



ML Strategies Update

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Africa Update

Leading the News

West Africa Ebola Outbreak

On February 26th, acknowledging that Ebola transmission remains widespread in Sierra Leone, the United Nations (U.N.) World Health Organization (WHO) and the U.N. Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) raised concerns about challenges in engaging communities to win the fight against the disease. The WHO and UNMEER reported that unsafe burials pose a challenge, in addition to the number of individuals infected with Ebola who are still either unable or reluctant to seek treatment. Additional feedback from the U.N. was posted [here](#).

On February 26th, the U.S. military mission to build treatment facilities to combat the Ebola outbreak in Liberia came to an end, months earlier than expected. At the peak of the operation, more than 2,800 U.S. troops were deployed to Liberia to build treatment centers, set up mobile testing labs, and provide transportation and logistical support. As the number of new cases of Ebola in Liberia has plummeted in recent months, many treatment centers have been empty. Roughly 100 soldiers are expected to remain in Liberia over the next several months to monitor the disease. An update was provided [here](#).

On February 27th, the WHO announced an independent advisory body will decide in August whether or not to recommend the widespread introduction of an Ebola vaccine. According to WHO spokesman Christian Lindmeier, the recommendation will be based on the results of clinical trials. The path forward on an Ebola vaccine was discussed [here](#).

On February 27th, the U.N. released a report finding HIV/AIDS work has come to a halt in Sierra Leone, as a result of the West Africa Ebola outbreak. Manager of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Hakan Bjorkman, who runs the organization's AIDS programs, said hospitals have remained closed and HIV prevention activities in schools, as well as awareness campaigns, have been suspended. Additionally, Manager Bjorkman said about 25 percent of patients taking antiretroviral medications are missing clinic appointments. For more details, click [here](#).

On February 28th, the *New York Times* reported on the resurgence of new Ebola cases in Sierra Leone.

While the number of new cases had been on the decline at the start of the year, resulting in the lifting of travel restrictions and the reopening of schools, transmission of Ebola from sick fisherman who came ashore at Tamba Kula in February is now raising concern. While efforts were implemented in an attempt to mitigate transmission, the incident has brought dozens of new cases and deaths. The situation was described [here](#).

On March 2nd, Karamoko Ibrahima Fofana, president of the association of traditional healers in the town of Macenta, Guinea, said healers are vital in the Ebola response. In remote areas where modern communication is nonexistent, education on Ebola has been difficult. Often the first to be called upon by the sick, Fofana said healers can spread information to help stop the spread of the disease. Jean Marie Dangou, head of the WHO in Guinea, agreed. With the failure of radio and television campaigns, Dangou said that disease communication must be shaped to work with local cultures. For more information, click [here](#).

On March 2nd, the Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved a disbursement of \$85.45 million under the Extended Credit Facility (ECF) arrangement, as well as \$29.18 million for immediate debt relief under the Catastrophe Containment and Relief (CCR) Trust for Sierra Leone. The ECF funds will support the authorities' fight against the Ebola outbreak by covering urgent budgetary and balance of payments needs and strengthening international reserves. The CCR funds will be applied immediately to repay debt service obligations due to the IMF. A press release was posted [here](#).

On March 2nd, Nina Pham, a nurse at the Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital who was infected with Ebola while treating a patient last fall, filed a lawsuit in Dallas County against Texas Health Resources because the hospital lacked proper training and equipment for caring for patients infected with Ebola. She also claimed the hospital violated her privacy in an effort to improve its image after its failure to successfully treat Thomas Eric Duncan, the first Ebola patient in the U.S. While Pham is now Ebola free, she said she suffers residual effects from virus. The full story is available [here](#).

On March 3rd, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said the international community has reached a critical point in Ebola response efforts. Speaking at U.N. headquarters, Secretary-General Ban urged support to continue recovery in the hardest-hit areas of Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. Excerpts from Secretary-General Ban's statement were highlighted [here](#).

On March 3rd, U.N. representatives pledged their continued support for West African countries hardest hit by the Ebola outbreak. The pledge occurred at a high-level conference on Ebola coordinated by the European Union (EU) in Brussels, Belgium, which was intended to keep international attention on the crisis and recovery process. The conference was summarized [here](#).

On March 4th, the WHO released updated statistics on new Ebola cases in West Africa. A total of 132 new confirmed cases were reported in the week ending March 1st, an increase from the previous week when 99 new cases of Ebola were reported. Liberia reported no new confirmed cases this week, representing the first time no new cases have been reported since May 2014. Sierra Leone reported 81 new confirmed cases in eight districts, while, while Guinea reported 51 new cases. The data was analyzed [here](#).

On March 5th, the WHO announced the final stage of trials for an Ebola vaccine developed by Merck and NewLink Genetics will begin in Guinea on March 7th. Additionally, the WHO indicated a second shot, developed by GlaxoSmithKline (GSK), will be tested in a sequential study, as supply becomes available. While the recent decline in new Ebola cases in West Africa will make it harder to prove the effectiveness of the experimental vaccines, the WHO said is it committed to pushing ahead. An article on the vaccine trials was published [here](#).

On March 5th, Liberia released its last Ebola patient following two weeks of treatment in Monrovia. The news came as the WHO reported that Liberia had no new confirmed cases of Ebola over the past week. WHO officials warned that mobile populations in West Africa could lead to fresh outbreaks in Liberia and said it remains important to get case numbers down to zero in all three countries hardest hit by the virus. More information can be found [here](#).

Liberia

On February 27th, IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde met with Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. According to the IMF, the leaders discussed President Johnson's plans and priorities for Liberia's recovery from the Ebola crisis. The IMF has provided Liberia with \$130 million of new financing and debt relief to assist in responding to the Ebola outbreak. Recognizing that Liberia had been making significant progress before Ebola hit, Managing Director Lagarde said the IMF will continue to support Liberia in getting its economy back on track. The meeting was summarized [here](#).

On February 27th, President Barack Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry hosted Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf for a meeting at the White House. The leaders discussed a range of topics, including the ongoing Ebola response, the region's economic recovery plans, and other meetings of mutual interest. President Obama's meeting with President Sirleaf was detailed [here](#).

On February 27th, Secretary of State John Kerry, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield, and Director of Policy Planning David McKean met with Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf at the Department of State. During the meeting, the leaders discussed the Ebola crisis and future development challenges in Liberia, including the need to upgrade health care infrastructure, as well as the signing of a new \$2.8 million Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) compact with Liberia. A transcript from a press conference held after the meeting can be read [here](#).

On February 27th, in conjunction with Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's visit to Washington, DC, the State Department issued a fact sheet on the U.S.-Liberia relationship. The fact sheet highlights U.S. efforts to assist Liberia with the Ebola emergency response, investments in Ebola recovery, and other development projects, U.S. mentoring of the Liberian security forces, and investments in reconciliation and conflict prevention. The fact sheet can be accessed [here](#).

On February 27th, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) announced the \$18.7 million Education Crisis Response program to assist the Government of Liberia in restoring basic education following the Ebola crisis and to help return children to school safely. The primary goals of the program, implemented by the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF), is to help reopen schools in all 15 Ebola-affected counties in Liberia, protect education gains and investments that have already been made, and prevent future disruptions in education. A press release was issued [here](#).

On February 27th, Secretary of Defense Ash Carter hosted an honor cordon and meeting in honor of Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf at the Pentagon. The leaders discussed the unprecedented collaboration between the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) and the armed forces of Liberia in responding to the spread of Ebola, and Secretary Carter reiterated DOD's commitment to support Liberia during the next phase of Operation United Assistance. Details can be viewed [here](#).

Nigeria

On February 27th, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon reiterated his strong condemnation of the continuing indiscriminate and horrific attacks by Boko Haram against civilian populations in Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria. In addition, Secretary-General Ban said the abduction and use of children as suicide bombers is particularly abhorrent. In addition, he applauded the efforts of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) and Benin, with the support for the African Union (AU), towards operationalizing the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) to counter the Boko Haram threat. Secretary-General Ban's feedback was articulated [here](#).

On February 27th, Boko Haram killed 23 people in separate attacks in Nigeria. A military source said at least 17 people were killed in an explosion at a bus station in Biu after a suicide bomber detonated his device. Shortly after this attack, six people were killed when two roadside bombs exploded in Jos. For details on the attacks, click [here](#).

On March 2nd, Nigerian militant group Boko Haram released a video showing the beheading of two men in its first online posting that closely resembling tactics used by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). In the video, one of the victims was forced to say they had been paid by authorities to spy on Boko Haram before the film moved to another scene showing their decapitated bodies. While Boko Haram has yet to declare any allegiance to ISIL, Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan has said Boko

Haram shares ties with ISIL and other Al Qaeda affiliates. The video was described [here](#).

On March 2nd, journalists speculated why, despite the lack of tangible evidence, Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan remains popular in his home Niger Delta region. According to some, people in the Delta simply believe that with one of their own holding the presidency, historic injustices are being righted. More information can be viewed [here](#).

On March 3rd, the U.N. refugee agency (UNHCR) reported that mass groups of Nigerians in the northeastern part of the country are continuing to flee to Cameroon to escape the ongoing violence between the Government and Boko Haram. UNHCR Spokesperson Adrian Edwards said officials in Cameroon are observing the flow of refugees through the border regions of Makaria, Logone Birni and Fotokol. UNHCR is planning daily transfers of 2,000 refugees to Minawao, where basic relief will be provided. More information on UNHCR operations in Nigeria was shared [here](#).

On March 4th, Chadian President Idriss Deby said he knew the whereabouts of Abubakar Shekau, the leader of Nigerian militant group Boko Haram, and called on him to surrender or risk being killed. President Deby said Shekau had been in Dikwa, Nigeria two days ago. Chad's army has waged a series of battles against Boko Haram as part of a cross-border military campaign and has retaken territory claimed by Boko Haram in northeastern Nigeria. Meanwhile, Nigeria's military has said it had previously killed Shekau on three separate occasions. President Deby's announcement was reported [here](#).

On March 4th, an abandoned home in Dikwa, Nigeria became a symbol of Boko Haram casualties. Its location was the setting of a dawn attack by Chadian troops, who are part of a regional offensive effort to drive the militant group out of the country. Chad army spokesman, Colonel Azem Bermandoa, said more than 100 Boko Haram militants were killed in the fighting to reclaim control of Dikwa. More information on the event can be read [here](#).

Egypt

On February 28th, an Egyptian court ruled that Hamas, the Islamist group present in the Gaza strip, is a terrorist organization. In response to the ruling, Hamas held a news conference where it claimed Egypt's decision to list Hamas as a terrorist organization is a direct attack on the Palestinian people that will contaminate Egypt's reputation. For years, Egypt has played a role in facilitating peace talks between Israel and Palestine. More information can be seen [here](#).

On March 1st, audio recordings of senior Egyptian officials were leaked that suggested the United Arab Emirates (UAE) gave the Egyptian Ministry of Defense money to support the uprising against President Mohamed Morsi. Current Egyptian President Abdul Fattah Al-Sisi was Defense Minister at the time and claims he was acting in response to protestors. Egyptian officials have said the recordings are fabrications, but several Egyptian commentators believe they are credible. The full story is available [here](#).

On March 1st, a court in Egypt ruled that part of an election law, regarding electoral districts, is unconstitutional. Legal experts noted the ruling would likely delay the parliamentary polls slated to be held on March 22nd. The main election committee is working on a date for the anticipated vote, while President Abdul Fattah al-Sisi attempts to amend the law. More information on the upcoming polls in Egypt can be read [here](#).

On March 2nd, a bomb detonated in the proximity of a top court building in Cairo, wounding nine people. The Interior Ministry reported the incident is the latest in a string of attacks in Egypt's capital. The wounded included five policemen and four civilians. An account of the bombing can be read [here](#).

On March 3rd, an Egyptian court officially postponed the long-overdue parliamentary elections. The move comes after another court deemed the country's election law regarding electoral districts unconstitutional. A new date for the vote has yet to be announced. The delay was announced [here](#).

On March 4th, an Egyptian court upheld the ten-year prison sentence for two policemen charged with torturing and killing an activist during the 2010 uprising that ousted Hosni Mubarak. The victim, Khaled Said was 28-years-old when police beat him to death in Alexandria. Zahraa Said, the victim's sister, is

not satisfied with result. An update on the case was provided [here](#).

Libya

On March 2nd, the internationally recognized government of Libya appointed Khalifa Hiftar, former Libyan general, as top military commander. General Hiftar, who is a former ally of Muammar Gaddafi, has caused tension within the Tripoli government in his rise to power. Details on his appointment can be seen [here](#).

On March 3rd, the U.N. Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) announced a new round of peace talks would begin later this week, with key stakeholders gathering in Morocco. In a statement, UNSMIL said parties had agreed to the U.N.-sponsored talks and were prepared to work on the formation of a national unity government. For details, click [here](#).

On March 4th, Libya submitted a written request to the U.N. Security Council seeking a lifting of the arms embargo so Libyan forces can stand up to ISIL's presence in the country. More specifically, Libya is seeking permission from the U.N. to import 150 tanks, two dozen fighter jets, seven attack helicopters, tens of thousands of assault rifles and grenade launchers, and millions of rounds of ammunition from Ukraine, Serbia, and Czech Republic. If there are no objections by any member of the committee overseeing the embargo, the request will be approved on Monday. An article on the request can be read [here](#).

On March 4th, U.N. Special Representative for Libya and head of UNSMIL Bernardino Leon briefed the U.N. Security Council on the situation in the country, which he said is deteriorating rapidly amid a growing terrorist threat and continuing violence. Speaking extensively on the recent terrorist bombings in Al-Qubbah, Special Representative Leon said Libya's leaders must act quickly and decisively, or else risk their country's national unity and territorial integrity. Excerpts from the briefing were highlighted [here](#).

On March 4th, the airport in Zintan, Libya was bombed by two unidentified warplanes. According to Zintan aviation official Omar Matoog, while electricity systems were damaged, the runway remained intact. Flights after sunset will be suspended until the damaged systems are repaired. For details, click [here](#).

On March 4th, forces from Libya's internationally-recognized government carried out air strikes on an airport in Tripoli after an attack on the airport in Zintan, a town aligned with the Tobruk-based government. The retaliatory strike came just one day ahead of the scheduled restart of U.N.-brokered peace talks. Zintan has previously been attacked by Libya Dawn forces. An update on the situation in Libya can be viewed [here](#).

On March 5th, forces loyal to Libya's internationally recognized government said they would halt air strikes on targets allied to the rival administration in support of the ongoing peace talks in Morocco. However, Air Force Commander Saqir El-Jaroshi indicated if government forces were attacked, they would respond in kind. The announcement was posted [here](#).

Mali

On February 26th, the high-level team appointed by the U.N. to investigate the events surrounding the recent, violent demonstration against the U.N. Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) concluded its first visit to Mali as part of its investigation. The three independent experts from Senegal, the United Kingdom (U.K.), and the U.S. spent eight days in Mali, meeting with national and regional authorities, as well as representatives of MINUSMA, authorities from hospitals that received victims, and protestors who were injured. The team will present their findings in a preliminary report to U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. The conclusion of the team's visit to Mali was noted [here](#).

On February 27th, the U.N. office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) joined with partner agencies to launch a multi-million dollar appeal for urgent funding for aid operations in Mali. According to OCHA, despite the progress in reconstructing and stabilizing areas in the north of Mali, persisting insecurity has not allowed for the resumption of basic social services and the restart of economic activities. OCHA estimates hundreds of thousands of people are still in need of humanitarian aid to

survive. The situation in Mali was highlighted [here](#).

On March 1st, the Government of Mali signed a preliminary peace agreement to end the fighting with northern separatists. However, the Tuareg-led rebels asked for more time before definitively agreeing to the deal. More details on the U.N.-brokered deal in Mali can be read [here](#).

On March 2nd, MINUSMA praised the parties involved in reaching a draft peace deal in Mali. A spokesperson for U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told press that the Government of Mali, a member of the coalition of armed groups “Platform,” and the mediation team led by Algeria had reached an agreement. The “Coordination” coalition of armed group has yet to sign the document and has asked for additional time to consult with its constituencies in Mali. For more information on the agreement, click [here](#).

South Sudan

On March 2nd, UNICEF Representative for South Sudan Jonathan Veitch reiterated concerns that hundreds of children seized by armed men are now being forced to serve as child soldiers. Initially, UNICEF reported that 89 children preparing for exams had been abducted last month, but U.N. officials believe the number of children recruited is now in the hundreds. UNICEF appealed to militia leader Johnson Oloni to release the children immediately and called on the Government of South Sudan to use whatever influence it has to secure the children’s release. The situation was detailed [here](#).

On March 2nd, Secretary of State John Kerry called on warring parties in South Sudan to seize the current and final round of negotiations to deliver sustainable peace. In order to do so, Secretary Kerry said South Sudan’s leaders must put aside their own interests to end the conflict and the associated violence. Secretary Kerry observed President Salva Kiir and opposition leader Riek Machar have repeatedly promised to negotiate a transitional government under the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) process, but have instead failed to compromise. Secretary Kerry warned the U.S. will work with international partners to take further action against those who do not demonstrate a willingness to make the difficult decisions needed for peace. Secretary Kerry’s views were articulated [here](#).

On March 3rd, the U.N. Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution to create a system by which the body would be able to impose sanctions on anyone impeding the peace process in South Sudan. The Security Council expressed support for the cessation of hostilities agreements previously signed by both the Government of South Sudan and the Sudan Peoples’ Liberation Movement (SPLM). The Security Council also emphasized there is no military solution to the conflict and all parties must implement the cessation of hostilities agreements. The Security Council vote was noted [here](#).

On March 3rd, Ugandan military officials denied allegations that troops were gathering along the border of South Sudan. The announcement comes after a local news agency reported that 16,000 Ugandan soldiers were due to arrive at the border to fight rebels opposed to President Salva Kiir’s government. For more details, click [here](#).

On March 4th, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called on South Sudanese political enemies, President Salva Kiir and former Vice President Riek Machar, to settle their differences and progress towards peace ahead of the March 5th mediation deadline. In a statement, Secretary-General Ban urged the two to show leadership and work together to do what is necessary to settle the conflict in South Sudan. Secretary-General Ban’s comments were highlighted [here](#).

On March 4th, U.N. Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict Leila Zerrougui demanded the release of hundreds of child soldiers forcibly recruited by militias and groups aligned with the warring factions of the South Sudanese Government. According to Special Representative Zerrougui, the recruitment and use of child soldiers continues to be a major challenge in South Sudan, despite commitments by the Government the opposition led by former Vice President Riek Machar to protect children from the impacts of the conflict. Her comments were captured [here](#).

Lesotho

On February 27th, concerns were raised over the election to be held in Lesotho two years early. The All Basotho Convention (ABC) and the Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD), the country's two leading parties, competed in the parliamentary vote, held on February 28th. Political analyst Gary Staden articulated his belief that any flaws in the electoral process could be perceived as attempts to rig the election, causing a wave of civil unrest. An overview of the situation leading up to the election can be viewed [here](#).

On March 1st, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon applauded the people of Lesotho on the peaceful conduct of the country's February 28th parliamentary elections. In addition, Secretary-General Ban commended the work of the Independent Electoral Commission of Lesotho in preparing for the elections, as well as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) for helping to resolve political challenges in the country. Secretary-General Ban also reaffirmed the U.N.'s readiness to support efforts in Lesotho to consolidate democracy and advance justice and development. Secretary-General Ban's praise for the elections was shared [here](#).

On March 2nd, the U.S. congratulated the people of Lesotho for participating peacefully in Lesotho's parliamentary election. The U.S. Embassy deployed 18 American and Basotho staff as observers to six of Lesotho's ten districts, where they witnessed the opening, voting, closing, and counting of votes at approximately 80 polling stations. The State Department expressed hope these elections will allow Lesotho to move beyond a period of political uncertainty and strengthen national security. U.S. officials also commended Lesotho's Independent Electoral Commission for organizing a professional and well-run poll, especially in light of the compressed timeline, as well as the SADC, for supporting the elections. Feedback from the State Department can be seen [here](#).

On March 4th, Lesotho appeared headed for a new coalition government as election results trickled in, raising alarm about continuing instability in the country. The new coalition will be led by Pakalitha Mosisili of the Democratic Congress (DC), who cobbled together a coalition of seven parties, including the LCD, to give him a four-seat majority in parliament. The DC won just one more seat than the ABC, the party of outgoing Prime Minister Tom Thabane. In one of his first moves as leader of the ruling coalition, Mosisili indicated he plans to reappoint the military commander who launched the coup attempt against Prime Minister Thabane last year. The impacts of the elections were noted [here](#).

United States – Africa Relations

White House

On March 3rd, President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama announced a new, whole-of-government initiative to help adolescent girls worldwide attend and complete school. Called Let Girls Learn, the initiative will build on the Let Girls Learn public engagement campaign launched last summer by USAID. A key part of the project will be to encourage and support community-led solutions to reduce barriers that prevent adolescent girls from completing their education, including HIV/AIDS, early and forced marriage, and other forms of violence. Programs launched in Africa under Let Girls Learn were outlined [here](#).

On March 3rd, President Barack Obama notified Congress of his intent to continue the national emergency with respect to Zimbabwe through March 6, 2015. The national emergency, first declared in 2003, blocked the property of certain persons to address the actions and policies of certain members of the Government of Zimbabwe and other persons to undermine Zimbabwe's democratic processes and institutions. In 2005 and 2008, the scope of these sanctions was expanded. President Obama noted the actions and policies of these persons continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the foreign policy of the U.S. More information can be found [here](#).

State Department

On February 26th, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Steve Feldstein concluded his visit to Sudan where he met with Sudanese Government leaders, representatives of NGOs, and civil society activists, including representatives of Sudan's religious communities, journalists, humanitarian groups, and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Blue Nile State. In his meetings, Deputy Assistant Secretary Feldman emphasized the importance of advancing

democracy and human rights and resolving the ongoing conflicts in Darfur and the Two Areas. He also reiterated U.S. support for an inclusive and comprehensive national dialogue to resolve Sudan's conflicts. More information can be found [here](#).

On February 27th, Secretary of State John Kerry hosted a welcome reception to commemorate the announcement of Randy Berry as the first-ever Special Envoy for the Human Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, and Bisexual (LGBT) Persons, at the Department of State. In his remarks, Secretary Kerry acknowledged Special Envoy Berry's previous service in Kampala, Uganda, where he was responsible for overseeing humanitarian aid to more than 1.5 million refugees in Africa's Great Lakes region, as well as his service in Cape Town, where he focused on implementing one of the world's largest HIV/AIDS prevention programs to curb mother-to-child transmissions in rural areas. Secretary Kerry's full remarks can be seen [here](#).

On February 27th, Assistant Secretary of State for Political Military Affairs Puneet Talwar met with Assistant to the Egyptian Minister of Defense Major General Fouad Abdelhalim at the Department of State. The meeting was noticed [here](#).

On March 1st-6th, Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs Charles Rivkin was on overseas travel to Algeria and Tunisia, where he co-led a business delegation with the National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce and the U.S.-Algeria Business Council. In Algiers, Assistant Secretary Rivkin and Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Anne Patterson met with government officials to discuss opportunities to strengthen the bilateral commercial relationship. In Tunis, Assistant Secretary Rivkin held meetings with Tunisian Government officials focused on promoting economic growth, job creation, and increased U.S. investment. He also attended the Partners for a New Beginning – North Africa Partnership for Economic Opportunity (PNB-NAPEO) Investment and Entrepreneurship Conference. Assistant Secretary Rivkin's travel was announced [here](#).

On March 2nd, Secretary of State John Kerry attended the 28th Session of the Human Rights Council (HRC) in Geneva, Switzerland. Secretary Kerry expressed support for the HRC and the role it has played in shaping the global response to situations where human rights violations have reached staggering levels, including in North Africa where violent extremists appear to have no regard for human life. Secretary Kerry's full remarks were transcribed [here](#).

On March 2nd, the State Department issued a summary of the launch of the inaugural U.S.-Djibouti Binational Forum, held on February 25th-26th. Deputy Secretary of State Tony Blinken welcomed the Djiboutian delegation and opened the Forum, while senior-level delegations addressed a range of important issues including security cooperation, economic development, energy exploration, and education. The ministerial-level meetings, led by Secretary of State John Kerry and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Mahamoud Ali Youssouf, as well as a meeting with Secretary of Defense Ash Carter, focused on countering violent extremism and terrorism in the East Africa region. The Forum was summarized [here](#).

On March 3rd, in recognition of World Wildlife Day, Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment Catherine Novelli hosted a Google+ Hangout on the subject of combating wildlife trafficking. Under Secretary Novelli was joined by prominent African and Asian leaders from non-governmental environmental organizations. Participants included Executive Director of WildAid Peter Knights, Executive Director of Wildlife Direct Paula Kahumbu, Rhino Project Lead for CHANGE Nhi Thoi and Asia Regional Director of the International Fund for Animal Welfare Grace Ge Gabriel. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On March 4th, Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights Sarah Sewall led a roundtable with 12 civil society leaders from Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania, India, Pakistan, and Indonesia as part of the Women Preventing Violent Extremism Symposium at the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP). Under Secretary Sewall's participation was noted [here](#).

On March 5th, Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources Heather Higginbottom and First Lady Michelle Obama presented the Secretary of State's International Women of Courage Award to ten recipients from ten countries. The annual award recognizes women around the globe who have demonstrated exceptional courage and leadership in advocating for peace, justice, human rights, gender

equality, and women's empowerment, often at personal risk. Among the recipients were President of Foundation Voix du Coeur Beatrice Epaye of the Central African Republic (CAR) and nurse, Ebola survivor, and activist Marie Claire Tchecola of Guinea. For more information, click [here](#).

Department of Defense

On February 27th, as part of the annual Flintock exercise, over 400 local Chadians from the town of Mao received medical screening and care from multinational troops participating in the exercise. This component of Flintock, which runs through March 9th, brought together 23 countries and local medical providers in support of Civil Military Support Element (CMSE) teams to provide humanitarian care. More information on Flintock was shared [here](#).

On March 2nd-6th, U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa hosted the Combined Force Maritime Component Commander (CFMCC) Flag Course in Naples, Italy, for 33 senior naval leaders from maritime countries in Europe and Africa. The course included seminars and discussions focused on the effective employment of naval forces in a joint, collation, or interagency environment. An article on the course was published [here](#).

Department of Treasury

On February 26th, the Department of Treasury targeted a key Hizballah support network based in Africa by designating Mustapha Fawaz, Fouzi Fawaz, and Abdallah Thahini as acting on behalf of Hizballah. Entities under the control of these individuals, including Amigo Supermarket Limited, Wonderland Amusement Park at Resort, and Kafak Enterprises were also targeted for asset freezes and a prohibition on dealings with U.S. entities. A press release was issued [here](#).

Overseas Private Investment Corporation

On March 4th, Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) President and CEO Elizabeth Littlefield visited Morocco to meet with senior government and private business sector leaders in an effort to strengthen economic ties between the U.S. and Morocco and expand OPIC's financing and insurance portfolio in the country. In Casablanca, she met with representatives from the American Chamber of Commerce, as well as Moroccan business associate GEM to discuss OPIC's offerings of development financing and political risk insurance to U.S.-connected private investors seeking to expand into the world's emerging markets and address development needs. President Littlefield's visit to Morocco was summarized [here](#).

Millennium Challenge Corporation

On March 4th, the MCC published a blog post authored by Deputy Chief Executive Officer Nancy Lee on projects completed as part of the MCC's \$450 million compact with Senegal that is expected to benefit more than 1.5 million people. During a recent visit to the Casamance region, Lee inaugurated the Kolda Bridge and visited the compact's Irrigation and Water Resource Management (IWRM) Project, where the MCC is investing \$170 million to help the Senegalese people achieve food security and greater export potential. The blog post can be accessed [here](#).

Congress

On February 27th, the House Foreign Affairs Committee approved a resolution condemning the cowardly attack on innocent men, women, and children in the northeastern Nigerian town of Baga. In addition, the resolution, introduced by Congresswoman Robin Kelly (D-IL), urges Nigeria to hold a safe and credible election without delay and applauds the efforts of the AU to standup a regional force to combat Boko Haram. A recording of the markup can be watched [here](#).

On March 3rd, the House Appropriations Defense Subcommittee held a closed hearing on the FY16 budget request for U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM). Testimony was provided by AFRICOM Commander General David Rodriguez. More information was shared [here](#).

On March 4th, the House Select Committee on Benghazi sent subpoenas to the State Department to

gather a deeper look into former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's nearly exclusive use of personal e-mails to do official business related to the September 2012 attack on the U.S. diplomatic compound in Benghazi, Libya. The House Oversight and Government Reform Committee also indicated it will look into Secretary Clinton's use of a personal email address. The full story is available [here](#).

North Africa

On February 26th, the U.N. Security Council voted unanimously to extend the mandate of the U.N. Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) through February 15, 2015. UNISFA, established in June 2011 following an outbreak of violence after Sudanese troops took control of the oil-rich area in the weeks before South Sudan achieved independence, is tasked with overseeing the demilitarization of the area and maintaining security. The Security Council also called on Sudan and South Sudan to immediately resume the work of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee to develop temporary administrative arrangements for the region and the withdrawal of troops by both sides. More information can be found [here](#).

On March 2nd, the World Bank Board of Directors approved a \$200 million loan to support Morocco's competitiveness strategy and encourage reforms to promote productivity and growth. The Development Policy Loan (DPL) reform program addresses needs critical for simplifying procedures for business and enforcing rules for competition to create a more enabling and transparent business environment. These reforms are expected to energize trade and investment and help create high-value jobs and a more vibrant private sector and Morocco. The program was outlined [here](#).

On March 4th, a boat that capsized off the coast of Italy left ten North African migrants dead. Italian authorities were able to rescue the remaining 130 from the vessel. In a separate event, Tunisian authorities rescued another 81 migrants off a boat in the wear nearby the island of Djerba. The events were reported [here](#).

East Africa

On February 27th, the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) conducted a mission resulting in the release of four Thai nationals held in captivity for five years after being captured by Somali pirates. Captured in 2010, the crew members were released to the Somali Regional Administration in Galmudug. Of the original 24 crew members, six died in captivity, while 14 others were previously released. More information was posted [here](#).

On February 27th, Governor of the Central Bank of Somalia Bashir Issa Ali reassured the international community that tightened money transfer procedures are keeping funds from being diverted to terrorist organizations. The country has faced increasing difficulties in keeping the business of foreign banks due to this fear. Governor Ali is currently working with the World Bank, the IMF, and other organizations to create and enhance regulations for Somalia's financial center. For more details, click [here](#).

On February 27th, the CHADEMA party, the main opposition to Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) in Tanzania, announced it will boycott the constitutional referendum on April 30th. Representatives of CHADEMA say the ruling party has ignored their suggestions for replacing the current constitution, which dates back to 1977, with one that creates a three-government structure. In the proposal, mainland Tanzania and the semi-autonomous Zanzibar archipelago would have a government, and the third would be comprised of a union of the two. Details on the opposition's complaints can be read [here](#).

On February 27th, Kenya's Rift Valley Water Services Board, said tests on a recently discovered aquifer in the country's Turkana region show the stored water is too salty to drink. While the aquifer was once thought to be a viable solution for curing Kenya's drought, the country's water regulator said it would be very expensive to desalinate the water to make it safe for human consumption, livestock, or irrigation. The full story is available [here](#).

On March 1st, a car bomb detonated by Al Shabaab militants injured two policemen in Mogadishu, Somalia. According to police, the militants activated the bomb remotely and escaped. There were no known fatalities. For more details, click [here](#).

On March 3rd, the World Bank issued the Fifth Uganda Economic Update titled, “The Growth Challenge: Can Ugandan Cities Get to Work?” The report notes Uganda’s urban population will increase from six million in 2013 to over 20 million by 2040. While the report shows that Ugandan cities can help propel economic growth, it concludes the speed of urbanization is challenging and can lead to congestion and strain infrastructure, lowering productivity. The report’s findings were highlighted [here](#).

On March 3rd, to mark World Wildlife Day, Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta set fire to 15 tons of elephant tusks to discourage poaching and the illegal trade of ivory. President Kenyatta said the symbolic event highlighted Kenya’s natural heritage and will help to protect it for prosperity. Additional comments from President Kenyatta were captured [here](#).

On March 3rd, President Jakaya Kikwete of Tanzania made a promise to end albino killings. In a speech, President Kikwete said the witchcraft-related killings were bringing shame to the country. Excerpts from President Kikwete’s address were published [here](#).

On March 3rd, Tanzanian police reported that Mohammed Emwazi, known as ISIL killer “Jihadi John,” was denied entry into the country at the request of British intelligence back in 2009. According to reports, Emwazi and two friends were denied entry because they were on an official immigration stop list. While British officials have not commented, the report aligns with emails published by London activist group Cage. An article on the situation can be read [here](#).

On March 4th, flooding in northwestern Tanzania killed at least 38 people and left hundreds of others homeless in the Shinyanga region. The downpours were accompanied by hail and strong winds that prevented residents from escaping and made rescue operations difficult. Maize and cotton crops were also destroyed and livestock was killed in the flooding. More information was posted [here](#).

On March 5th, the World Bank published its 11th Kenya Economic Update (KEU). The most recent analysis finds Kenya’s growth is projected to rise from 5.4 percent in 2014 to 6-7 percent over the next three years, making it one of the fastest growing economies in Africa. The report notes external and internal balances are expected to improve significantly, thanks to falling oil prices. In addition, public investment in infrastructure, mainly in energy and railways, will strengthen growth in the medium term. The KEU can be downloaded [here](#).

West Africa

On February 27th, several members of Democratic Party of Ivory Coast (PDCI), President Alassane Ouattara’s main coalition partner, announced they will not support President Ouattara’s bid for re-election later this year. Kouadio Konan Bertin, the party’s former youth leader and currently a member of parliament, was joined by ex-Prime Minister Charles Konan Banny, former Foreign Affairs minister Amara Essy, and a former Deputy Speaker of parliament, Jerome Brou Kablan, in telling the press they may challenge President Ouattara in the election. The political tensions in Ivory Coast were analyzed [here](#).

On March 2nd, *Sierra Express Media* provided an update on work on a new railway that will link Niamey, Niger, to the seaport in Cotonou, Benin, which is due to be completed by the end of 2015. The new rail network is expected to boost inter-regional trade among Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d’Ivoire, Niger, and Togo. After several delays, the project is now firmly on track with construction underway in Niger, Benin, Burkina Faso, and Togo. An article on the project can be read [here](#).

On March 3rd, in acknowledgement of World Wildlife Day, the World Bank collaborated with the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWCC) to explain the link between wildlife crime and lack of economic opportunity. According to the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), in Ghana, commercial poaching has increased due to local fisherman taking up hunting, after their fishing grounds were decimated by fishing concessions given to other nations. In this case, the driver of poaching was capitalist economic relations that took resources away from local people and award them to groups with more money and power. The situation was described [here](#).

On March 3rd, the World Bank announced 28 Ghanaian startups have concluded the first national boot camp designed to promote local entrepreneurship and innovation in clean technologies. The boot camp,

organized by the Ghana Climate Innovation Center (GCIC), aimed to identify and launch growth-oriented Ghanaian entrepreneurs and new ventures involved in developing profitable and locally relevant solutions to climate change. The participants represented some of the most promising clean technology sectors in Ghana's green growth agenda, including solar energy, biofuels, waste, and water management. More information was shared [here](#).

On March 4th, the World Bank reported on the World Bank and Cooperation in International Waters in Africa (CIWA) program's support for the Niger River Basin Management Project. The project supports the Niger Basin Authority (NBA), which was created to foster collaboration on potential investments in infrastructure among the countries with boundaries on the river, including Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Niger, and Nigeria. The project was detailed [here](#).

On March 3rd, oil traders and industry sources said that major cities in Nigeria are experiencing fuel shortages as importers feel the effects of decreasing local currency, stricter credit lines, and unpaid government subsidies. Consumers are being forced to use the black market for gasoline. The shortages come weeks before the presidential election that will pit President Goodluck Jonathan against former military leader Muhammadu Buhari. For more details, click [here](#).

On March 4th, the Executive Board of the IMF concluded the Article IV consultation with Nigeria. The IMF observed Nigeria has a large and diverse economy that has achieved a decade of strong growth, averaging 6.8 percent a year. While inflation has remained high, the banking sector has been expanding credit, and the trade surplus has been declining, the IMF urged Nigeria to address shortfalls in critical infrastructure, as well as high rates of poverty and income inequality. Additional analysis on the economic situation in Nigeria was provided [here](#).

On March 4th, an IMF mission completed a visit to Cabo Verde to conduct discussions on the 2015 Article V Consultation. IMF officials met with Minister of Finance and Planning Cristina Duarte, Central Bank Governor Joao Serra, other government officials, parliamentarians, representatives of civil society, development partners, and the private sector. The meetings addressed the factors that led to only slight economic growth in 2014, as well as prospects for accelerated growth in 2015. More information can be found [here](#).

Sub-Saharan Africa

On February 27th, UNICEF noted it is on high alert and coordinating with the Government of Malawi to help stop the spread of cholera in the southern part of the country, including at camps established for people displaced by recent flooding. According to Malawi's Ministry of Health, 39 cases of cholera have been confirmed in the past two weeks. UNICEF is working to support the Government with mobile health services, as well as safe water, sanitation, and hygiene services. UNICEF's efforts were detailed [here](#).

On February 27th, President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe said that, despite what political analysts say, his wife Grace does not influence his decisions. In an interview with a local television station, President Mugabe said his wife is not the power behind the throne. President Mugabe, age 94, plans to run in Zimbabwe's 2018 presidential election. For more details, click [here](#).

On February 27th, Maxwell Mwale, Zambia's former Mines Minister, was convicted of corruption and sentenced to one year in jail with hard labor. The former minister was found guilty of interfering with the granting of licenses to Zhonghui International Mining Group, a Chinese mining company, back in 2009. The situation was described [here](#).

On March 2nd, the IMF hosted a conference titled, "Managing Capital Flows: Lessons From Emerging Markets for Frontier Economies," in Balaclava, Turtle Bay, Mauritius. Minister of Finance and Economic Development of Mauritius Seetanah Lutchmeenaraidoo and First Managing Director of the IMF David Lipton opened the conference, followed by a keynote address from Princeton Professor Dani Rodrik. The conference provided a forum for policymakers from emerging and frontier markets to share their experiences in managing capital flows and to engage in discussions about policy options on how to best benefit from foreign capital, while minimizing the risk associated with inflow surges. More information was shared [here](#).

On March 2nd, outgoing Namibian President Hifikepunye Pohamba was awarded the \$5 million Mo Ibrahim Prize for African Leadership. The award is given each year to a leader who governed well, raised living standards, and then left office. For the past two years, the award has gone unclaimed. Salim Ahmed Salim, the chairman of the committee awarding the prize said that under President Pohamba's leadership, Namibia had cemented its reputation as a well-governed, inclusive democracy with strong media freedom and respect for human rights. Details were provided [here](#).

On March 2nd, in a cabinet reshuffle, President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda replaced his Finance, Security and Transport Ministers. Political analysts believe the move is intended to award his allies and boost his chances for re-election next year. Additionally, President Museveni could be hoping to sway the support of Amama Mbabazi, his former prime minister and likely opposition, to his side. The situation was detailed [here](#).

On March 2nd, Lambert Mende, a Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) Government spokesman, reported the Congolese army had killed at least ten rebel fighters and regained control of both territory and weapons in separate attacks in Tongo and South Kivu. It is the latest in the campaign to push the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) out of the DRC. For more details, click [here](#).

On March 2nd-7th, IMF First Deputy Managing Director David Lipton was on overseas travel to Mauritius, South Africa, and the DRC. In Mauritius, First Deputy Managing Director Lipton attended a conference on "Managing Capital Flows: Lessons From Emerging Markets for Frontier Economies." In South Africa, he met with policymakers and representatives of trade unions and the business community and delivered a lecture at the University of Cape Town. During his visit to the DRC, First Deputy Managing Director Lipton is scheduled to meet with senior government officials, donors, and members of the private sector. First Deputy Managing Director Lipton's visit to sub-Saharan Africa was outlined [here](#).

On March 3rd, Clair Hershey, program leader at the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), said cassava crops are not keeping pace with population growth across Africa. Cassava, a high energy root crop, is grown in sub-Saharan Africa and provides a cheap food source for the poor. In a presentation to the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Hershey said more than 200 million people rely on cassava. Excerpts from the lecture were highlighted [here](#).

On March 3rd, Hussein Radjabu, a political rival of Burundi's President Pierre Nkurunziza, escaped from prison with six others, including three police officers that were guarding the jail. According to Justice Ministry Spokesman Eliason Bigirimana, Radjabu was serving 13 years on charges of endangering state security and was aided in his escape by the chief officer in charge of security. The incident was reported [here](#).

On March 3rd, prominent Mozambican lawyer, Gilles Cistac, was shot and killed. Cistac was viewed as sympathetic to the political opposition's calls for the decentralization of power. He supported a controversial proposal by the main opposition party, Renamo, to create autonomous regions. His assassination was noted [here](#).

On March 4th, an IMF team concluded a visit to Antananarivo, Madagascar for discussions with the government on reforms aimed at addressing macroeconomic pressures, accelerating growth, and achieving a durable reduction in poverty. The mission met with President Hery Rajonarimampianina, Prime Minister Jean Ravelonarivo, Minister of Finance and Budget Gervais Rakotoarimanana, Central Bank of Madagascar Governor Alain Rasolofondraibe, the Economic Advisor to the President Leon Rajaobelina, and other senior officials, as well as private sector representatives and development partners. A press release was issued [here](#).

On March 4th, South Africa's Minister of Agriculture Senzeni Zokwana said a government proposal to limit farm size to 12,000 hectares is a negotiating tactic and not a final number in its attempts to redistribute land to black farmers. At a conference in Johannesburg, Minister Zokwana said farmers could lease additional land for commercial reasons, if necessary. The proposal was outlined [here](#).

On March 4th, two former supporters of Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe sued President Mugabe and the Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party for unfair dismissal and breach of the party's constitution. Rugare Gumbo, once a ZANU-PF spokesman, and Didymus Mutasa,

the party's former Secretary General, were both fired in the last few months on charges that they supported an effort by former Vice President Joice Mujuru to remove President Mugabe from his position. The lawsuit was summarized [here](#).

On March 4th, the interim parliament of Burkina Faso passed an anti-corruption law, effectively meeting one of two legislative requirements necessary for the World Bank to release \$100 million in budget support. With the new legislation, government officials and anyone managing country funds must declare their assets in addition to any gifts or donations received while in office. The World Bank has stated this law, as well as a mining code that has yet to be approved, are needed reforms for the country. For details, click [here](#).

On March 4th, Michel Losembe, President of the Banking Association and CEO of the DRC's third-largest bank, BIAC, announced the country will experience two years of stagnant growth in the banking sector, after a decade of rapid advancement. Reports find the 2011 government decision to pay public servants through the banking system was a major factor in this economic forecast. President Losembe predicted that 2015 growth in the banking sector will be below the growth of the DRC's gross domestic product (GDP). Additional analysis can be viewed [here](#).

On March 4th, Andrew Matibiri, General Manager of Zimbabwe's Tobacco Industry and Marketing Board, said heavy rains in Zimbabwe have hampered tobacco production. Officials report that Zimbabwe's crop will decrease by 190 million kilograms in 2015. Details can be seen [here](#).

On March 5th, Burundi's national assembly approved a draft media law, backtracking from contentious 2013 legislation that critics said threatened freedom of the press. The old law banned the media from publishing stories about national defense, public safety, and the local currency, and threatened to punish reporters who broke the rules with fines above their wages. Information Minister Tharcisse Nikezabihizi said he hoped the new law, once fully ratified, would ease tensions between the government and the media. The legislative proposal was described [here](#).

General Africa News

On February 26th, the African Development Bank (AfDB) published its 2014 annual report, "Financing Change: AfDB and the Climate Investment Fund (CIF) for a Climate-Smart Africa." The report shows AfDB support to Africa through the CIF increased exponentially in 2014 to include one regional and 25 national investment plans, with an additional nine poor countries being funded for renewable energy solutions. The report also showed an additional \$500 million from AfDB and CIF for a total of \$2.1 billion going to 16 projects already underway in 11 African nations. The report's findings were summarized [here](#).

On February 27th, the World Bank Group's Board of Executive Directors approved \$75.5 million in International Development Association (IDA) financing to improve the management of fisheries and increase the economic benefits from fishing-related activities for the nine African countries that border the waters of the South West Indian Ocean. More specifically, the First South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Governance and Shared Growth Project (SWIOFish1) will help Comoros, Mozambique, Mauritius, Seychelles, Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, and South Africa address challenges such as too little economic growth, hunger, poverty, and exposure to climate change. More information can be found [here](#).

On March 2nd, *Forbes* highlighted the 29 African billionaires included on its annual ranking of the world's richest people. While Aliko Dangote of Nigeria remains the continent's richest man, South African mining magnate Desmond Sacco and Moroccan real estate mogul Anas Sefrioui fell off the rankings this year, as Mohammed Dewji of Tanzania made his debut with an estimated fortune of \$1.3 billion. All 29 African billionaires were profiled [here](#).

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