



ML Strategies Update

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Africa Update

Leading the News

Tunisia

On March 18th, U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Ed Royce (R-CA) issued a statement on the terrorist attack in Tunisia. Congressman Royce said the attack was abhorrent, but not surprising, and articulated his belief that Tunisia was targeted by terrorists as a new democracy in a region of turmoil. In addition, Congressman Royce argued the U.S. needs to do more to help Tunisia secure its borders and build capable government institutions, especially in the security sector. His feedback was posted [here](#).

On March 19th, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) claimed responsibility for the deadly attack on the Bardo National Museum in Tunis, Tunisia, and warned of more bloodshed to come. The announcement came just hours after the Tunisian Government deployed the military to protect the country's largest cities. In a statement posted on the Internet, ISIL criticized the country's secularism and hailed Abu Zakaria al-Tunisi and Aby Anas al-Tunisi, aliases for gunmen Hatem Khachnaou and Yassine Labidi, as martyrs. ISIL's claim of responsibility for the attack was announced [here](#).

On March 19th, U.S. President Barack Obama spoke with President Beji Caid Essebsi of Tunisia to offer condolences and support following the March 18th attack on the Bardo Museum. President Obama extended sympathy to the victims' families and loved ones and commended the Tunisian people for their commitment to standing strong and united in the face of terrorism. Additionally, he reiterated that Tunisia's inclusive democracy is a powerful example in the region and reaffirmed robust cooperation on counterterrorism and broader security issues with the Tunisian Government. President Obama also offered U.S. support for Tunisia's investigation of the attack. The call was summarized [here](#).

On March 19th, State Department Spokesperson Jen Psaki acknowledged reports that ISIL has claimed responsibility for the attack on the Bardo Museum in Tunisia. She noted the State Department believed the Internet claim was authentic, but was working independently to verify the claims. Spokesperson Psaki also reported the U.S. Embassy in Tunis had been in touch with the Tunisian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and offered assistance, but no formal request for assistance had been received to date. Her comments were recorded [here](#).

On March 20th, at the European Union (EU) Summit in Brussels, Belgium, EU leaders agreed to increase cooperation with Tunisia following the terrorist attack on tourists visiting the Bardo National Museum. The EU also agreed to provide more economic assistance to Tunisia, as well as additional support for social development. More information can be viewed [here](#).

On March 20th, Tunisian Security Minister Rafik Chelly provided an update on the investigation into the terrorist attack on the Bardo Museum. Minister Chelly reported the suspects were activated from sleeper cells in Tunisia, but did not say which group activated them or with whom they trained. He also said they left the country illegally last December for Libya and were able to train with weapons there. At the time of the update, authorities had arrested nine people in connection with the attack. For details, click [here](#).

On March 22nd, Tunisian Prime Minister Habib Essid dismissed six police commanders following the March 18th attack on the National Bardo Museum. Mofdi Mssedi, Prime Minister Essid's spokesman, said the six included an intelligence brigade chief, the Tunis district police chief, the traffic police commander, a Bardo Museum security chief, and a commander for the capital's Sidi Bachir district. The decision followed Prime Minister Essid's visit to the Bardo Museum on Sunday, where he observed security failures. The dismissals were noted [here](#).

On March 24th, plans to reopen Tunisia's Bardo Museum following last week's terrorist attack were delayed until Sunday. The museum had been due to reopen on Tuesday morning, but due to security concerns, the reopening was halted and replaced with a symbolic ceremony. While only media was permitted inside the museum, a crowd gathered for the ceremony to show support for the museum as a symbol of Tunisian culture. The ceremony was described [here](#).

On March 24th, the Tunisian Government announced the closing of its airspace to flights arriving from western Libya, just days after allowing planes from Tripoli back into the country for the first time in six months. Flights between Tunisia and the internationally recognized government based in the eastern part of the country have never stopped. According to officials, airspace was closed for security reasons, further elevating concerns the attack on the Bardo Museum by gunmen who had trained in Libya could be a sign that violence is spilling over from Libya into Tunisia. The full story is available [here](#).

Nigeria

On March 19th, upon concluding a visit to Yola, Nigeria, Operations Director for the United Nations (U.N.) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) John Ging and Director of Emergency Programs for the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) Afshan Khan reported on the growing tragedy facing civilians amidst ongoing fighting between government forces and Boko Haram insurgents. According to U.N. officials, more than one million people have already been displaced by the fighting and an estimated 6,300 civilians have been killed. In addition, Yola, which is located along the border with Cameroon, had doubled its population to 600,000 due to the influx of internally displaced persons (IDPs). Additional observations were posted [here](#).

On March 20th, Chadian and Nigerien troops discovered a mass grave of Boko Haram victims outside the town of Damasak, Nigeria, which was liberated from Boko Haram control over the weekend. According to the Nigerien military, investigations were launched to establish the number of bodies found at the grave site. Nigerien military leaders requested that Nigerian troops ultimately occupy the town and take over the investigation. More information was reported [here](#).

On March 22nd, two Chadian helicopters bombed Nigerian Boko Haram positions, killing several dozen militants near the village of Djaboullam, across the border from the Nigerien town of Diffa. According to the Nigerien military, Niger and Chad had received intelligence that a group of Boko Haram fighters had gathered in the border village, which led to the strikes that also destroyed several vehicles and motorcycles. It is thought the militants were reconvening in Djaboullam after being chased from other towns by the Nigerian army. More information can be seen [here](#).

On March 23rd, U.S. President Barack Obama recorded a video message for the Nigerian people on the March 28th presidential election. President Obama praised the people of Nigeria for their efforts to build political institutions free of military rule and to grow the continent's largest economy. In addition, he

called for the elections to be held in a manner that is free, fair, and peaceful and urged candidates to make it clear to voters that violence has no place in the elections. President Obama's video message was recorded [here](#).

On March 23rd, U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Ed Royce (R-CA) issued a statement on House passage of a resolution introduced by Congresswoman Robin Kelly (D-IL) condemning the cowardly acts on innocent men, women, and children in northeastern Nigeria by Boko Haram and urging a peaceful and credible national election. Congressman Royce said this weekend's election in Nigeria will be a critical moment for the country and the region, especially given the grave threat of Boko Haram. Further, Congressman Royce said the resolution puts the House on record urging a non-violent, free, and fair election and robust security assistance for the forces fighting on the front lines against Boko Haram. The statement was posted [here](#).

On March 23rd, the Hudson Institute held a briefing titled, "Boko Haram, the Islamic State's West African Franchise." Speakers included Bukky Shonibare of the #BringBackOurGirlsCampaign and Adopt-A-Camp, Nigeria and Emmanuel Ogebe of Washington Working Group on Nigeria. Nina Shea of the Hudson Institute moderated the discussion. Clips from the briefing can be watched [here](#).

On March 24th, the Nigerian federal high court in Lagos barred the military from deploying around polling stations during the March 28th elections. The court accepted arguments made by national assembly member and opposition leader Femi Gbajabiamila that deployment of the military for election purposes violated the constitution, amid opposition fears soldiers could be used for intimidation. The ruling does not affect troops already deployed to northeastern Nigeria to deter Boko Haram violence. The court's decision was detailed [here](#).

On March 24th, the head of Nigeria's electoral commission, Attahiru Jega, reported that about 56.7 million voter cards have been collected. This represents roughly 82 percent of the registered electorate. In addition, Jega pledged the elections March 28th elections will be well organized, credible, and peaceful. The status of voter card collection was noted [here](#).

On March 24th, *Reuters* reported that political uncertainty surrounding Nigeria's upcoming elections, in addition to the fall in world oil prices, has slashed revenues and triggered layoffs across the country, notably in the construction sector. Standard and Poor's rating agency downgraded Nigeria to a B+ from BB- last week and the naira has fallen 20 percent since being devalued in November. The job and revenue losses are anticipated to negatively impact incumbent candidate President Goodluck Jonathan. An article on the situation was published [here](#).

On March 25th, U.S. National Security Advisor Susan Rice met with Nigerian Defense Minister Aliyu Mohammed Gusau on the upcoming Nigerian presidential elections. Ambassador Rice underscored the importance of a transparent, free, fair, and inclusive electoral process without violence and highlighted the need for the Nigerian security forces to remain apolitical while providing election security. Additionally, Ambassador Rice noted recent progress Nigeria and its neighbors have achieved in the campaign against Boko Haram and reiterated U.S. support for a regional campaign to counter the terrorist group while respecting human rights and addressing the underlying causes of Boko Haram's founding and territorial expansion. The meeting was summarized [here](#).

On March 25th, reports surfaced that Boko Haram militants had kidnapped more than 400 women and children from the town of Damasak, Nigeria. The town was only recently freed of Boko Haram last month by forces from Chad and Niger. There has been no official confirmation of the number kidnapped. An article on the kidnappings can be read [here](#).

On March 26th, Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan and opposition party presidential candidate Muhammadu Buhari signed a second peace agreement focused on preventing the escalation of violence during the upcoming elections. The agreement is a promise between the two parties to hold peaceful elections on Saturday and to avoid religious or ethnic tensions. Details on the peace agreement can be viewed [here](#).

On March 26th, the Nigerian military detained two *Al Jazeera* journalists in Maiduguri. According to Nigeria's defense headquarters, Ahmed Idris and Ali Mustafa were being kept in their hotel rooms after

they were found in areas in close proximity to the military operations against Boko Haram. The situation around the detentions was detailed [here](#).

On March 27th, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield will travel to Nigeria to lead the official diplomatic observation mission for the March 28th presidential and national assembly elections. While in Nigeria, Assistant Secretary Thomas-Greenfield is also expected to hold high-level bilateral meetings. Her travel was announced [here](#).

Libya

On March 19th, Libya's state-owned oil company, National Oil Co., posted a declaration of independence on its website amidst the ongoing conflict between the internationally recognized government and the rival Libya Dawn coalition controlling Tripoli. National Oil Co. noted it receives no directives from either government and operates in independence from both sets of authorities. Due to the security situation in Libya, the company has been forced to cut its production by two thirds to just 500,000 barrels per day. The full story was reported [here](#).

On March 20th, as Libyan stakeholders resumed peace talks in Morocco, U.N. Special Representative and head of the U.N. Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) Bernardino Leon said the negotiations were entering a decisive round. Special Representative Leon also recognized that fighting and airstrikes in Libya, as well as recent terrorist attacks in the region, serve as evidence of the delicate nature of the country's peace building process. This three-day phase of negotiations focused on a series of documents pertaining to security arrangements and a national unity government, as well as a confidence building measures document. Details on the latest round of peace talks can be found [here](#).

On March 21st, the Governments of France, Germany, Italy, Spain, the United Kingdom (U.K.) and the U.S. issued a joint statement on Libya congratulating progress in the U.N.-sponsored peace talks. The leaders urged those taking part in the dialogue to enter into the discussions constructively and in good faith in order to reach agreement on a national unity government and arrangements for a ceasefire as quickly as possible. Additionally, they expressed concern about the growing threat from terrorist groups in Libya, including ISIL, which has expanded its presence in the country in the absence of a unified central government. The joint statement can be read [here](#).

On March 23rd, U.N. Special Representative for Libya and head of UNSMIL Bernardino Leon provided an update on the Libyan peace talks. Special Representative Leon noted UNSMIL was prepared to advance a proposal that might be the basis for the future governance of Libya and would compromise the formation of a council of municipalities as one of several key institutions in a post-conflict Libya. He also observed the challenges facing Libyan stakeholders, including the need to reduce fighting to allow for the delivery of critical humanitarian aid and the need to send a message against all terrorist groups in Libya. The update was captured [here](#).

On March 23rd, eight civilians were killed in an airstrike near Tripoli, as Libya's internationally recognized government moved forward with an assault to recapture the capital taken over by the coalition of militias known as Libya Dawn last year. The offensive was first announced on Friday, despite the restart of peace talks in Morocco. The government based in eastern Libya claimed responsibility for the airstrike in Tarhouna, claiming to have hit a military base and shot down a jet flow by Libya Dawn fighters. For details, click [here](#).

On March 25th, UNSMIL and the U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) released a joint report detailing how armed groups across Libya have targeted human rights defenders seeking to shed light on the abuses. The report documents attacks, including killings, abductions, torture, and other ill-treatment, unlawful deprivation of liberty and death threats by phone and on social media since the escalation of fighting in May 2014. The report can be downloaded [here](#).

On March 25th, ISIL claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing that occurred earlier this week in Benghazi, Libya. The attack killed seven people at an army checkpoint and triggered a round of retaliatory airstrikes by army forces. ISIL's claim of responsibility for the attack was noted [here](#).

On March 25th, the forces of the two rival governments in Libya each came under attack by ISIL militants in the city of Sirte. According to reports, five members of the Tripoli government forces were killed in a clash. While fighting also occurred with forces of the internationally recognized government, no deaths were reported. The violence is the latest in a string of attacks by ISIL militants in Libya. More information was shared [here](#).

On March 25th, ISIL released two Bangladeshi citizens that had been held as hostages with other foreigners after an attack on the Al-Ghani oilfield in Libya. The two were held for over two weeks. The hostage situation was detailed [here](#).

South Sudan

On March 24th, the U.N. Security Council expressed disappointment over the dissolution of peace talks between parties in South Sudan. The Security Council condemned the violations of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement that was accepted by the Government and opposition forces in 2014. Additionally, the Security Council threatened sanctions if steps by both sides were not taken to end military operations and violence. Excerpts from a statement issued by the Security Council were highlighted [here](#).

On March 25th, South Sudanese President Salva Kiir announced the possibility of international sanctions would not stop him from responding to his rival, former Vice President Riek Machar. Addressing a gathering in Juba, President Kiir warned that if his forces are attacked they will fight back against the opposition until they are gone. The statement comes just days after the parliament of South Sudan voted to extend President Kiir's term in office for an additional three years. For more information, click [here](#).

Central African Republic

On March 17th-19th, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield visited the Central African Republic (CAR), making her third visit to the country since December 2013. In Bangui, Assistant Secretary Thomas-Greenfield met with CAR Transitional President Catherine Samba-Panza, as well as members of the Transitional Government, the Transitional National Council, the Preparatory Committee for the Bangui Forum, the U.N. Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the CAR (MINUSCA), and members of civil society. Her visit to the CAR was outlined [here](#).

On March 18th, the Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved financial assistance under the Rapid Credit Facility (RCF) in the amount equivalent to \$7.63 million for the CAR in support of the Transitional Authorities' emergency economic recovery program. The IMF noted the CAR authorities' overall fiscal response in 2014 was broadly adequate. Despite the CAR's difficult security environment, the IMF also said the prospects for 2015 remain favorable on condition there is a successful and timely completion of the political transition, improved security, and increased support from the international community in revitalizing the country's economy. Additional analysis was provided [here](#).

On March 20th, Ambassador-At-Large for Global Criminal Justice Issues Stephen Rapp was on travel to Bangui, CAR to meet with government officials, civil society organizations, and U.N. officials on international justice issues, including proposed legislation for a Special Penal Court in the CAR. His travel was noticed [here](#).

On March 23rd, the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) launched an urgent appeal to help provide farmers in the CAR with seeds and tools for the country's upcoming planting season, warning that without additional assistance vulnerable populations risked further deterioration of their livelihoods. According to the FAO, 1.5 million people in the CAR remain food insecure amid ongoing hostilities throughout the country. The situation was described [here](#).

On March 26th, the U.N. Security Council adopted a resolution to increase the number of peacekeepers serving as part of MINUSCA by 750 military personnel, 280 police personnel, and 20 corrections officers. In adopting the resolution, the Security Council observed the CAR remains a threat to international peace and security due to continuing clashes between the mainly Muslim Seleka alliance and the mostly Christian anti-Balaka militia. More information can be found [here](#).

West Africa Ebola Outbreak

On March 19th, *The Washington Post* reported on a team of U.S.-funded researchers in the Republic of Congo (ROC) trying to determine where Ebola hides between human epidemics. If scientists can pinpoint the carriers of Ebola, such as gorillas, bats, and other animals suspected of spreading the virus, and how Ebola is transmitted between them, future outbreaks may be easier to anticipate and prevent. The full story is available [here](#).

On March 20th, the U.N. World Health Organization (WHO) appealed for an urgent scaling up of routine immunization services and distribution of anti-malaria medicines in the West African countries most affected by Ebola to counter a growing risk of outbreaks of measles, pertussis, and other vaccine-preventable diseases. The Ebola outbreak has reduced routine vaccination coverage in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, as health workers have shifted their focus to stopping Ebola transmission. Fear of Ebola has kept those in need of vaccinations and other medications from visiting health centers. The WHO's recommendations were outlined [here](#).

On March 20th, Liberia diagnosed its first case of Ebola in more than two weeks. The patient was identified as Ruth Tugbah, a street vendor who lived in a one-bathroom house shared with 52 others in a suburb of Monrovia. Tugbah had also recently sold food at a school where more than 1,900 students are enrolled. In the past days, officials have expressed concern Liberia may see additional Ebola cases, especially given the number of people Tugbah came into contact with after showing symptoms. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On March 20th, at the request of Doctors Without Borders (MSF), Google unveiled a tablet that can be used by health workers treating Ebola patients. For most of the response, doctors fighting Ebola have had to use a pen and paper. However, Google's tablet is enclosed in polycarbonate, which allows for it to be soaked in chorine for decontamination. In addition, the tablet communicates with a battery-powered server outside of high-risk zones, allowing doctors to save and retrieve patient records more easily. More information can be seen [here](#).

On March 22nd, *The New York Times* recognized the one-year anniversary of the passage of the declaration of the largest Ebola outbreak in history in West Africa. The outbreak has now claimed more than 10,000 lives. While the response effort has, at times, been messy, inefficient, expensive, and slow, the global effort to fight the disease has improved and is helping to contain disease transmission. In addition, the response has established expertise that may be needed to prevent future outbreaks. An article on efforts to contain Ebola in the past year was published [here](#).

On March 23rd, UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador and actor Orlando Bloom ended a four-day visit to Ebola-affected communities in Liberia, where he praised Liberians' efforts to combat the deadly virus. While in Liberia, Bloom met with representatives of A-Life, a peer education project in Monrovia, and visited a primary school in a severely affected community on the border with Sierra Leone. His visit to Liberia was summarized [here](#).

On March 23rd, the Government of Guinea hired U.S. firm Nelson Mullins to act as the country's foreign agent in the U.S. Nelson Mullins will assist Guinea with Ebola-related appropriations by working with the Embassy of Guinea to improve its engagement with the Obama Administration, Congress, and international organizations. The firm will also assist Guinea in reaching out to potential investors and development partners in the U.S. The engagement was detailed [here](#).

On March 23rd, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) hosted a call with U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Director Dr. Tom Frieden titled, "Where Does Guinea Stand in the Fight Against Ebola? A Conversation with CDC Director Tom Frieden." Dr. Frieden discussed his recent trip to assess the Ebola outbreak in Guinea, as well as broader efforts and challenges to bring the Ebola outbreak in Guinea under control. More information was posted [here](#).

On March 25th, the WHO released its weekly statistics on the number of new Ebola cases in West Africa. A total of 79 new confirmed cases of Ebola were reported in the week ending on March 22nd, the lowest weekly total in 2015. There were 45 new confirmed cases reported in Guinea, 33 new cases in Sierra Leone, and one new case in Liberia. Additional data was analyzed [here](#).

On March 26th, the IMF approved a grant of approximately \$29.8 million in debt relief under the Catastrophe Containment and Relief (CCR) Trust for Guinea. The CCR grant will be used repay outstanding debt and free up resources for economic recovery in Guinea following the Ebola crisis. A press release on IMF support for Ebola relief efforts in Guinea can be read [here](#).

United States – Africa Relations

White House

On March 19th, President Barack Obama announced the designation of a Presidential Delegation to Namibia to attend the inauguration of President-elect Hage Geingob and the country's celebration to mark its 25th anniversary of independence on March 21st. The delegation was led by Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources Heather Higginbottom and also included U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria Thomas Daughton, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield, Ambassador-At-Large and U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator and Special Representative for Global Health Diplomacy Deborah Birx, and Ranking Member of the House Foreign Affairs Africa Subcommittee Karen Bass (D-CA). The delegation was announced [here](#).

On March 24th, President Barack Obama announced his intent to nominate Lucy Tamlyn to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Benin. Tamlyn is a career member of the Foreign Service and currently serves as Director of the Office of the Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan. Her nomination was listed [here](#).

On March 25th, Vice President Joe Biden called the Chairperson of the African Union (AU) High-Level Implementation Panel for Sudan and South Sudan and former President of South Africa Thabo Mbeki to discuss Sudan. Vice President Biden thanked President Mbeki for his leadership and his efforts to bring the many Sudanese groups together, and the two discussed the importance of establishing a nation-wide approach to ending the conflict. The leaders also discussed the need for continued pressure on the Sudanese government and opposition leaders, as well as civil society groups, to begin the process of a national dialogue and agreed to continue coordinating close on AU and U.S. efforts. A readout of the call was shared [here](#).

State Department

On March 19th, the U.S. embassies in Bamako, Mali, and Niamey, Niger noted they are boosting security for diplomats and their families amid security concerns sparked by attacks from Islamist militants. The U.S. Embassy in Mali sent a notice to Americans that it had banned non-official travel by U.S. government personnel outside of the capital until the end of April and might restrict travel in the city on two upcoming holidays. The U.S. Embassy in Niger said that armed guards will now be required at schools attended by American officials due to security concerns. The full story is available [here](#).

On March 20th, Secretary of State John Kerry issued a press statement congratulating the people of Namibia on 25 years of independence. Secretary Kerry said Namibia's pursuit of democratic principles and economic prosperity stands as an example to the region. As a friend and partner, Secretary Kerry said the U.S. is proud of the work the two countries are doing to fight HIV/AIDS, promote education, and ensure environmental conservation, and the U.S. will continue to seek new ways of partnering with Namibia to create peace and prosperity. His full statement can be read [here](#).

On March 20th, the State Department issued a statement expressing its disappointment regarding the disappearance of Zimbabwean civil society activist Itai Dzamara on March 9th. His whereabouts remain unknown. The State Department urged Zimbabwean authorities to mobilize their full resources to locate Dzamara, investigate his disappearance, and ensure the protection of his human rights and fundamental freedoms. The statement was posted [here](#).

On March 24th, the Governments of the U.S., the U.K., and Norway issued a joint statement to express their continuing support for the process of National Dialogue in Sudan. The members of the Troika stressed that a comprehensive and inclusive National Dialogue remains the best opportunity to achieve a representative political system and to confront the fundamental issues of governance, political inclusiveness, resource sharing, identity, and social equality. As a result, the leaders welcomed the

recent pledges by the Government of Sudan and Sudanese opposition and civil society groups of their readiness to participate in a pre-dialogue meeting, planned for March 29th-30th, without conditions. The full joint statement was published [here](#).

On March 24th, Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment Catherine Novelli participated in a dialogue of the Africa Chiefs of Mission Regional Conference, at the Department of State. Under Secretary Novelli's participation was noted [here](#).

On March 25th, State Department Spokesperson Jen Psaki congratulated Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sudan on the signing of the agreement on declaration of principles on the Gran Ethiopian Renaissance Dam project. She noted this is an important step forward and said the State Department looks forward to working with the countries to reinforce this spirit of cooperation and ensure the sustainable development of the Nile for the benefit of all countries. Spokesperson Psaki's comments were transcribed [here](#).

On March 26th, Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment Catherine Novelli met with U.S. Ambassador to South Africa Patrick Gaspard at the Department of State. The meeting was listed [here](#).

On March 26th, State Department Counselor Tom Shannon met with U.S. Ambassador to Tunisia Jacobs Walles. The meeting was included on the State Department's daily appointment schedule, which can be accessed [here](#).

U.S. Agency for International Development

On March 23rd, Colin Quinn, a Climate Change Advisor and Natural Resources Officer with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) mission in Mozambique, authored a blog post on Mozambique's adaptability to climate change. Mozambique is among the African countries most vulnerable to climate change, with over 1,550 miles of coastline, more than half of its population living along the ocean, and cities that serve as economic hubs. Floods, droughts, and cyclones are also common. The blog post can be accessed [here](#).

Department of Defense

On March 17th, Djiboutian medical providers, in coordination with the Djibouti Ministry of Health, USAID, and Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa (CHTF-HOA), took part in the Dikhil Region Medical Caravan. The event included specialists in the fields of ophthalmology, pediatrics, and obstetrics and gynecology, to provide medical treatment and medications to over one hundred villagers in Yoboki, Djibouti. The event was detailed [here](#).

On March 17th-18th, Ghanaian, German, and U.S. Navy sailors occupied the Ghana Navy Ship (GNS) Bonsu, a former U.S. Coast Guard ship sold to the Ghana navy in 2001, to practice tactical sweeps, room clearings, prisoner handling, and medical responses as part of training program. The program was held prior to the start of Exercise Obangame Express, which was held March 20th-26th in the Gulf of Guinea. Exercise Obangame Express brought together 24 countries and international organizations to work together to increase maritime security for the purposes of sustaining global commerce. An article on the training was published [here](#).

On March 26th, Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force Crisis Response – Africa provided insights on a recently completed small unit tactics training with more than 40 Tanzanian park rangers at the Selous Game Reserve in Matambwe. Marines and sailors began the training with two days of weapons handling procedures and combat marksmanship training, followed by the basic weapons skills training with assault rifles. The training was intended to enhance the park rangers' counter-illicit trafficking capabilities. Details can be viewed [here](#).

U.S. Trade and Development Agency

On March 23rd, U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) Director Leocadia Zak led a delegation of U.S. and Cape Town officials on a tour of Lentegeur Library, where a new Wi-Fi hotspot will provide internet access to residents in the township of Mitchell's Plain. The library is among 69 facilities at which

the city has installed Wi-Fi hotspots as part of its digital inclusion strategy, which was developed with USTDA support. As part of the project, the City of Cape Town, South Africa, plans to install a total of 130 Wi-Fi hotspots in and around public buildings where community members congregate for services. More information can be found [here](#).

On March 23rd-25th, USTDA, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT)/Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), hosted the U.S.-South Africa Aviation Leadership and Skills Development Seminar in Cape Town, South Africa. The seminar was the capstone of a series of USTDA-sponsored workshops for South Africa aviation professionals held in the U.S. These training courses have focused on aviation education and skills awareness, operations, management and security/safety training, emergency planning, and airport terminal airspace capacity development and planning, among other important human capacity-building requirements. Details can be seen [here](#).

Overseas Private Investment Corporation

On March 20th, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) highlighted an OPIC-funded water desalination plant in Algiers, Algeria, that is bringing clean drinking water to many of the city's residents. The plant, which uses reverse osmosis technology, was built with the support of OPIC financing to Ionics Inc. of Watertown, Massachusetts. OPIC provided a \$200 million loan to Ionics to help facilitate construction of the plant. The project was detailed [here](#).

On March 22nd, OPIC recognized World Water Day by highlighting its efforts to support African farmers who rely on rainfall for their livelihoods. Last year, OPIC partnered with Pamiga Finance S.A., an investment company developed by French NGO PAMIGA, to bring financial resources to rural microfinance institutions in Africa. The project has been successful in providing dedicated loans to African farmers to finance investments in micro-irrigation systems to help improve agricultural productivity. More information was shared [here](#).

Millennium Challenge Corporation

On March 20th, in honor of World Water Day, the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) issued a fact sheet on the importance of water in sustainable development. The fact sheet highlights portions of MCC's \$350.7 million compact with Malawi to protect the sustainability of hydropower infrastructure investments, \$354.8 million compact with Zambia to help improve access to water and sanitation for people in Lusaka, \$362.2 million compact with Lesotho to provide more water for the growth of garment and textile operations, and \$540 million compact with Senegal to promote investment in irrigation schemes designed to increase rural incomes. The fact sheet can be accessed [here](#).

On March 20th, U.S. Ambassador to Cabo Verde Donald Heflin authored a post for MCC's *Poverty Reduction Blog* highlighting MCC's investments in water and sanitation projects in the country. In Cabo Verde, MCC has partnered with local governments, private utilities, and philanthropists, such as The Coca-Cola Africa Foundation, to transform policies and institutional mandates, reform inefficient utilities, and improve the quality and reach of water and sanitation infrastructure across the nation. The blog post can be read [here](#).

Congress

On March 25th, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee held a hearing to consider ambassadorial nominations, including those of Paul Folmsbee to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Mali, Mary Catherine Phee to serve as U.S. Ambassador to South Sudan, and Katherine Simonds Dhanani to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Somalia. The hearing was noticed [here](#).

On March 26th, the Senate Armed Services Committee held a hearing on U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), and U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM) programs and budgets. As part of the hearing, the Committee received testimony from AFRICOM Commander General David Rodriguez. A webcast of the hearing can be watched [here](#).

North Africa

On March 19th, World Bank Managing Director and Chief Operating Officer Sri Mulyani Indrawati concluded an official visit to Tunisia. At the end of her visit, Dr. Indrawati reaffirmed the World Bank's support for Tunisia, especially following the attack on the Bardo Museum that coincided with her visit. While in Tunis, the World Bank delegation also met with Tunisian President Beji Caid Essebsi and Prime Minister Habib Essid to discuss Tunisia's political progress and how World Bank resources may be used to support Tunisia in the post transition period. Dr. Indrawati's visit to Tunisia was outlined [here](#).

On March 19th, the World Bank highlighted the Egypt Development Marketplace (DM) project. Financed by the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the project has provided \$1.25 million to help create jobs and revive and preserve handicrafts at the risk of dying out. The project includes 35 grantees across 14 Egyptian governorates that were each awarded \$25,000, as well as capacity development and technical assistance to improve the sustainability and scalability of their project. More information can be seen [here](#).

On March 23rd, representatives from Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sudan met in Khartoum and signed a preliminary deal on sharing water from the Nile River allowing Ethiopia to continue with its construction of a \$4 billion hydroelectric dam. Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn said the dam will not disrupt the flow of the Nile, which mainly originates in Ethiopia, while Egyptian President Abdul Fattah Al-Sisi said his country has sought assurances that the dam will not significantly cut the river's flow to Egypt's growing population. Details of specific procedures will be worked out in a later agreement. The preliminary deal was announced [here](#).

On March 24th, a roadside bomb killed two Egyptian soldiers during a patrol near the town of Sheikh Zuweid, the latest in a string of attacks in the Sinai Peninsula. Attacks in North Sinai have increasingly targeted security forces. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack, although the region is a stronghold of Sinai Province, the group formerly known as Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis, which has pledged its allegiance to ISIL. The attack was reported [here](#).

On March 25th, the head of Morocco's Central Bureau for Judicial Investigations Abdelhaq Khyam reported that Moroccan authorities had dismantled an ISIL cell plotting to launch attacks across the country after security forces conducted operations in a number of cities, including Marrakesh. Thirteen men between the ages of 19 and 37 were arrested on Sunday for their suspected involvement in planning attacks against public and military figures. Handguns, ammunition, mobile phones, and computers were also confiscated as part of the raid. Details were posted [here](#).

On March 25th, a court in Egypt adjourned the trial of *Al Jazeera* journalists Mohamed Fahmy and Baher Mohamed until April 22nd. The two have been charged with terrorist organizations, specifically the Muslim Brotherhood. More details on the court case can be read [here](#).

East Africa

On March 19th, a team from the IMF concluded a visit to Tanzania to initiate the second review under the Policy Support Instrument (PSI) program that was approved in July 2014. The mission met with Minister of Finance Saada Mkuya Salum, Governor of the Bank of Tanzania Benno Ndulu, and other senior government officials. The IMF team found that recent macroeconomic developments in Tanzania have been favorable and growth is estimated to have topped seven percent in 2014. Additional information was shared [here](#).

On March 20th, U.S.-based NGO Nature Conservancy launched the Upper Tana-Nairobi Water Fund in Kenya. This first African, public-private water fund brings together partners including East African Breweries Ltd, Coca-Cola, Nairobi City Water and Sewage Company (NCWDC), and electricity provider KenGen, as well as local farmers, to fund upstream water conservation through activities such as watershed protection and reforestation. The partnership was described [here](#).

On March 20th, Ethiopian Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonnen set fire to 6.1 tons of illicit ivory seized from poachers and traders over the last 20 years. Police and park officers poured petrol on the stockpile at a ceremony on a hill in the middle of the capital's Gulele Botanic Garden. The ash will be

used to fertilize 90,000 trees to be planted around a statue of an elephant. The ceremony was highlighted [here](#).

On March 23rd, a woman was killed by riot police at a demonstration organized in Malindi, Kenya to oppose higher local business taxes. According to reports, the woman died when police used teargas and live ammunition to disperse the crowd. Meanwhile, police denied killing the women or using live rounds. Under a new constitution, Kenya has given local authorities more autonomy to institute measures to help increase revenue, but businesses in the Kilifi region believe authorities are driving up costs and bureaucracy. For details, click [here](#).

On March 24th, Kenya's Interior Ministry detailed plans to build a new road, more border crossings, and barriers along the border with Somalia as part of an effort to mitigate the threat posed by Al Shabaab. Work on the project will commence this year, but officials declined to provide further information on the overarching costs, timeline, and scope of the proposal. Since 2013, more than 200 Kenyans have been killed in the border counties of Mandera and Lamu. Al Shabaab has claimed responsibility for much of the bloodshed and continues to vow to avenge Kenya's contribution of troops to an AU force battling militants in Somalia. More information was posted [here](#).

On March 26th, Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta announced the country will soon begin work on the first of three berths at a port along its northern coast. The project, first proposed in the 1970s, will give South Sudan and Ethiopia access to the Indian Ocean while bolstering the economy of northern Kenya. For details on the Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia Transport (LAPSSET) project, click [here](#).

On March 26th, Kenyan police reported that a senior officer with the country's counter-terrorism police unit was shot and killed in Mombasa. Police believe it may have been a revenge attack for the crackdown on Al Shabaab's recruitment efforts. Details on the attack were shared [here](#).

On March 26th, Ugandan authorities announced that security was being increased at locations perceived to be at high risk for terrorist attacks. The increase in security comes after the U.S. Embassy in Kampala warned officials of possible threats. While no specific group was identified, Ugandan military spokesman Paddy Ankunda said threats have commonly been made by Al Shabaab. Additionally, any non-essential events were cancelled by the U.S. embassy. More information can be found [here](#).

On March 26th, Somali entrepreneur Liban Egal discussed his plans to create a biometric fingerprint system to help struggling money transfer firms in the country. Somali firms are facing closures as a result of increased restrictions to prevent money from landing in the hands of militant groups. These restrictions have significantly impacted business from foreign banks. Egal's plan relies on a fingerprint scanner, bought from an Indian firm, and a CamelCash smartphone app that was developed by First Somali Bank. The project was described [here](#).

West Africa

On March 20th, to commemorate World Water Day, Ivorian government officials and members of parliament, representatives of the private sector, international development partners, and officials from the African Development Bank (AfDB) gathered in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, to discuss the priorities and challenges relating to access to water on the continent. According to data presented at the meeting, close to half a billion people are forced to live without safe drinking water and are deprived of basic sanitation. A substantial part of that population is made up of women and children living in impoverished conditions, primarily in rural areas. The meeting was noted [here](#).

On March 23rd, Secretary General of the Sierra Leone People's Party Sulaiman Banja Tejan-Sie, called for an indefinite campaign of civil disobedience until Vice President Samuel Sam-Sumana, who was sacked by President Ernest Bai Koroma last week, is reinstated. Sierra Leone's main opposition party is planning to engage in peaceful demonstrations and strikes beginning on March 30th as its lawyers prepare to challenge the dismissal of Vice President Sam-Sumana in court. An update on the situation was provided [here](#).

On March 23rd, a Senegalese court sentenced Karim Wade, the son of former President Abdoulaye Wade, to six years in prison for corruption. Wade, who has been in detention since April 2013, was also

ined \$230 million for illegal enrichment worth roughly \$1.4 billion during his father's 12-year rule. The verdict came as the Democratic Party of Senegal selected Wade to be their candidate in the next presidential election over the weekend. Developments around the case were reported [here](#).

On March 24th, Antonio Guterres, U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, began a two-day visit to Cameroon to observe the impacts of the displacement crises in Nigeria and the CAR. In both countries, citizens have fled as a result of violence, including in northeastern Nigeria. During his trip, High Commissioner Guterres was scheduled to meet with President Paul Biya. More information on his trip and the humanitarian crises in the region can be found [here](#).

On March 24th, the World Bank announced it would resume development operations in Guinea Bissau. The revival of activities signals a normalization of relations with Guinea Bissau, after the World Bank suspended relations immediately following a military coup. For more information on the resumption of World Bank operations in Guinea Bissau, click [here](#).

On March 24th, The Tony Elumelu Foundation (TEF) unveiled the inaugural 1,000 finalists from those who registered interest in the Tony Elumelu Entrepreneurship Program (TEEP). A total of 20,000 candidates from 52 countries across Africa submitted applications. TEEP is a \$100 million initiative to discover and support 10,000 African entrepreneurs over the next decade, with a target of creating one million new jobs and \$10 billion in additional revenues in the process. The TEEP finalists were announced [here](#).

On March 25th, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) suggested a 10-day delay in the Togo elections, slated to be held April 15th. The proposal comes as effort to allow officials time to finish a revision of the voter list, which the opposition has suggested was skewed to favor the incumbent. Details on the proposal can be read [here](#).

On March 26th, donors attending at conference hosted by the European Union in Brussels pledged over one billion Euros for Guinea-Bissau. The money will support a 10-year development plan that is intended to address the long felt political instability within the country. The pledging conference was summarized [here](#).

Sub-Saharan Africa

On March 19th, U.N. Special Representative and head of the U.N. Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (MONUSCO) Martin Kobler briefed the U.N. Security Council on developments in the country. Special Representative Kobler described the DRC Government's efforts to restore security, saying it had succeeded in freeing a large amount of territory from armed groups, which were now limited to the country's eastern provinces. He warned, however, the overall security situation is not stable and more work is needed to reduce the threat from armed groups and violence against civilians to a level that can be effectively managed by Congolese authorities. Excerpts from the briefing were highlighted [here](#).

On March 19th, an IMF team concluded a visit to Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso to carry out discussions with Burkinabe authorities on the second and their reviews of their economic and financial program supported by the Extended Credit Facility (ECF). The mission reached ad referendum agreement with the authorities on economic and financial policies that could support approval of the second and third reviews of Burkina Faso's three-year program under the ECF, which will be considered by the IMF Executive Board in May. The mission found that, in spite of a difficult economic environment, the transition government is implementing sound economic policies and preparing the country for the October 2015 elections. A press release was issued [here](#).

On March 19th, the World Bank's Board of Executive Directors approved a \$6 million International Development Association (IDA) grant to support Comoros' Social Safety Nets Project. The project will provide social safety net services to almost 6,000 extremely poor families, and will include activities related to protecting communities' productive assets and increasing their resilience to climate change. It will also focus on improving the nutrition of young children and mothers from poor communities. The project was described [here](#).

On March 19th, Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete concluded a two-day visit to Bujumbura, Burundi. Upon the conclusion of his visit, President Kikwete warned of the risk of renewed violence in Burundi if politicians do not abide by a new constitution that would prevent President Pierre Nkurunziza, who has been in power since 2005, from running for another term. President Nkurunziza has not yet said if he will run in June's election, but his supporters argue his first term should not count since he was picked by lawmakers, rather than voted into office. President Kikwete's comments were captured [here](#).

On March 19th, students at the University of Cape Town (UCT) in South Africa sent an open letter to university officials calling for the removal of a statue of British colonialist Cecil John Rhodes from university grounds. Following an incident in which the statue was vandalized, students protested the statue, which they claim serves as a reminder of Rhodes' support for racial segregation. UCT Vice-Chancellor Max Price agreed the statue should be taken down. A final decision will be made the university council at its April 15th meeting. The full story is available [here](#).

On March 23rd, the Executive Board of the IMF completed the fifth and sixth reviews of Malawi's economic performance under the program supported by an ECF arrangement, enabling an immediate disbursement of \$18.1 million. Additionally, the Board approved the authorities' request for waivers of non-observance of performance criteria related to the net domestic assets of the Reserve Bank of Malawi (RBM), net domestic borrowing by the government, the ceiling on new non-concessional external debt maturing in more than one year, and the ceiling on non-accumulation of external payments arrears. The Board also approved a request for an extension of the current ECF arrangement by six months to May 22, 2016. More information can be viewed [here](#).

On March 23rd, the Executive Board of the IMF completed the sixth review of Burundi's economic performance under the program supported by an ECF arrangement. The Board's decision enabled the immediate disbursement of \$6.9 million. The Board also approved the authorities' request for an extension of the current ECF arrangement through March 2016 and an augmentation of access by \$13.9 million. The additional financing and time will help strengthen the management of public finances and consolidate the country's economic reform program. Details can be seen [here](#).

On March 23rd, Pan Macmillan announced it had acquired U.K. and Commonwealth rights to publish the sequel to former South African President Nelson Mandela's *Long Walk To Freedom*, which it expects will hit shelves next year. The book is based on a manuscript that President Mandela wrote by hand, but never completed, chronicling his time as South Africa's first black president. The second volume of President Mandela's autobiography will focus on his divorce from his second wife, Winnie, as well as his decision to step down after a single term in office. For more information, click [here](#).

On March 23rd, the South Gauteng High Court in Johannesburg, South Africa found former Grand Slam doubles tennis champion Bob Hewitt guilty of two charges of rape and one charge of sexual assault of minors. Hewitt was charged with assaulting three under-age girls during his time coaching children in South Africa in the 1980s and 1990s. The proceedings were detailed [here](#).

On March 24th, Zimbabwean Finance Minister Patrick Chinamasa said Zimbabwe is planning talks with Germany on how to resolve a \$739 million debt. Meanwhile, German Regional Director for sub-Saharan Africa and the Sahel said the German Government will take its cues from Zimbabwe's engagement with the IMF. The Zimbabwean Government owes foreign creditors, including the IMF and World Bank, roughly \$9 billion and is intensifying efforts to have the debt canceled or rescheduled to allow for access to new loans. The full story is available [here](#).

On March 24th, South African Finance Minister Nhlanhla Nene expressed concern for the temporary suspensions of key officials at state-owned power utility Eskom. South Africa faces frequent, controlled power cuts, which are implemented by Eskom to prevent the national grid from being overwhelmed. While raising concerns about the suspensions, Minister Nene reported that Eskom's financial stability remains on course. His comments were captured [here](#).

On March 25th, the IMF released its end-of-mission statement after a visit to the ROC. Dalia Hakura, who led the 7-day mission, said the ROC's increase in government spending should be monitored. She also said the budget must reflect realistic revenues and proposed strengthening public financial management to improve the quality of government spending. A press release was issued [here](#).

On March 25th, Malawian Health Minister Jean Kalilani said the Global Fund cancelled \$574 million in grant funding for AIDS and asked for a \$6.4 million refund. The cancellation comes after allegations of financial mismanagement within the Ministry of Health and National Aids Commission. Allegedly vehicles were purchased that were not within the budget. Minister Kalilani said that Global Fund plans to channel the AIDS funding to Malawi through other organizations. His comments were recorded [here](#).

On March 25th, two child brides filed a lawsuit against the Government of Zimbabwe. Loveness Mudzuru and Ruvimbo Tsopodzi say that child marriage, which is prevalent in Zimbabwe, is a type of child abuse. Additionally, the two have stated that Zimbabwe's Marriage Act is discriminatory because it sets the minimum age for marriage at 16 for girls and 18 for boys. Mudzuru and Tsopodzi are calling for the law to align with country's 2013 constitution and international treaties that ban child marriage. For more information on the lawsuit, click [here](#).

On March 25th, South Africa's state-owned power utility Eskom announced a cut of 2,000 megawatts of electricity. Eskom has routinely begun to instate power cuts to keep the national grid from being overwhelmed in the country's worst energy crisis since 2008. An article on the energy crisis can be read [here](#).

On March 26th, 79 senior officials from the ruling party of Burundi called on President Pierre Nkurunziza to stop his efforts to seek a third term in office. In a letter delivered to the President, members of the National Council for the Defense of Democracy – Forces for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD-FDD) said the 2000 agreement, which ended the conflict between the Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups, barred him from running again. In addition, officials urged President Nkurunziza to step down to avoid violence. Excerpts from the letter can be viewed [here](#).

On March 26th, 21 rebel opposition members in Zimbabwe asked the constitutional court to reverse the decision by the speaker to remove them from parliament for allegedly abandoning the party. In the court application, the members said their dismissal was unfair and that they still belonged to the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). More details on the request can be read [here](#).

General Africa News

On March 22nd, *Mail & Guardian* highlighted trends in global arms transfers to Africa. According to available data, Africa received 9 percent of all global arms delivers between 2010 and 2014. States in sub-Saharan Africa received 42 percent of all imports into the continent during that time period. The U.S., China, and Russia are among Africa's biggest arms suppliers, while the three largest importers on the continent were Algeria, Morocco, and Sudan. Additional data was compiled [here](#).

On March 23rd, the U.N. Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) released new data compiled by the CITES' program for Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE). The figures suggest an ongoing decline in overall elephant numbers remains likely as the poaching of African elephants continued to exceed population growth throughout 2014. In particular, U.N. data shows poaching remains a significant concern in parts of the CAR, the DRC, Mozambique, Benin, and Tanzania. Additional findings were highlighted [here](#).

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