



ML Strategies Update

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Africa Update

Leading the News

Burundi

On April 30th, as a fourth day of protests ensued following the ruling National Council for the Defense of Democracy – Forces for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD-FDD) party's decision to nominate President Nkurunziza as its candidate in the June 26th presidential election, U.N. Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region Said Djinnit traveled to Burundi. Special Envoy Djinnit met with government representatives to urge them to ensure security, guarantee freedom of expression, and create room for dialogue. His visit to Burundi was outlined [here](#).

On April 30th, the United Nations (U.N.) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) provided an update on the situation on the ground in Burundi. At the time, a total of seven deaths, including two police officers, had been reported. While OCHA observed that much of the political tension is concentrated in the capital, it also observed that many shops and schools remained closed in other parts of the country. Further, OCHA expressed concern the media and communications blackout implemented by Burundian authorities could fuel rumors and increase anxiety among the population. Feedback from OCHA was reported [here](#).

On April 30th, U.S. Department of State Acting Spokesperson Marie Harf confirmed that roughly 200 demonstrators in Bujumbura had peacefully assembled outside the U.S. Embassy in Burundi. The U.S. Embassy was closed on Thursday, as well as for the holiday on May 1st. Spokesperson Harf added that Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Tom Malinowski had met with President Pierre Nkurunziza, civil society, political opposition, journalists, and activists in the international community to encourage a rejection of violence. An update on the situation in Burundi was provided [here](#).

On May 1st, the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) expressed deep concern about the measures taken by Burundian authorities to curtail rights to freedom of expression and assembly, urging measures to ensure the space necessary for the conduct of free and fair elections. In particular, OHCHR observed the use of live ammunition by intelligence and security forces during protests and the detentions of hundreds of people in overcrowded conditions since demonstrations began on April 26th. More information can be accessed [here](#).

On May 1st, hundreds of students from the University of Burundi sought refuge outside the U.S. Embassy in Bujumbura. According to reports, the students said they were seeking security from the Embassy because they had been chased from campus and were afraid they would be targeted by the government while traveling home. The students were reportedly visited by U.S. Ambassador to Burundi Dawn Liberi. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On May 1st, U.S. Department of State Acting Spokesperson Marie Harf noted U.S. officials had visited with the approximately 600 students who were seeking shelter and security outside the walls of the U.S. Embassy in Bujumbura. She commended the students and the police outside the Embassy for behaving in a peaceful and professional manner and called on the Government of Burundi to ensure there is space for peaceful protest and assembly. Further, she said the U.S. Embassy is pushing the Burundian Government to reopen universities so students can return to their studies. Her comments were captured [here](#).

On May 4th, civil society groups reported an additional two demonstrators were killed as protests against President Pierre Nkurunziza's decision to seek a third term in office continued. The protestors were reportedly shot dead by police. The police had no immediate comment. The deaths were reported [here](#).

On May 5th, the CNDD-FDD ruling party in Burundi said the country's constitutional court had validated President Pierre Nkurunziza's decision to seek a third term in office, noting the constitution says the president is elected by universal direct suffrage for a mandate of five years, renewable one time. The announcement came as dozens of protestors marched on Bujumbura, noting at least four of the seven constitutional court judges have fled the country due to recent unrest. Following the ruling, Burundian Vice President Prosper Bazombanza promised to release hundreds of protestors and reopen radio stations if the demonstrations stop. More information can be found [here](#).

On May 5th, in response to Burundi's constitutional court ruling President Pierre Nkurunziza's decision to seek a third term constitutional, U.S. Department of State Acting Deputy Spokesperson Jeff Rathke said the U.S. maintains the only way to respect both the terms of the Burundian constitution and the Arusha agreement is for President Nkurunziza not to seek a third term. In addition, he expressed concern about reports that the vice president of the constitutional court fled to Rwanda, claiming that he and other members of the court were pressured to rule in favor of the constitutionality of a third term. U.S. officials have since urged the Burundian Government to investigate claims of undue influence and intimidation. Deputy Spokesperson Rathke's comments were transcribed [here](#).

On May 5th, Rwandan Foreign Affairs Minister Louise Mushikiwabo expressed concern about the ongoing protests in Burundi, noting at least 24,000 mostly Tutsis had fled to Rwanda since the start of last week's demonstrations, fearing another outbreak of ethnic strife. She acknowledged reports from civil society groups that 12 people had been killed in the protests and appealed to the leaders of Burundi to do everything in their power to bring the country back to a peaceful situation. Minister Mushikiwabo's comments were recorded [here](#).

On May 6th, the U.N. reported nearly 40,000 refugees have fled Burundi to Rwanda, Tanzania, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in the last month amid protests against President Pierre Nkurunziza's decision to seek a third term. Meanwhile, the Burundi Red Cross said a total of 16 people were injured in protests held in different parts of the capital on Wednesday. The ongoing unrest in Burundi was described [here](#).

On May 7th, protestors in Burundi burned a man to death, accusing him of being a member of the CNDD-FDD's Imbonerakure youth wing that had launched attacks against the opposition. A presidential spokesman condemned the incident and said the government should take strenuous measures to prevent such incidents. Government officials have regularly dismissed charges that the Imbonerakure has been instigating violence. The incident was noted [here](#).

Togo

On May 4th, Togo's constitutional court swore in incumbent President Faure Gnassingbe for a third term in office. While the national election commission reported that President Gnassingbe had won 58.75

percent of the more than 1.2 million votes cast in the April 25th election, his main challenger, opposition candidate Jean-Pierre Fabre, alleged voter fraud. Despite tensions around the accusations that brought regional leaders to Togo to mediate, the country largely avoided post-election violence, similar to clashes that occurred after previous polls. The swearing in was noted [here](#).

On May 4th, the U.S. Department of State congratulated the people of Togo on exercising their democratic rights peacefully during the presidential elections. Additionally, the State Department congratulated President Faure Gnassingbe on his re-election and echoed statements of observers from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union (AU), the Organization of the Francophonie, and the Gorree Institute that the election was free and transparent. The State Department urged all candidates and political parties to respect the outcome of the elections and pledged to continue to work with President Gnassingbe to strengthen Togo's democracy. A statement on the election was published [here](#).

Guinea

On May 4th, in defiance of a government ban on demonstrations, youths clashed with security forces in Conakry, Guinea, as they continued to protest the timing of elections. According to witnesses, barricades were constructed and stones were thrown at security forces, who responded with teargas. Gunfire was also reported, although a spokesman for the government said it was unclear who had fired the shots. The national electoral commission recently scheduled the presidential election for October 11th, despite an agreement to hold local polls first. The full story is available [here](#).

On May 6th, the political opposition in Guinea announced opposition leader Cellou Dalein Diallo will meet with President Alpha Conde in an effort to ease tensions on the timing of elections that have triggered ongoing clashes between protestors and security forces. The opposition has rejected previous overtures from President Conde, but the meeting is expected to occur late this week. Despite the meeting, the opposition called for further protests on Thursday and Monday. Since the start of demonstrations in mid-April, the opposition reports at least five people have died and many more have been injured. An update was provided [here](#).

Nigeria

On May 1st, the governor of Niger's Diffa region ordered the evacuation of the islands in Lake Chad following last week's deadly Boko Haram attack on Karamga. Residents were directed to leave the islands by May 4th, due to security imperatives. Last week's assault on Karamga left 74 Nigerian soldiers and civilians dead. In addition, 156 Boko Haram militants were killed. The evacuation order was reported [here](#).

On May 4th, *Reuters* reported that recent government advances against Boko Haram have been effective, as the group is now experiencing shortages of weapons and fuel, in addition to rising tensions between foot soldiers and leadership. According to women who were recently rescued after being held hostage by Boko Haram, the militants had been complaining about lacking military equipment over the past month. The group abducted an estimated 2,000 women and girls last year, 700 of whom were freed last week as a result of military raids in the Sambisa forest. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On May 4th, *The Washington Post* provided additional insights on the testimony of women and girls recently freed from Boko Haram captivity in the Sambisa forest. According to some, the Boko Haram guards overseeing the captives began stoning the women so they could not be saved by approaching Nigerian soldiers. The freed hostages also reported many other hostages had died from disease and malnutrition. The full story is available [here](#).

On May 4th, the Nigerian military said it had battled militiamen in central Nigeria over the weekend that had destroyed several villages and killed scores of people last week, including six soldiers who had their eyes gorged out and their tongues cut off. While the military declined to provide further detail with operations ongoing, authorities clarified the violence was not perpetrated by Boko Haram. Witnesses suspected those killed in retaliation for the dead soldiers belonged to the Tarok ethnic group, which had allegedly been engaged in cattle rustling. For details, click [here](#).

On May 5th, Niger evacuated thousands of Nigerian refugees sheltering from Boko Haram fighters on Lake Chad's Karamga island. The evacuations follow an order issued last week that refugees leave after Boko Haram fighters killed scores of soldiers and civilians during an ambush on April 25th. According to Yobe state Executive Secretary of the State Emergency Management Agency, 4,000 displaced Nigerians were in the process of being sent home. The evacuations were noted [here](#).

On May 6th, Nigerian troops rescued 25 more women and children held hostage by Boko Haram in the Sambisa forest. According to military authorities, seven additional terrorist camps, along with weapons and vehicles, were destroyed and a number of militants were killed in the latest offensive. Of the 700 women and children who have been rescued from Boko Haram captivity in the past two weeks, at least 275 have been taken to hospitals in Adamawa state for rehabilitation. So far, none of the rescued girls are thought to have been among the group of schoolgirls kidnapped from Chibok last year. An update was provided [here](#).

Mali

On May 1st, the U.N. Security Council issued a press statement expressed deep concern for the outbreak of violence in Mali, warning the violence could undermine the peace process. The Security Council urged the parties to demonstrate their commitment to the peace process and adhere to earlier ceasefire and cessation of hostilities agreements. Further, the Security Council reiterated its support for the U.N. Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and its efforts to engage with all parties to de-escalate tensions and continue dialogue. The statement was published [here](#).

On May 1st, the Malian Defense Ministry reported nine Malian soldiers were killed when Tuareg separatist rebels attacked the town of Lere on vehicles armed with machine guns. Six more soldiers were wounded and an additional six soldiers were taken hostage. The international community has said the recent string of clashes in Mali between pro-government and anti-government militias endanger a peace deal due to receive preliminary approval from the government and armed groups in Bamako on May 15th. More information can be found [here](#).

African Migrant Crisis in the Mediterranean

On May 4th, Italian authorities reported around 7,000 migrants were rescued from overcrowded boats crossing the Mediterranean from Africa to Europe over the weekend and on Monday. The rescues have raised concern the number of migrants risking the journey to a better life is continuing to rise, even after as many as 900 people drowned last week. A driving factor appears to be the lawlessness and anarchy in Libya, where two rival governments continue to compete for legitimacy. The activity over the weekend was outlined [here](#).

On May 4th, international aid group Save the Children said nearly 40 migrants are believed to have died in a new migrant tragedy in the Mediterranean, less than a month after an estimated 900 migrants drowned in one of the deadliest incidents in the region. The latest incident occurred on the passing between Libya and Sicily on Sunday, where survivors reported dozens of fellow passengers fell out of a migrant boat and drowned as a commercial vessel approached to rescue them. Details were posted [here](#).

On May 5th, the Turkish Coast Guard reported rescuing more than 600 people trying to cross the Aegean Sea, including several African migrants, in the five days prior. Acting on tip-offs, the Coast Guard also detained a suspected human trafficker. An update from the Turkish Coast Guard was provided [here](#).

On May 6th, Libya's coast guard detained 585 illegal African migrants who had tried to sail to Europe on a fishing boat departing from Sabratha. Those detained reportedly hailed from Somalia, Eritrea, Ghana, and Mali. Facing pressure from Europe to help address the migrant problem, Libya's coast guard said they had intercepted several boats and brought migrants back to shore. More information can be found [here](#).

On May 7th, U.N. diplomats said European members of the U.N. Security Council, including Britain, France, Lithuania, and Spain have drafted a resolution that would authorize the European Union (EU) to intervene on the high seas, in Libyan territorial waters, and onshore in Libya to seize vessels to prevent

trafficking, smuggling, and illegal migration across the Mediterranean. The prospects for passage of the resolution remain unclear, as Russia, which has veto power on the Security Council, initially appeared supportive, but has more recently expressed opposition to authorizing the destruction of boats. For more information, click [here](#).

West Africa Ebola Outbreak

On May 1st, the World Bank highlighted its efforts to help Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia reopen schools while preventing any further spread of Ebola through the education system. At the height of the epidemic, the World Bank believes as many as five million West African children were affected by school closures that lasted between six and eight months. Now that all schools have reopened, World Bank funding is being used to distribute hand washing stations, disseminate information about returning to school, and provide school feeding to the most vulnerable children. An article on the World Bank's support for the reopening of schools in West Africa can be read [here](#).

On May 4th, Sierra Leonean President Ernest Bai Koroma launched a Social Safety Net program to support extremely poor households and vulnerable communities, including those affected by the Ebola outbreak. The program, financed by a \$7 million World Bank International Development Association (IDA) grant, a \$300,000 grant from the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF), and a \$1 million contribution from the Government of Sierra Leone, will help address impacts of the Ebola outbreak such as loss of livelihoods and income, delayed schooling, and children orphaned by the disease. A press release was issued [here](#).

On May 5th, U.N. Special Representative for Liberia and head of the U.N. Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) Karin Landgren briefed the U.N. Security Council on developments in the country. Special Representative Landgren noted Liberia is expected to be declared Ebola-free by the World Health Organization (WHO) within the week if no more new cases are discovered. She also pointed out the U.N. Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) had closed its doors in the country and transferred residual tasks to UNMIL. Excerpts from the briefing were highlighted [here](#).

On May 6th, the U.N. World Health Organization (WHO) updated its statistics on the number of Ebola cases in West Africa. A total of 18 confirmed cases of Ebola were reported in the week ending May 3rd, with Guinea and Sierra Leone each reporting nine cases. This is the lowest weekly total this year and comes after a month-long period during which case incidence fluctuated between 30 and 37 confirmed cases per week. In Liberia, the outbreak will be declared to have ended if no new cases are reported up to May 9th, which marks 42 complete days since the burial of the last confirmed case. The data was further analyzed [here](#).

On May 6th, U.N. Special Representative for Liberia and head of the U.N. Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) Karin Landgren was interviewed on the challenges in Liberia as the country bounces back from the Ebola crisis. Despite more than 4,000 Ebola deaths, Liberia is now at zero cases and Special Representative Landgren reported the nationwide panic has stabilized. In addition to recovering from the Ebola outbreak, Special Representative Landgren said the country must also prepare for future challenges, including the build-up of the security sector and the undertaking of critical presidential elections in 2017. The interview was transcribed [here](#).

United States – Africa Relations

White House

On May 5th, National Security Advisor Susan Rice and Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni met in New York City to exchange views on regional developments. They discussed the ongoing conflict in South Sudan and agreed on the need for the international community and South Sudan's regional partners to work quickly to achieve peace. Ambassador Rice also reiterated U.S. concern over the continued conflict in Darfur and the vicious bombing of civilians in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile States. Ambassador Rice and President Museveni also reaffirmed a shared commitment to advancing regional efforts to defeat the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and continuing cooperation to support the vital work of the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). They also discussed cooperation to counter terrorism and prevent violent extremism in the region. The meeting was summarized [here](#).

On May 6th, President Barack Obama announced his intent to nominate David Gilmour to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Togo. Gilmour, a career member of the Foreign Service, currently serves as Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of African Affairs at the Department of State. He has also previously held assignments at U.S. posts in Malawi, Cameroon, Senegal, and South Africa. Gilmour's nomination was announced [here](#).

State Department

On April 30th, Senior Advisor to the Secretary David Thorne visited South Africa and delivered remarks at the U.S. Embassy in Pretoria on South Africa Freedom Day. In addition to reflecting on South Africa's historic 1994 elections, Advisor Thorne highlighted the strong partnership between the U.S. and South Africa on shared priorities, including enhancing peace and security, strengthening democracy, boosting the economy, and fighting HIV/AIDS. His remarks can be read [here](#).

On May 1st, Assistant Secretary of State for Political Military Affairs Puneet Talwar met with Egyptian Defense Attaches Rear Admiral Mohamed Abdelaziz Elsayed and Major General Khaled Mogawar, at the Department of State. The meeting was noticed [here](#).

On May 1st, the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) published a fact sheet on World Press Day and the importance of freedom of expression, both at home and abroad. The fact sheet highlights the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor's efforts to support media programs in 43 countries, including in the Great Lakes region of Africa where U.S. programs were launched to support diversity within the media sector by increasing women's involvement in journalism and giving them greater public access to high-quality, gender-sensitive media programming, particularly on women's rights issues. The fact sheet can be downloaded [here](#).

On May 3rd, Secretary of State John Kerry arrived in Nairobi, Kenya, accompanied by Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights Sarah Sewall, Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs Michelle Bond, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield, National Security Council (NSC) Senior Director for African Affairs Grant Harris, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees, and Migration Catherine Wiesner, Chief of Staff Jon Finer, Acting State Department Spokesperson Marie Harf, and Vice Admiral Kurt Tidd of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS). Upon his arrival, Secretary Kerry toured the Sheldrick Elephant Orphanage and Nairobi National Park. He also met with Director of Pan African Wildlife Conservation Network Pat Awori, Director and Trustee of Amboseli Trust for Elephants Dr. Cynthia Moss, and Chief Scientist of Landscape Conservation Programs Dr. Philip Muruthi to discuss biodiversity and conservation efforts. Secretary Kerry's arrival in Kenya was detailed [here](#).

On May 4th, Secretary of State John Kerry continued his visit to Nairobi, Kenya. Secretary Kerry met with staff and families at the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi and participated in a wreath-laying ceremony to commemorate those killed in the August 7, 1998 U.S. Embassy bombing. He then met with Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta, as well as Members of the Coalition for Reform and Democracy, Kenyan Chief Justice Willy Mutunga, refugee leaders from the Dadaab refugee camp, and Kenyan students. Secretary Kerry also hosted a working dinner for Kenyan business leaders. Secretary Kerry's schedule was outlined [here](#). His meet and greet with Embassy staff was highlighted [here](#). Secretary Kerry's remarks at the wreath-laying ceremony were transcribed [here](#) and his comments before meeting with Members of the Coalition for Reform and Democracy were recorded [here](#). A press note on Secretary Kerry's meeting with Chief Justice Mutunga was issued [here](#) and his video conference with students in Dadaab was detailed [here](#).

On May 4th, during his visit to Kenya, Secretary of State John Kerry announced over \$45 million in additional funding to help the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) protect and assist some 600,000 refugees residing in Kenya. The funding will provide for basic needs, including food, shelter, education, and health care, as well as voluntary repatriation to countries of origin, where security permits. The assistance will benefit 419,000 Somali refugees in Dadaab and elsewhere, as well as 45,000 additional refugees who have arrived from South Sudan since December 2013. A factsheet was issued [here](#).

On May 4th, Secretary of State John Kerry announced the U.S. plans to provide \$5 million to promote justice and accountability in South Sudan, pending congressional approval. The funds will support a credible, impartial, and effective justice mechanism, such as a hybrid court, to hold perpetrators of violence in South Sudan to account. The funding will also build the capacity of South Sudanese civil society to document human rights violations for the purposes of promoting justice and reconciliation. For details, click [here](#).

On May 5th, Secretary of State John Kerry concluded his visit to Kenya. Before his departure, Secretary Kerry met Somali President Sheikh Mohamoud, Prime Minister Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke, regional leaders, and Somali civil society activists. Secretary Kerry's appointments in Somalia were highlighted [here](#). Secretary Kerry's remarks before his meeting with civil society leaders were posted [here](#).

On May 5th, Secretary of State John Kerry made a previously unannounced visit to Mogadishu, Somalia to reinforce the U.S. commitment to supporting Somalia's ongoing transition to a peaceful democracy. In his meeting with federal and regional government officials, Secretary Kerry discussed security cooperation and Somalia's progress towards meeting its reform and development benchmarks in view of its 2016 elections. He also met with civil society leaders to discuss the importance of a vibrant NGO sector and to thank AU troops for their role in stabilizing the country. Secretary Kerry is the first ever Secretary of State to visit Somalia. His travel was announced [here](#). A transcript of Secretary Kerry's remarks in Mogadishu can be read [here](#).

On May 5th, Acting Deputy Spokesperson Jeff Rathke noted that in his meetings in Somalia, Secretary of State John Kerry said the department will begin the process to re-establish diplomatic premises in Mogadishu. While there is no fixed timeline for re-establishing an embassy, there have been a number of positive developments in the country that warrant a more enduring U.S. presence in Somalia. Additionally, Deputy Spokesperson Rathke noted the nomination of Katherine Dhanani to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Somalia and said she will be based out of the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi until diplomatic premises are established in Somalia. His comments were recorded [here](#).

On May 5th, Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs William Brownfield delivered keynote remarks on efforts to combat wildlife trafficking at the "Collaboration Across Borders" event at Meridian International Center. The event brought together 12 leaders in the field from Africa, Asia, and Europe to discuss international collaboration across sectors to deter poaching and trafficking of wildlife. More information can be found [here](#).

On May 6th, Secretary of State John Kerry arrived in Djibouti, Djibouti. Upon his arrival, Secretary Kerry toured the Salman Mosque and held talks with young Djiboutian leaders. He then met with President Ismail Omar Guelleh and Foreign Minister Mahamoud Ali Youssouf. Secretary Kerry also visited the U.S. Embassy in Djibouti to visit with staff and families and to thank consular officers for their hard work in providing consular services. Before departing, Secretary Kerry toured camp Lemonnier and met with U.S. troops. The schedule for Secretary Kerry's visit to Djibouti was shared [here](#). Secretary Kerry's remarks at Salman Mosque can be read [here](#) and his meeting with Embassy staff and families was transcribed [here](#). Secretary Kerry's remarks to the consular section of the Embassy were posted [here](#) and his comments with Minister Youssouf can be viewed [here](#).

U.S. Agency for International Development

On April 30th, USAID Acting Administrator Alfonso Lenhardt welcomed President Barack Obama's decision to nominator Gayle Smith as USAID Administrator. Administrator Lenhardt recognized Smith's leadership on global development, democracy, and humanitarian assistance issues on the President's National Security Council (NSC) staff, as well as her prior experience at USAID and her two decades spent working in Africa. His full statement was posted [here](#).

Department of Defense

On April 30th, *The Washington Post* reported that skies above Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, the U.S. military's counterterrorism hub in the Horn of Africa, are dangerous for U.S. pilots. Unlike other major U.S. military bases around the world, Camp Lemonnier is wholly dependent on civilian air-traffic controllers hired by the Government of Djibouti. According to reports, local air traffic controllers

frequently fall asleep on the job and engage in other hazardous behaviors, such as playing video games, making personal calls, and chewing khat. The full story was published [here](#).

On May 4th, U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) highlighted its role in the Law of Armed Conflict Competition for Military Academies, recently held in San Remo, Italy. Two teams of cadets from the Nigeria Defense Academy participated in the competition, one of which was sponsored by AFRICOM. The sponsorship is part of AFRICOM's broad effort to support adherence to rule of law by militias in Africa. More information can be seen [here](#).

On May 5th, AFRICOM noted its participation in a recent Southern African Development Community (SADC) Spiritual and Moral Services Work Group meeting held in Livingstone, Zambia. Over 25 military chaplains from seven different nations attended the conference to discuss resiliency and its impact on military personnel. For details, click [here](#).

Congress

On April 30th, U.S. Senator Chris Coons (D-DE) said Gayle Smith is a terrific choice by President Barack Obama to be the next USAID Administrator. Senator Coons noted Smith previously worked closely with former USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah to prioritize U.S. support for African countries and to revolutionize how the U.S. engaged with continent. Senator Coons' full statement was shared [here](#).

On May 1st, Senate Foreign Relations Committee Ranking Member Ben Cardin (D-MD) issued a press statement recognizing World Press Freedom Day. Beyond celebrating the value of freedom of the press and the critical role it serves in creating a free and open society, Senator Cardin honored all of the journalists imprisoned or killed while seeking to tell stories that deserved to be heard. He also highlighted the arrest of the Zone 9 Bloggers in Ethiopia as reason to stand up to injustice. Senator Cardin's full statement can be read [here](#).

On May 4th, in response to a summons issued by House Select Committee on Benghazi Chairman Trey Gowdy (R-SC) late last month, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's attorney David Kendall indicated she would be willing to testify once before the Committee, but will not meet the panel's demand to appear twice. Secretary Clinton is expected to appear before the Committee during the week of May 18th. The full story is available [here](#).

North Africa

On April 30th, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon briefed the U.N. Security Council on developments in South Sudan. Secretary-General Ban reported the political conflict between President Salva Kiir and opposition leader Riek Machar has worsened, with both parties recruiting children to fight and restricting the work of U.N. peacekeepers. In addition, he warned if President Kiir and former Vice President Machar do not show willingness to compromise in peace talks, they may be subject to consequences, such as sanctions. Excerpts from the briefing were highlighted [here](#).

On May 1st, UNHCR reported the number of South Sudanese refugees who have fled to Ethiopia since fighting broke out in South Sudan in mid-December 2013 has passed the 200,000 mark and more are expected amid fresh conflict across the border. Roughly 199,000 of the refugees are in western Ethiopia's Gambella region, while about 3,000 others are in the neighboring Benishangul-Gumuz region. Since the start of the year, UNHCR estimates the rate of South Sudanese refugees entering Ethiopia has increased from 1,000 people a month to 4,000 people a month. Additional data was analyzed [here](#).

On May 4th, the U.N. Committee on the Rights of the Child hailed South Sudan's ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), becoming the 195th country to do so. Adopted by the U.N. General Assembly in 1989, the treaty seeks to eliminate the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, and the involvement of children in armed conflict. Details can be seen [here](#).

On May 5th, U.N. Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Sudan El-Mostafa Benlamlih announced the Sudan 2015 Humanitarian Response Plan, a partnership with the Sudanese Government and a tool used to map where humanitarian projects can best respond to people's priority needs in Sudan and to allocate funding accordingly. The Plan found that humanitarian organizations in Sudan will need just over

\$1 billion to fund projects delivered by 112 humanitarian partners to meet the needs of roughly 5.4 million people in need of assistance. The full story is available [here](#).

On May 5th, the World Bank highlighted the Egyptian Social Housing Program, which aims to provide a million new housing units, including better homes for low-income families. To build on this program, Egypt is launching a new project, using a \$500 million World Bank loan, to continue to improve both homeownership and rentals for low-income households. This new project, which is expected to reach 1.6 million beneficiaries, is intended to open up housing for young people and improve access to services and jobs. More information can be found [here](#).

On May 5th, Libya's internationally recognized government carried out air strikes against Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) militants in the eastern city of Derna. Air Force Commander Saqer al-Joroushi encouraged all residents to stay away from checkpoints and ISIL locations and also warned fishers and tankers against approaching the coast all the way to Derna. Egyptian jets previously bombed Derna in February after ISIL released a video showing the beheading of 21 Egyptian Christians. The latest air strikes were reported [here](#).

On May 7th, Sudan's army said an object shot down by anti-aircraft defenses near Khartoum on Tuesday was a reconnaissance drone, but its origins remain unclear. The targeting of the drone initially triggered rumors of a coup attempt, which were denied by the military. While Sudan faces insurgencies in Darfur and along its border with South Sudan, rebels are not believed to have air capabilities. The incident was detailed [here](#).

On May 7th, Egyptian state television aired video footage of President Abdul Fattah Al-Sisi greeting 30 Ethiopians reported to have been kidnapped in Libya as they arrived at the airport in Cairo on an Egyptian government plane. Speaking to journalists at the airport, President Sisi said the situation in Libya is of growing international concern and it is important for the world that Libya returns to a safe and stable country. Last month, a video issued by ISIL militants in Libya showed the beheading of 30 Ethiopian Christians. Details were shared [here](#).

On May 7th, two Egyptian police recruits were killed after exchanging fire with smugglers at a border post in the Northern Sinai region. Earlier, security sources reported unidentified gunmen in a car shot dead the two police officers who were guarding the gate of a police camp in Rafah. Last month, Egypt extended the state of emergency in the Northern Sinai by three months in response to a series of rebel attacks. For more information, click [here](#).

East Africa

On April 30th, the World Bank Group's Board of Executive Directors approved an IDA credit of \$37 million for the Kenya Financial Sector Support Project. The project is intended to strengthen the legal, regulatory, and institutional environment and to help Kenya improve financial stability and increase affordable and long term financing. A press release was issued [here](#).

On April 30th, the World Bank highlighted the Devolution Working Paper Series, which it recently launched with the Government of Kenya to set out options and a framework for strengthening participation in decentralized governance and service delivery. Kenya's devolution, adopted following the March 2013 general elections, is among the most ambitious in the world for transferring key functions and financing to an entirely new level of sub-national government. The papers can be downloaded [here](#).

On May 3rd, speaking at a church service, Kenyan Deputy President William Ruto said there is no room for homosexuality in Kenyan society. A spokesman for Deputy President Ruto later confirmed his remarks and added the government believes that homosexual relations are unnatural and un-African. Like many other African countries, Kenyan society is strongly religious and socially conservative. As of late, remarks by African leaders in opposition to homosexuality have put them at odds with Western donors. Deputy President Ruto's comments were captured [here](#).

On May 4th, Nigeria's Dangote Cement said it will begin production in Tanzania in August as part of its efforts to expand to new markets. The company is in the final stages of constructing a \$500 million factory in southern Tanzania that is expected to produce three million tons of cement each year.

However, over the weekend, Aliko Dangote raised concerns regarding access to coal and natural gas as sources of cheap power to run the factory. More information can be viewed [here](#).

On May 6th, Al Shabaab militants shot and killed Deputy District Commissioner of Mogadishu's Wadajir district Abdifatah Barre in his car before fleeing the scene. Also on Wednesday, an Al Shabaab improvised explosive device (IED) damaged an armored vehicle in a convoy of AU peacekeeping vehicles as it passed through Elasha town. While details about casualties were not immediately available, Al Shabaab reported there were many. Both attacks were reported [here](#).

On May 6th, 600 students from Garissa Teachers Training College in Kenya demanded to be transferred to other academic institutions due to security concerns. Located just 200 meters from Garissa University College, where Al Shabaab recently killed 148 students, Garissa Teachers Training College reported that only a few students returned to class after the attack. The full story is available [here](#).

On May 7th, the World Bank released its latest Tanzania Mainland Poverty Assessment. The report finds sustained economic growth and concerted efforts around national strategies to alleviate poverty have led to a decline of approximately one percentage point per year in the rate of poverty in the country between 2007 and 2012, constituting the first significant reduction in 20 years. According to the World Bank, the poverty rate in Tanzania has declined from 34 percent to 28.2 percent over that period. The World Bank's findings were articulated [here](#).

On May 7th, rights group Equality Now launched the #JusticeForGirls initiative in Uganda. The project's goal is to enable women and girls who suffer sexual violence to pursue justice through local channels in order to avoid the complex and expensive process of taking a case to court. According to Equality Now, rape is the first sexual experience of almost a quarter of Ugandan women aged 15-49 and 39 percent of women in this age group have been subjected to sexual violence. Further, one in five Ugandans is disabled, and women and girls with disabilities are most at risk of sexual violence. The new initiative was described [here](#).

West Africa

On April 30th, members of the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) West African Regional Technical Assistance Center (AFRITAC) met in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire to review the activities of the most recent fiscal year and to approve the work program for the coming year. The Steering Committee expressed appreciation for the increased volume of technical assistance provided by the Center, noting the important support to regional economic integration and the progress made by member countries in the area of public finance reforms. The new work plan provides for an increase in training and peer-learning programs, including regional workshops and seminars and study trips. The meeting was summarized [here](#).

On May 5th, an IMF mission completed a visit to Guinea Bissau to conduct discussions for the 2015 Article IV consultation and to discuss possible financial support from the IMF. The mission reached staff-level agreement on an economic program that, subject to approval by IMF Management and the Executive Board, could be supported by the Extended Credit Facility (ECF) arrangement. The Executive Board is expected to review the economic program in July. More information can be found [here](#).

On May 5th, Nigerian Finance Minister Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala delivered a speech after lawmakers approved the 2015 budget. In her speech, Minister Okonjo-Iweala said Nigeria is borrowing money to pay salaries as it struggles through a difficult cash crunch brought on by halved oil prices. While acknowledging revenue challenges, Minister Okonjo-Iweala noted food prices and single-digit inflation remain stable and the economy is on a course to grow 4.8 percent this year. Excerpts from the speech were highlighted [here](#).

On May 6th, the World Bank provided an update on Benin's Emergency Urban Environment Project (EUEP), which launched in 2011 and is intended to improve sanitation conditions, limit the impact of floods, and build the institutional capacity of development actors across the country. The project is expected to better living conditions for 1,426,000 beneficiaries and reduce the number of households vulnerable to flooding by 30 percent. The project also includes training and technical assistance for Benin's local governments to help boost disaster preparedness. More information can be accessed [here](#).

Sub-Saharan Africa

On April 30th, U.N. Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Director-General Irina Bokova called for an investigation into the killing of Soleil Balanga, a journalist in the DRC. Balanga was killed in the town of Monkoto on April 16th after using a megaphone to broadcast news in the streets after the transmitter of his local radio station, Monkoto Soso Aleli, broke down. Details can be seen [here](#).

On April 30th, the Board of Directors of the African Development Bank (AfDB) approved a \$30 million sector budget support grant towards the protection of basic social services in Malawi. As the government faces fiscal pressures in the delivery of basic services following suspension of general budget support in the wake of financial mismanagement issues, AfDB financing is intended to help preserve the gains Malawi has made in expanding access to basic services to further human development and poverty reduction. The funding was announced [here](#).

On April 30th, the Government of Angola banned nine church groups operating in central Huambo province, where the main opposition party said hundreds were killed in a raid against The Light of the World Christian religious sect. Provincial authorities and the national police have declared fringe Christian groups illegal under new rules that require denominations to have 100,000 registered members spread across at least a third of Angola's 18 provinces. The new policy was criticized by human rights groups who claim the ban represents further suppression of civil liberties and freedom of speech. The full story is available [here](#).

On May 1st, the U.N. noted plans to proceed with its investigation of the events surrounding the release of an internal report on allegations of sexual misconduct by French military personnel in the Central African Republic (CAR). The report, released unofficially to French authorities in July 2014, allegedly included the identities of victims, witnesses, and investigators and represents a breach in protocol. The situation was described [here](#).

On May 1st, Seychelles subscribed to the IMF's Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS), bringing the number of subscribing countries to 64. Seychelles is the 13th country to graduate from the IMF's General Data Dissemination System (GDDS), of which Seychelles has been a participant since 2006. As the third sub-Saharan African country to subscribe to the SDDS, the IMF commended Seychelles for its strong commitment to transparency, as well as the adoption of internationally accepted best practices in statistics. Seychelles' subscription to the SDDS was announced [here](#).

On May 4th, U.N. Special Representative for the DRC and head of the U.N. Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) Martin Kobler condemned an attack on U.N. helicopters near the city of Beni. The helicopters were fired upon by a group of unidentified armed men, but the helicopter was eventually able to land safely. Special Representative Kobler indicated the attackers will be pursued. The incident was detailed [here](#).

On May 4th, the AfDB's Executive Directors endorsed the Bank's Botswana Country Strategy Paper (CSP) 2015-2019, which provides a framework for the Bank to support Botswana in achieving inclusive, sustainable growth. The AfDB's support will focus on infrastructure development and private sector development through the promotion of public-private partnerships and policy and regulatory reforms. A press release was issued [here](#).

On May 4th, the Cato Institute held a briefing titled, "South Africa: The Next Ten Years." Speakers included Frans Cronje of the South African Institute of Race Relations and Vukasin Petrovic of Freedom House. The discussion was moderated by Marian Tupy of the Cato Institute. Event details were shared [here](#).

On May 5th, the IMF highlighted a seminar recently hosted by AFRITAC South on "Frameworks for the Management of Fiscal Risks." The event brought together 21 Finance Ministry officials from eight AFRITAC South member countries, including Botswana, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe, as well as a representative of the Macroeconomic and Financial Management Institute of Eastern and Southern Africa (MEFMI). Country experts shared their experiences in setting up the institutional and organizational frameworks necessary for identifying,

assessing, and reporting on fiscal risks, managing natural resource income, and addressing risks from public-private partnerships. The seminar was highlighted [here](#).

On May 5th, following a week-long national reconciliation forum, eight major militia groups in the CAR signed a pact agreeing to free all child soldiers and other children used as sex slaves or menial workers and to stop recruiting children. The parties are soon expected to agree to a schedule for the release of the children and their return to families, as well as protection and support for the children who are freed. According to UNICEF, the deal is likely to cover between 6,000 and 10,000 children. An article on the agreement can be read [here](#).

On May 5th, DRC Prime Minister Augustin Matata Ponyo's office reported strong economic growth helped the DRC create around 100,000 jobs per year from 2012 to 2014. Despite the number of new jobs created, the government reported unemployment remains above 40 percent. Some believe the disconnect between the figures is due to the fact a government unemployment survey ignored much of the informal economy, which provides jobs for many of the country's 67 million people. The data was analyzed [here](#).

On May 5th, a military spokesman announced the DRC army killed 16 Ugandan Islamist rebels on Sunday during fighting in Kokola. Four Congolese soldiers were also killed. Last year, Congolese forces launched Operation Sukola I against the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). In addition to killing several militants, the army also received six AK-47s. The news follows the military's announcement last week that its forces had killed the ADF's third highest ranking commander. More information was posted [here](#).

On May 6th, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon condemned the killing of two peacekeepers and the wounding of 13 others in the DRC following an ambush in the North Kivu region. The attack occurred when a MONUSCO convoy came under fire from suspected ADF fighters. Following the attack, four Tanzanian peacekeepers were reported missing. More information can be seen [here](#).

On May 6th, Zimbabwean officials met with Western ambassadors and representatives from the IMF and AfDB to discuss direct budgetary support, marking the first time Zimbabwe has asked the West for financial assistance in a decade. Donors pledged \$468 million to Zimbabwe for this year to support health, agriculture, and governance projects, down from \$737 million in 2014. Zimbabwe is one of a few developing countries that funds its budget entirely from taxes because it does not qualify for international credit due to a foreign debt of \$9 billion. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On May 6th, South African police fired rubber bullets at protestors in Johannesburg's Soweto township to disperse demonstrations against state utility company Eskom's unaffordable electricity prices. The police moved in after residents barricaded streets to show their discontent with a new payment system that they say has increased the price of electricity. Eskom has recently employed rolling blackouts to avoid overwhelming the grid with electricity demand. The protests were noted [here](#).

On May 7th, South African Revenue Service (SARS) Deputy Commissioner Ivan Pillay resigned. SARS Commissioner Tom Moyane had suspended Deputy Commissioner Pillay in December, pending an investigation into charges that he helped establish an unlawful secret intelligence unit within the organization. All charges have been dropped as a result of Deputy Commissioner Pillay's resignation and he will no longer appear at a disciplinary hearing scheduled for May 15th. The situation was explained [here](#).

General Africa News

On April 28th, former U.S. President Bill Clinton and Chelsea Clinton departed on a nine-day trip to Africa, with stops planned in Tanzania, Kenya, Liberia, and Morocco. The trip was designed to highlight the Clinton Foundation's work on economic development and climate change, as well as the empowerment of women and girls. The Clintons were accompanied by wealthy donors and foundation supporters and additional donors and supporters were expected to join a conference in Marrakesh, Morocco. For more information, click [here](#).

On May 5th, OCHA Operations Director John Ging detailed his recent visits to Chad and Niger to assess how both countries are hosting more than 850,000 refugees from Nigeria, the CAR, Mali, Libya, and

South Sudan. While applauding Chad and Niger for their humanity in opening their borders, Director Ging encouraged the international community to step up to share more of the burden, especially as Chad and Niger are facing a worsening climate, acute poverty, and minimal infrastructure. Director Ging's observations were summarized [here](#).

On May 5th, the Africa 2015 Wealth Report was released, noting that Mozambique is expected to be the fastest growing African market for individuals with a net worth of \$1 million or more over the next decade, followed by Ivory Coast and Zambia. Currently, South Africa is home to the greatest number of millionaires, and despite unrest in the country, Egypt current ranks second. The report's findings were highlighted [here](#).

On May 6th, the IMF and the United Kingdom's (U.K.) Department for International Development (DFID) launched the Enhanced Data Dissemination Initiative 2 (EDDI2). The project will help to improve macroeconomic statistics covering national accounts and prices, monetary and financial statistics, government finance statistics, and data dissemination in 44 countries in Africa and the Middle East. The project was launched [here](#).

On May 6th, the Norwegian Refugee Council's (NRC) Internal Displacement Monitoring Center released new data showing a total of 38 million people have been internally displaced within their countries at the end of 2014, the highest figure ever recorded. Of the displaced people, 60 percent came from the five countries of Iraq, South Sudan, Syria, the DRC, and Nigeria. The study can be downloaded [here](#).

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