo and Gambia do not have term limits at all. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On May 20th, the World Bank's Board of Executive Directors approved \$51.1 million in grant and credit from the International Development Association (IDA) for Guinea's Primary Health Services Improvement Project. Acknowledging the Ebola crisis has taken a major toll on families, communities, and the economy, the project will make urgently needed medicines available to women and children. The project also includes training for health workers at rural clinics in Faranah and Labe. The project was detailed [here](#).

On May 20th, Ghanaian President John Dramani Mahama handed over the ECOWAS flag and gavel to the newly elected chairman, Senegalese President Macky Sall after a two year term. In his acceptance speech, President Sall promised to build on the gains of his predecessor. In addition, ECOWAS paid tribute to outgoing Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan and commended the example he set with his response to his loss in the recent Nigerian elections. The transition in power was reported [here](#).

On May 20th, the Gambian Government announced its new policy will be to accept all Rohingya refugees from Myanmar because it believes it has a duty to alleviate the suffering of fellow Muslims fleeing southeastern Asia. Gambian officials also appealed to the international community to send tents, bedding, household materials, and medicine to help Muslim communities in the country prepare for the arrivals of refugees. The policy was summarized [here](#).

On May 20th, in a case that has increased the visibility of child marriages in Nigeria, prosecutors withdrew murder charges against a 15-year-old girl accused of using rat poison to kill her 35-year-old husband. According to the Kano state attorney general, the case was dropped because the defendant

was a minor and the victim's father had already forgiven her. The girl admitted to killing her husband after being forced into the marriage. The full story is available [here](#).

Sub-Saharan Africa

On May 14th, three separate ceremonies were held near Bambari, CAR during which 357 children were released by anti-Balaka militias and the ex-Seleka coalition. The release of the child soldiers came as the result of an agreement facilitated by UNICEF that is likely to result in the release of thousands of other children associated with armed groups in the CAR. According to UNICEF, between 6,000 and 10,000 are currently connected to armed factions and serving as combatants, cooks, and messengers. More information can be found [here](#).

On May 16th, the U.N. Security Council welcomed the recent national reconciliation forum held in Bangui, CAR. In particular, the Security Council observed the inclusive, grassroots-level manner in which the consultations were carried out and called on the CAR's transitional authorities to act quickly to implement the forum's outcomes, including the adoption of the Republican Pact for Peace, National Reconciliation, and Reconstruction, in addition to commitments for swift presidential and legislative elections, decentralization, and a reinforced judiciary. The Security Council's views on the forum were articulated [here](#).

On May 18th, the World Bank highlighted its recently launched "Writing for Development" essay contest in Burkina Faso. The initiative invites youth between the ages of 15 and 25 to write about their ideas and visions for Burkina Faso's development, and its sustainable development in particular. The first place winner will win a prize of \$1,000, with a \$750 award for the runner up and a \$500 cash prize for the third place winner. The essay contest was described [here](#).

On May 18th, *Mail & Guardian* reported new documents have surfaced that implicate Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe in mass killings of Ndebele people in western Zimbabwe in January 1983. The papers, recently declassified, appear to substantiate that President Mugabe, who was then serving as Prime Minister, was the prime architect of the killings that were planned and executed in Matabeleland. The full story is available [here](#).

On May 18th, U.S. hunter Corey Knowlton killed a black rhino in Namibia, after bidding \$350,000 nearly 18 months ago on a permit issued by Namibia's Ministry of Environment and Tourism and auctioned by the Dallas Safari Club. Knowlton has faced criticism and death threats as animal welfare groups reacted to the planned hunt of the black rhino, the world's most endangered species. Knowlton argues his \$350,000 will go to fund government anti-poaching efforts across the country and his killing of the older rhino bull, which no longer contributes to the gene pool but could harm or kill younger males, will help with conservation. For more information, click [here](#).

On May 19th, the World Bank noted, at the request of the Government of Zambia, is has embarked on a study to explore the problem of teenage pregnancy and early marriage in Zambia. While the report is not due to be released until later this year, it is expected to include recommendations focused on keeping girls in school, providing them with technical and life skills training, supporting them in adopting healthy lifestyles and a successful transition to motherhood, and helping their children to reach their full potential. In Zambia, approximately 16,000 teenage girls fall pregnant every year. The report was profiled [here](#).

On May 20th, Zambian Tourism Minister Jean Kapata announced Zambia is lifting its ban on big cat trophy hunting after establishing the populations of leopards and lions are larger than previously thought. Zambia banned the hunting of lions and other endangered wild cats in 2013. The ban on hunting leopards will end at the start of the 2015/2016 hunting season in July. Lion hunting will be permitted starting next year. More information can be found [here](#).

On May 20th, the South Africa Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa said the government will cut road toll charges in the economic hub of Johannesburg by 50 percent. The unpopular electronic toll fees were intended to repay a \$2 billion loan used to help upgrade the road network in the city. However, given pressure from the labor federation, government officials acknowledged the current system places a disproportionate burden on low and middle-income households. Details can be accessed [here](#).

General Africa News

On May 20th, at a meeting of the WHO's governing body in Geneva, Switzerland, member States approved the health agency's budget for 2016-2017. The \$4.4 billion budget represents a \$236 million increase from current funding levels, intended to help meet country needs, leverage experience gained during the Ebola outbreak, and address emerging priorities, such as antimicrobial resistance, health, and the environment. The WHO also agreed to a new malaria strategy for 2016-2030 to reduce the global disease burden by 40 percent by 2020, and at least 90 percent by 2030. More information can be viewed [here](#).

On May 20th, the European Parliament, in a 402-118 vote, approved legislation that would ban all products that contain blood metals, such as gold, tantalum, tin, and tungsten, sold by African warlords. The legislation, however, is likely to be blocked by EU governments, who argue it is impossible to track materials from small mines all the way through commodity exchanges to component manufacturers and the final product. More information can be seen [here](#).

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