



ML Strategies Update

David Leiter, djleiter@mlstrategies.com
Georgette Spanjich, gmspanjich@mlstrategies.com
Katherine Fox, ksfox@mintz.com
Sarah Mamula, srmamula@mlstrategies.com

ML Strategies, LLC
701 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20004 USA
202 296 3622
202 434 7400 fax
www.mlstrategies.com

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Africa Update

Leading the News

West Africa Ebola Outbreak

On January 14th, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) issued its 16th fact sheet on the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. The most recent fact sheet highlights that new Ebola cases continue to decrease in Liberia, and the number of confirmed cases has declined by 43 percent between December 22nd and January 5th in Sierra Leone, according to the United Nations (U.N.) World Health Organization (WHO). In addition, the fact sheet highlights how USAID partners have worked to open one Ebola treatment unit (ETU) and four community care centers (CCCs) in Sierra Leone. The latest fact sheet can be downloaded [here](#).

On January 15th, U.N. Special Envoy on Ebola Dr. David Nabarro said while the number of new Ebola cases in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea is declining, there are at least 50 micro-outbreaks in the three hardest hit countries. While Dr. Nabarro said it is good news that Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea are now reporting the lowest weekly totals of new Ebola cases since this summer, he cautioned that the emergence of micro-outbreaks evidences there are still chains of transmission that need to be understood. He argued the key will be to continue efforts to get local communities to change their traditional healing rituals and funeral and burial practices. Dr. Nabarro's comments were recorded [here](#).

On January 15th, spearheaded by the U.N., a team of international experts from the European Union (EU), World Bank, and the African Development Bank (AfDB) launched an Ebola Recovery Assessment (ERA) mission in Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia. The mission's aim is to work with the Governments of the countries hardest hit by the virus to assess critical areas that will spearhead economic and social recovery in the post-Ebola era. An article on the ERA can be read [here](#).

On January 15th, Carol Han, a Press Officer for USAID's Ebola Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) authored a blog post on USAID's efforts to train the next generation of Ebola fighters. Han reported on the training program underway at the Liberian National Police Training Academy, where a replica of an ETU has been constructed for training purposes. Weeklong classes have been held to teach health workers every aspect of Ebola care, from diagnosis and patient record keeping to proper disinfection techniques and handling of the dead. The blog post can be accessed [here](#).

On January 16th, Public Health England (PHE) announced two volunteers potentially exposed to Ebola in

West Africa were being transported to the U.K. for further assessment and to undergo a 21-day monitoring period. The first volunteer was exposed to the virus in Sierra Leone when his personal protective equipment (PPE) was damaged. The second volunteer had been working with an NGO in West Africa responding to the Ebola crisis. While neither volunteer had a confirmed Ebola diagnosis, a British nurse diagnosed with Ebola last month remained in a hospital in London where she continues to receive treatment. The full story is available [here](#).

On January 18th, the *Washington Post* reported that many of the ETUs constructed by U.S. military personnel as part of Operation United Assistance have yet to see any patients infected with Ebola. With transmission of Ebola slowing in Liberia, it is becoming clear that the disease had already drastically subsided before the first American treatment centers were completed. While in September the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) suggested a worse-case scenario of 1.4 million Ebola victims in West Africa, there is now an average of less than one new case reported in Liberia per day. Details were shared [here](#).

On January 19th, the WHO officially declared Mali Ebola-free after the country completed a 42-day period without reporting any new Ebola cases. Speaking as part of a national news broadcast, Malian Health Minister Ousmane Kone praised the country's health workers as critical to the effort to see the country declared Ebola-free. In total, Mali experienced eight cases of Ebola. Six of those individuals died from the virus. Mali's Ebola-free status was announced [here](#).

On January 19th, the U.N. Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) welcomed the encouraging statistics released by Liberia's Ministry of Health and Social Welfare that reported that 12 of the country's 15 counties have had no new cases of Ebola within the past seven days. The regions that are still reporting new Ebola cases include Grand Cape Mount, Margibi, and Montserrado. While welcoming the progress, UNMEER officials cautioned all involved in response efforts to remain on high alert and continue the high intensity of response efforts. Feedback from UNMEER can be viewed [here](#).

On January 19th, schools in Guinea that closed during the peak of the Ebola epidemic began to reopen. The decision to reopen schools came as Guinea reported its lowest weekly total of new confirmed Ebola cases since mid-August. As schools began opening their doors, employees took the temperatures of returning students, allowing only those with normal readings to enter the buildings. Despite the screening procedures, many parents opted to keep their children home in light of concerns about the effectiveness of efforts to disinfect educational facilities. The full story is available [here](#).

On January 19th, *Politico* interviewed White House Ebola Coordinator Ron Klain about lessons learned in developing and coordinating the U.S. Government's interagency Ebola response effort. Coordinator Klain said developing the approach was a problem-solving exercise that relied on simple medical science to treat and stop the epidemic. In addition, Coordinator Klain said strategies to develop the patient monitoring system, infectious disease containment areas in U.S. hospitals, and emergency response training will help prepare the country for the next epidemic. The full piece can be read [here](#).

On January 20th, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon addressed the U.N. General Assembly meeting on Ebola. A year after Ebola first began spreading in West Africa, Secretary-General Ban reported that progress is now being made in the fight against the virus. While Secretary-General Ban expressed his belief that defeating the outbreak is ultimately possible, he noted that challenges remain in minimizing overall suffering and helping the hardest hit countries regain their footing following the unprecedented epidemic. Excerpts from Secretary-General Ban's remarks were highlighted [here](#).

On January 20th, the World Bank issued a new report on the economic impact of Ebola in West Africa. While the report finds that the Ebola epidemic will result in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone experiencing a combined \$1.6 billion in forgone economic growth in 2015, the probability of spread and the associated economic costs beyond the three most-affected countries are now much lower than previously feared. Current estimates project the economic impact for all of sub-Saharan Africa to be between \$500 million and \$6.2 billion, down from a previous estimate of \$25 billion, due to global and national responses to the Ebola outbreak. Additional analysis can be found [here](#).

On January 21st, speaking at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, Switzerland, U.N. Special Envoy for Ebola Dr. David Nabarro said U.N. agencies require a final \$1 billion to fight the Ebola epidemic in West Africa as responders move into a new phase focused on tracing all remaining Ebola cases. A total of \$4 billion is needed for all U.N. efforts related to Ebola, especially as only two thirds of the target set for last year's operations has been received. Dr. Nabarro's comments were captured [here](#).

On January 21st, Sierra Leone President Ernest Bai Koroma said he believes the British-led international Ebola response in the country, which included nearly 800 British soldiers and \$450 million in foreign aid, has been effective and may lead to the end of the Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone by the end of March. While Sierra Leone reported just 184 new cases this week – the lowest in five months – health specialists and aid workers have been more cautious about declaring the response effort a success. An update on the situation in Sierra Leone can be seen [here](#).

On January 21st, USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah authored an article on how the USAID Global Development Lab has promoted new innovations, such as protective suits, cooling vests, and germ-killing gels, to help transform the fight against Ebola. Administrator Shah also highlighted how USAID's Fighting Ebola: A Grand Challenge for Development has been used to challenge the private sector to invent better tools to tackle Ebola quickly. The article can be accessed [here](#).

On January 21st, nonprofit tech firm Inveneo launched a three-month effort to bring Internet access to 100 locations in West Africa as part of the fight to stop the spread of Ebola. In partnership with Facebook, Inveneo was able to analyze cellular coverage and usage maps in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone to find the fastest and cheapest way to deploy its equipment to extend Internet connections. The new connections are intended to help aid workers facilitate data sharing with international health organizations. The project launch was noted [here](#).

Libya

On January 16th, Libyan factions meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, as part of U.N.-brokered negotiations to end the country's political crisis, agreed to continue discussions for another week. While a delegation from the Tripoli-based House of Representative attended the talks, representatives of Libya Dawn and the General National Congress (GNC) parliament refused to join, raising concerns that the talks may not result in a unity government. Developments related to the peace talks were summarized [here](#).

On January 16th, U.S. Department of State Press Office Director Jeff Rathke welcomed the announcement that the U.N.-led talks in Geneva, Switzerland, will continue and applauded the Libyans who are participating. He reiterated the U.S. Government's strong support for the U.N. effort and urged all parties to engage in dialogue aimed at producing a unity government that the international community can support. Director Rathke also noted the U.S. remains committed to working with the international community to help the Libyan people build an inclusive system of governance to address core needs, provide stability and security, and address ongoing threats. Director Rathke's comments were transcribed [here](#).

On January 17th, the U.N. Security Council commended participants in the Libyan dialogue intended to end the political, security, and institutional crisis in the country, hosted by the U.N. Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL). The Security Council reaffirmed there can be no military solution to the crisis in Libya and called on all parties to cease hostilities to create a peaceful and conducive environment for an inclusive dialogue. Additionally, the Security Council commended the ceasefire agreement announced on January 16th. Feedback on the peace talks was posted [here](#).

On January 18th, UNSMIL welcomed the unilateral announcements by the parties in Libya of a ceasefire in order to resolve the conflict peacefully through dialogue, as well as the decision announced in Tripoli by Spokesman Omar Humedian to join the second round of talks. In addition to approving the ceasefire, the participants in this week's round of talks agreed to meet again next week in Geneva, Switzerland, and strongly urged all relevant Libyan stakeholders to attend. An update on the negotiations was shared [here](#).

On January 19th, the internationally-recognized government led by Prime Minister Abdullah al-Thinni recalled retired General Khalifa Hiftar and 108 other former Gaddafi-era army officers to duty. In May, General Hiftar and loyal forces launched their own war against Islamist fighters in Benghazi. While the move is largely viewed as a strategic alliance against Libya Dawn, forces operating under General Hiftar have also been responsible for attacking commercial airports and a steel port in Western Libya, as well as the Greek-operated fuel tanker recently fired open in Derna. The alliance was described [here](#).

On January 20th, a spokesman for the state-run National Oil Corporation (NOC) announced that Samir Kamal, head of the planning department at the Tripoli-based government's oil ministry and its OPEC representative, has gone missing and could have been kidnapped. Abductions have become frequent in

Libya, especially following Libya Dawn establishing a self-declared government in Tripoli. This situation was detailed [here](#).

On January 20th, the U.S. Embassy in Tripoli, Libya, issued a travel warning advising U.S. citizens against all travel to Libya and recommending that U.S. citizens currently in Libya depart immediately. On July 26th, the U.S. Embassy suspended all embassy operations in Libya and relocated staff, due to ongoing violence between Libyan militias in the immediate vicinity of the Embassy. The State Department reported the security situation in Libya remains unpredictable and unstable, with high crime levels and threats of attacks targeting U.S. citizens. The travel warning was posted [here](#).

Nigeria

On January 14th, Ranking Member of the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Africa Karen Bass (D-CA) released a statement condemning the ongoing violence perpetrated by Boko Haram in Nigeria, including reports of the estimated 2,000 people killed in Baga. She also repeated concerns related to Boko Haram's use of children in its attacks, as well as the failure to rescue the more than 200 schoolgirls kidnapped by Boko Haram last year. Acknowledging the Government of Nigeria's decision to end training for the Nigerian Government hosted by U.S. forces, Congresswoman Bass expressed hope the Nigerian Government may accept U.S. assistance in stopping Boko Haram. Her statement was published [here](#).

On January 16th, the U.N. refugee agency (UNHCR) called on the Governments of Niger and Nigeria to suspend the repatriation of hundreds of refugees who have fled Nigeria's Borno state, warning that their return would place refugees back into the heart of the country's ongoing battle against Boko Haram. The repatriations, which reportedly began on January 14th, have already seen hundreds of refugees bused back into northeastern Nigeria. In the wake of the Boko Haram insurgency, the U.N. estimates as many as 2,000 people may have fled Nigeria for neighboring countries, including Chad, Cameroon, and Niger. Feedback from UNHCR was posted [here](#).

On January 16th, U.N. Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict Leila Zerrougui finished a weeklong visit to Nigeria. Following her visit to the northeastern part of the country, Special Representative Zerrougui observed the armed conflict with Boko Haram has been one of the world's deadliest for children over the past year. In particular, Nigeria has seen a rise in violence, growing recruitment and use of children, abductions and attacks on schools, and widespread reports of sexual violence against girls. Special Representative Zerrougui's visit to Nigeria was outlined [here](#).

On January 16th, Ghanaian President John Mahama announced a regional summit of West African leaders, including representatives of the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), to consider creating a joint military force to fight Boko Haram militants in Nigeria. The news comes in the wake of the Boko Haram assault on Baga, Nigeria, which is thought to have left as many as 2,000 civilians dead, and Cameroon's recent efforts to repel cross-border attacks. The regional summit was announced [here](#).

On January 19th, the U.N. Security Council condemned the recent escalation of attacks conducted by Boko Haram and expressed concern that Boko Haram's activities are undermining peace and stability in West and Central Africa. Additionally, the Security Council condemned Boko Haram's use of violence against women and children and demanded the immediate and unconditional release of all of those kidnapped by the group, including the 276 schoolgirls abducted from Chibok. Feedback from the Security Council can be viewed [here](#).

On January 19th, the U.N. Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) welcomed Chad's decision to send soldiers to Cameroon to help in the fight against Boko Haram. The decision comes a day after reports surfaced that Boko Haram had abducted 80 people, primarily children, in Cameroon. UNOCA said Chad's decision was critical, especially as the Chadian economy and the country's security continue to be threatened by repeated attacks launched across the Nigerian border by Boko Haram. In addition, UNOCA called on Boko Haram militants to immediately cease their attacks and release all who have been kidnapped. For more information, click [here](#).

On January 20th, regional leaders met in Niamey, Niger, to discuss a strategy for addressing the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria and neighboring countries. Following the meeting, Nigerien Foreign Minister Mohamed Bazoum announced the AU will present a resolution to the U.N. for authorization for a multinational force to take on Boko Haram. The countries also agreed to move the headquarters of the

proposed multinational force from Baga, Nigeria, to N'Djamena, Chad. The meeting was summarized [here](#).

On January 20th, the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) warned that women and children make up the vast majority of the latest wave of refugees fleeing the violence in northeastern Nigeria perpetrated by Boko Haram. In response to the crisis, UNICEF is continuing its efforts to provide basic assistance, including water, nutrition, health, education, and protection services, to children affected in the region. UNICEF is also planning to scale up its presence around Lake Chad, using its office in Mao to distribute lifesaving supplies, such as hygiene kits, therapeutic foods, blankets, clothing, and tents. UNICEF's reaction to the latest Boko Haram violence was detailed [here](#).

On January 21st, a man claiming to be Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau appeared in a video in which Boko Haram asserted responsibility for the recent assault on Baga. While the Nigerian military claims to have already killed Shekau, the video is thought to be authentic, especially as it was filmed in the trademark Boko Haram style, with the man claiming to be Shekau posing in combat fatigues surrounded by masked gunmen. The man in the video also expressed opposition to both candidates in the upcoming Nigerian presidential election. More information can be found [here](#).

On January 21st, *Reuters* reported on the tensions in Nigeria created by the upcoming presidential contest between incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan and former military ruler Muhammadu Buhari. Some have suggested that the election outcome might see some parts of the country try to secede, in addition to violence similar to the riots that occurred after Buhari lost to President Jonathan in 2011. While experts predict there could be bloodshed following the election, they also speculate that the break-up of the country is unlikely, especially as the country has demonstrated a strong ability to absorb risk. Additional analysis was provided [here](#).

On January 22nd, Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan's National Security Adviser Sambo Dasuki called on the Independent National Electoral Commission (NEC) to consider delaying the Nigerian election scheduled for February 14th by three months. While the main opposition coalition has said it would oppose any postponement of the election, National Security Advisor Dasuki said the delay would give electoral organizers more time to distribute millions of biometric identification cards to voters. The arguments for delaying the elections were outlined [here](#).

On January 22nd, CNA Corporation published a new report seeking to diagnose and dissect the Boko Haram conflict in northeastern Nigeria. The report finds the conflict in Nigeria's northeast is driven by grievances resulting from decades of poor governance, elite delinquency, and extreme economic inequality. In addition, the report classifies Boko Haram as more of a regional insurgent group with relatively local objectives, as opposed to a broader terrorist organization. The full report can be downloaded [here](#).

Democratic Republic of Congo

On January 16th, U.N. Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and head of the U.N. Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) Martin Kobler expressed full solidarity and support for the country's Government as it continues its fight against armed groups in the east. Special Representative Kobler's comments follow a series of operations launched against rebel groups including the Front de Resistance Patriotique de l'Ituri (FRPI), the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), and the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). Special Representative Kobler's comments were captured [here](#).

On January 16th, Lambert Mende, a spokesperson for the Government of DRC President Joseph Kabila announced the country's presidential election could be delayed until 2017. President Kabila's second, five-year term is due to end in 2016 and under the DRC constitution he would be term-limited from continuing to hold power. Mende expressed support for the action in parliament to revise electoral laws to require a census to be completed before the elections, while opposition leaders continued to mount opposition to block passage of the proposed law. More information can be seen [here](#).

On January 20th, police in the DRC fired shots to disperse crowds protesting the proposed change to the DRC's electoral code that could delay the presidential election currently scheduled for 2016 to allow for the completion of a census. Experts believe the census could take as long as four years to be completed. The shots were fired as students set fires and barricaded the roads leading to the University of Kinshasa. At least four people were killed in the demonstrations. Simultaneously, leader of the

opposition Union for the Congolese Nation (UNC) party Jean-Claude Muyambo was arrested. For details, click [here](#).

On January 20th, MONUSCO condemned the deaths and injuries that occurred as protests in Kinshasa turned violent. According to MONUSCO, the protests came following the opposition's call for demonstrations against the revision of the electoral law voted by the National Assembly over the weekend. As protestors gathered, security forces reportedly responded with teargas and live ammunition. U.N. Special Representative for the DRC Martin Kobler urged that the use of force by law enforcement officers must always be necessary, proportionate, and a measure of last resort. MONUSCO's views on the protests were articulated [here](#).

On January 21st, the U.S. Department of State issued a press statement expressing deep concern after a second day of violence in the DRC, following the National Assembly's passage of electoral legislation and as the Senate began consideration of similar legislation. The State Department was particularly alarmed by reports of widespread violent demonstrations, looting, unlawful arrests, and violence against protestors. In response, the State Department called upon all Congolese security forces, as well as civil society and opposition members, to exercise restraint and refrain from acts of violence. The U.S. also reiterated its support for peaceful, credible, and timely elections in the DRC in accordance with the Constitution. The full statement can be read [here](#).

On January 21st, the DRC saw its third day of protests related to the proposed legal reform the opposition party argues would keep term-limited DRC President Joseph Kabila in power for years. While the DRC Government said that only 15 people have been killed, primarily shot dead by security guards while looting, the opposition reports that as many as 42 people have died in the protests. According to reports, the third day of protests saw police again firing teargas at demonstrators at the University of Kinshasa while clashes were reported in three other areas within the capital city. The full story is available [here](#).

Central African Republic

On January 19th, Seleka rebels in the Central African Republic (CAR) said they are entitled to reward money from the U.S. for turning Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) commander Dominic Ongwen over to American Special Operations forces. The U.S. Department of State had previously publicized a \$5 million reward for information leading to Ongwen's capture. It is unclear if the U.S. Government will hand over any money to the Seleka rebels, previously an armed group that rallied to oust President Francois Bozize in March 2013. The Seleka alliance is thought to be responsible for scores of human rights abuses and thousands of civilian deaths. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On January 19th, the U.N. Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the CAR (MINUSCA) announced the capture of Rodrigue Ngaibona, the leader of the anti-Balaka militia also known as General Andilo. Ngaibona was apprehended by MINUSCA peacekeepers in the town of Bouca following an arrest warrant issued by the CAR's Public Prosecutor. He is viewed as a key player in the past two years of civil war between the Muslim Seleka alliance and the Christian anti-Balaka militia. Ngaibona's capture was announced [here](#).

On January 20th, a female peacekeeper with MINUSCA was kidnapped by unidentified men in Bangui. The incident is allegedly the second kidnapping attempt. The abduction came a day after a French charity worker and a churchman were seized in an area of Bangui controlled by anti-Balaka militia fighters. The kidnappings were described [here](#).

On January 20th, the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) condemned the abduction of a French aid worker by unidentified assailants in the CAR and called for her immediate release. OCHA noted the victim was a 67-year old aid worker who had been working in Bangui. Since January 2014, 18 humanitarian workers have been killed in the CAR and more than 130 security incidents directed at aid workers have been recorded. OCHA's response to the abduction can be seen [here](#).

On January 20th, LRA commander Dominic Ongwen, who was recently taken into custody in the CAR, was transferred to the International Criminal Court (ICC) to stand trial for war crimes. A one-time child soldier, Ongwen was among five senior commanders of the LRA indicted by the ICC for crimes against humanity in 2005. Upon his arrival in The Hague, Ongwen was expected to receive a medical visit and to appear before the court as soon as possible. The situation was detailed [here](#).

On January 20th, the U.S. Department of State issued a statement welcoming the transfer of LRA commander Dominic Ongwen to the ICC as the result of close cooperation and consultation between the governments of the CAR and Uganda, the AU Regional Task Force (AU-RTF), and the ICC. The State Department noted that Ongwen will face ICC charges for brutal crimes he committed as an LRA leader, including attacks on displaced civilians in northern Uganda and the massacre of more than 300 civilians in the DRC by elements under his command. In addition, the State Department called on remaining LRA members to follow the lead of the more than 250 individuals who have left the LRA since 2012 to put down their arms and return home. A press statement can be read [here](#).

On January 21st, the U.N.-mandated International Commission of Inquiry on the CAR called on the U.N. to establish a truly international tribunal with international judges to objectively investigate and prosecute perpetrators of war crimes in the CAR. The Commission, created by the U.N. Security Council in 2013, was scheduled to release its final report to the Security Council on Thursday. The report was also expected to include recommendations on implementing accountability mechanisms in the CAR to end the current cycle of impunity. The Commission's work was outlined [here](#).

On January 22nd, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon released a statement welcoming the transfer of senior LRA commander Dominic Ongwen to the ICC. Secretary-General Ban noted the ICC is currently escorting Ongwen to its detention center in the Netherlands and the date of his initial appearance hearing will soon be announced. In addition, Secretary-General Ban labeled Ongwen's transfer an important milestone for accountability, as he is the first LRA commander to be brought before the Court. Secretary-General Ban's statement was published [here](#).

Zambia

On January 20th, Zambians went to the polls to vote in the presidential election to pick a permanent replacement for President Michael Sata, who died in office in October. As the polls opened, Patriotic Front (PF) candidate, Zambian lawyer Edgar Lungu was viewed as having a slight advantage over United Party for National Development (UPND) candidate, businessman Hakainde Hichilema. Another election will be held in 20 months, when former President Sata's first term would have ended. Information on the opening of the polls was reported [here](#).

On January 20th, one of Zambia's frontrunner presidential candidates, UPND opposition candidate Hakainde Hichilema raised concerns of election fraud, alleging that some remote parts of the country had not received proper ballot papers halfway through the polling day. The rural parts of Zambia were expected to be voter strongholds for Hichilema. The allegations were described [here](#).

On January 22nd, Zambia's electoral commission reported that ruling party PF candidate Edgar Lungu had taken a slight lead over opposition UPND candidate Hakainde Hichilema as vote counting continued. According to the electoral commission, Lungu had won 590,252 votes, or 50.75 percent of the 1.16 million ballots counted, while Hichilema had won 524,976 votes, or 45.15 percent of votes counted. While the electoral commission had initially planned to announce a winner on Friday, officials indicated on Thursday that such an announcement may be delayed. An update on the vote count can be seen [here](#).

United States – Africa Relations

White House

On January 19th, the White House released the list of guests to be seated with First Lady Michelle Obama, Dr. Jill Biden, and Senior Advisor to the President Valerie Jarrett during the State of the Union address. Included on the guest list was Dr. Pranav Shetty of International Medical Corps, a critical partner in the U.S.-supported effort to bring the Ebola epidemic under control in West Africa. In August 2014, Dr. Shetty deployed to Liberia to establish and oversee two ETUs, teams of rapid responders that deployed to Ebola hot spots across the country and a training center for local and international health care workers now working on the frontlines of the Ebola response effort. Dr. Shetty's attendance was announced [here](#).

On January 20th, President Barack Obama delivered his annual State of the Union address. In his speech, President Obama noted how the U.S. is partnering with nations in North Africa to deny safe haven to terrorists who threaten America. He also highlighted the involvement of U.S. troops, scientists,

doctors, and nurses in rolling back Ebola in West Africa. President Obama's prepared remarks were posted [here](#).

State Department

On January 16th, Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment Catherine Novelli delivered a briefing on her November 2014 Africa trip to staff members of the Chamber of Commerce and representatives from private companies, at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. The briefing was listed [here](#).

On January 16th, State Department Counselor Tom Shannon participated in the swearing-in ceremony for U.S. Ambassador to Malawi Virginia Palmer. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield also attended the swearing-in ceremony. More information can be found [here](#).

On January 16th, Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs Sheba Crocker met with Egyptian Ambassador to the U.S. Mohamed Tawfik, at the Department of State. The meeting was included on the State Department's daily appointment schedule, which was posted [here](#).

On January 16th, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield met with Ambassador of Kenya to the U.S. Njeru Githae at the Department of State. More information is available [here](#).

On January 16th, Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs Evan Ryan delivered remarks at the Tunisia Community Colleges Scholarship Program Mid-Year Workshop, at the Department of State. More on Assistant Secretary Ryan's participation can be seen [here](#).

On January 19th-21st, Special Representative of the President for Nuclear Nonproliferation Ambassador Adam Scheinman traveled to Abuja, Nigeria, and Rabat, Morocco, for consultations in preparation for the 2015 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference (NPT RevCon). Ambassador Scheinman's travel was noticed [here](#).

On January 20th, the State Department condemned the violence in Niger on January 16th-17th during protests against the depiction of the Prophet Mohamed in the French journal *Charlie Hebdo*, which resulted in the deaths of at least ten people at the destruction of residences, businesses, and other property, including places of worship. In a statement, the State Department expressed support for freedom of expression and respect for all faiths. In addition, the State Department commended the efforts of government officials, religious and traditional leaders, and civil society in Niger to end the violence and encourage calm in the affected communities. A press statement was issued [here](#).

On January 20th-21st, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield led a U.S. delegation to Niger. While there, Assistant Secretary Thomas-Greenfield participated in a ministerial conference hosted by Niger to discuss steps in the fight against Boko Haram, threats to security in Nigeria and the Lake Chad region, and activities of the Multinational Task Force (MNTF). She also held high-level bilateral meetings on related topics of concern. Assistant-Secretary Thomas-Greenfield's travel was noted [here](#).

On January 22nd, Secretary of State John Kerry was on travel to London, United Kingdom (U.K.) for a series of bilateral and multilateral meetings. While in London, Secretary Kerry attended a meeting on Libya. He was accompanied by Special Coordinator for Libya Jonathan Winer. The meeting on Libya was listed [here](#).

On January 22nd, Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights Sarah Sewall and Ambassador-At Large, U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator, and Special Representative for Global Health Diplomacy Deborah Bix departed for Lusaka, Zambia, to attend the Zambian Presidential Inauguration. Under Secretary Sewall and Ambassador Bix's participation was highlighted [here](#).

Department of Defense

On January 20th, U.S. Army Africa reported that Colonel Frances Hardison and Captain Christian Smith recently traveled to Dar Es Salaam and Arusha, Tanzania, to plan a gender integration seminar co-hosted by the Tanzanian Peoples Defense Forces. The event is tentatively scheduled for May and will build on the success of a similar event hosted last year that was intended to help partner countries'

national security leadership incorporate a gender perspective and women in their planning activities while also supporting and encouraging the integration of women into their defense forces. The planning meeting was described [here](#).

On January 20th, U.S. Navy Europe and Africa reported that maritime professionals from 13 African countries, eight European nations, the U.S. and Brazil, recently convened in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, to finalize plans for Exercise Obangame Express 2015. The exercise, which will be held in the Gulf of Guinea in March 2015, will focus on increasing capabilities in deterring piracy, countering illicit trafficking, and addressing other maritime threats. The status of planning for Exercise Obangame Express 2015 was addressed [here](#).

On January 20th, Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) announced plans to transfer 20 mine resistant vehicles (MRAPS) to AU forces engaged in military operations in Somalia as part of the Excess Defense Articles program. The MRAPS, previously used by U.S. troops in Afghanistan, will be used primarily by troops sourced from Uganda and Burundi. Military contractors have been in Mogadishu since September working to get all 20 vehicles up and running. The initial set of transfers is due to occur by the end of this month. The transfers were announced [here](#).

On January 21st, a 30-man detachment of Marines based in North Carolina completed their mission to bolster security at the newly reopened U.S. Embassy in Bangui, CAR. The Marines, who were initially deployed to Moron, Spain, as part of Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force-Crisis Response-Africa were rerouted to Bangui in September at the request of the U.S. State Department. It was not immediately clear if a follow-on contingent from the crisis response unit would deploy to Bangui or if the Embassy would continue to operate with a standard Marine Security Guard (MSG) detachment. For more information, click [here](#).

Department of Justice

On January 20th, jury selection began for the trial of Khalid al-Fawwaz, who is alleged to have assisted in the planning of the 1998 bombings of the U.S. Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. Fawwaz is accused of supplying Osama Bin Laden with a satellite phone, helping to establish businesses and residence in Kenya, and aiding in the dissemination of information issued by Bin Laden calling for the deaths of American military personnel and civilians. While Fawwaz has pleaded not guilty to the charges, the Department of Justice indicated it possesses overwhelming evidence of guilt. An update on the proceedings can be seen [here](#).

Congress

On January 21st, House Foreign Affairs Africa Subcommittee Ranking Member Karen Bass (D-CA) published her biweekly Africa Update. The most recent update provides coverage of the escalating Boko Haram violence ahead of the Nigerian elections scheduled for February 14th, as well as how Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) participants have taken their experiences on American farms back to their home countries in Africa. The Africa Update can be downloaded [here](#).

On January 27th, the House Foreign Affairs Africa Subcommittee will hold a hearing titled, “Nigeria on the Brink?” Witnesses will include Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Robert Jackson, J. Peter Pham of the Atlantic Council, Jadegoke Adebajo of Bonajo Badejo & Co., Emmanuel Ogebe of Jubilee Campaign USA, and Chris Fomunyoh of National Democratic Institute. The hearing was noticed [here](#).

On January 28th, House Foreign Affairs Africa Subcommittee Ranking Member Karen Bass (D-CA) will host an Africa Policy Breakfast on “The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) Today and Beyond: The Future of the U.S.-Africa Commercial Relationship.” AGOA is due to expire on September 30th. Participants will include senior representatives from leading U.S. agencies, international NGOs, and the African diaspora. Event registration opened [here](#).

North Africa

On January 16th, the U.N. announced an advanced party of Chinese peacekeepers has arrived in South Sudan and the rest of a 700-strong contingent is due to arrive in phases throughout February, March, and April. The surge in the U.N. peacekeeping mission is intended to protect civilians as fighting continues between factions loyal to South Sudanese President Salva Kiir and former Vice President Riek

Machar. The initial deployments were noted [here](#).

On January 20th, Egyptian President Abdul Fattah Al-Sisi delivered a speech at a Policy Day celebration, in which he said that people in Egypt have the right to demonstrate, but cautioned that protesting could potentially cause harm to Egypt's already damaged economy. President Sisi called on the activists planning any future demonstrations to support government efforts to improve health, education, and the lives of the poor, and further suggested that protests would hinder progress in these areas. Excerpts from President Sisi's speech were highlighted [here](#).

On January 21st, OCHA reported that roughly 18,000 people in North Darfur are now confirmed displaced following fighting in the El Fasher, Shangil Tobaya, Tawila, and Um Barua areas of Sudan. The U.N.-Africa Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) reported increasing hostilities between Government forces and armed movements. According to U.N. estimates, the number of people displaced by conflict in Darfur has increased to more than 430,000 since the beginning of 2014, with close to 300,000 remaining displaced. Additional information was shared [here](#).

On January 21st, jailed Egyptian activist Alaa Abdel Fattah was moved to a prison hospital after more than two months on hunger strike. Fattah has been in and out of jail since 2011 on various charges. He was most recently re-arrested in October on charges that he violated the anti-protest law that bans demonstrations without a police permit. For more information, click [here](#).

On January 22nd, speaking at the WEF in Davos, Switzerland, Egyptian President Abdul Fattah Al-Sisi called on world leaders to unite against the global threat of terrorism. President Sisi said the whole world, not just Muslims, need to stand up and provide a proper environment for respecting religion. His remarks come as Egyptian security forces are confronting supporters of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in the Sinai Peninsula. President Sisi's remarks were highlighted [here](#).

On January 22nd, the Cairo Criminal Court ordered the release of former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's sons, Alaa and Gamal Mubarak pending retrial in a corruption case related to charges that they used public funds to upgrade family properties. According to court documents, the two men had already served the maximum permitted time of 18 months in pretrial detention. Meanwhile, judicial sources cautioned the men may not be released until prosecutors review other legal cases against them. Details can be seen [here](#).

East Africa

On January 12th-15th, the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Africa Regional Technical Assistance Center for Eastern Africa (East AFRITAC) and the Macroeconomic and Financial Management Institute for Eastern and Southern Africa (MEFMI) conducted a regional workshop on micro prudential stress testing. Held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the workshop attracted participants from the bank supervision and financial stability units of central banks of Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. More information was shared [here](#).

On January 20th, the World Bank issued an updated Poverty Assessment for Ethiopia. The report found that poverty in Ethiopia fell from 44 percent in 2000 to 30 percent in 2011, representing an overall 33 percent reduction in the share of people living in poverty. According to the World Bank's analysis, the improvement regarding the poverty situation was due primarily to strong agricultural growth and high and consistent overarching economic growth. Further analysis can be viewed [here](#).

On January 20th, Djibouti President Ismail Omar Guelleh laid the first stone of a new Chinese-funded airport, marking the first step in constructing the \$599 million project intended to make the country a regional travel hub. Funding for the new Hassan Gouled Aptidon international airport in Ali-Sabieh was provided by the China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC). The airport is set to open in 2018 and will be equipped to handle 100,000 tons of cargo annual, accommodate commercial airlines, and generate 500 jobs. The project was outlined [here](#).

On January 20th, the U.N. applauded Somalia's ratification of the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) and praised its passage as a commitment to improving the lives of Somalia's youngest citizens. Somalia is the 195th country to ratify the treaty, making it the most widely ratified international human rights treaty in history. South Sudan and the U.S. are the only two countries that have yet to ratify the CRC. Somalia's ratification of the treaty was reported [here](#).

On January 21st, Somalia-based militant group Al Shabaab praised Al Qaeda for its January 7th attack on the French satirical journal Charlie Hebdo and urged further attacks in Europe. Al Shabaab said the magazine had insulted Islam by repeatedly publishing cartoon images depicting the Prophet Mohammad in a blasphemous way. Al Shabaab's response to the attack in France can be seen [here](#).

On January 21st, app-based transportation network and taxi company Uber launched its uberX services in Nairobi, Kenya. As part of the launch, Uber teamed up with local restaurant discovery platform EatOut to offer complimentary rides during Nairobi Restaurant week, which began on January 22nd. Nairobi, which is thought to have smartphone penetration rates as high as 76 percent, is the sixth African city to launch Uber services. More information can be found [here](#).

On January 22nd, Al Shabaab claimed responsibility for the bombing attack at the gate of the Mogadishu hotel where Turkish delegates were meeting on Thursday, a day ahead of the scheduled visit of Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan. A spokesman for Al Shabaab reported that several Somali police officers were killed in the bombing. According to the Turkish Foreign Ministry, no members of the Turkish delegation were harmed in the attack. Excerpts from the Al Shabaab statement can be read [here](#).

On January 22nd, Kenyan Attorney General Githu Muigai said Kenyan officials are considering a request from the Chinese Government to extradite 76 Chinese nationals charged with cybercrime for prosecution in China. The Chinese nationals were detained by Kenyan police who have been investigating potential cyber offenses that were perpetrated by the Chinese who were operating private radio services. The full story is available [here](#).

West Africa

On January 15th, the World Bank highlighted the Agricultural Sector Support Project (PASA) in Togo. Funded by the World Bank and the Global Food Crisis Response Program (GFRP), the initiative was designed to provide farmers with construction materials, farming equipment, and veterinary services that will result in increased animal production and more balanced nutrition for the population. PASA is expected to reach as many as 12,500 livestock farmers. For more information, click [here](#).

On January 16th, the Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund concluded the Article IV consultation with Madagascar. While Madagascar has for a long time experienced slow economic growth, deteriorating social services, and political instability, the IMF observed early signs of economic recovery in 2014, including growth projected at three percent and low inflation. The IMF also expressed optimism that the government that assumed power in Madagascar in early 2014 is on the right track to identify budget priorities and to adopt a plan to strengthen public financial management. The IMF consultation with Madagascar was summarized [here](#).

On January 16th, Nigerian Agriculture Minister Akinwumi Adesina said that two poultry farms in Nigeria have been quarantined following the detection of an H5 strain of bird flu in Lagos and Kano. Samples from both farms were sent to a laboratory in Italy to confirm the presence of avian influenza virus. Nigeria was the first African country to detect bird flu in 2006, when chicken farms were found to have the H5N1 strain. The first Nigerian human deaths from bird flu were reported in 2007. Details can be seen [here](#).

On January 17th, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and U.N. Special Representative for Mali and head of the U.N. Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) Arnould Akodjenou condemned the terrorist attack on the U.N. base in Kidal that killed a Chadian peacekeeper and wounded four others. According to MINUSMA, the base came under attack when a suicide vehicle was detonated nearby. A second vehicle then exploded at one of the bases entrances, as the base was also bombarded by rockets. Information on the incident was shared [here](#).

On January 21st, hundreds of women and children in Kidal protested air strikes on Tuareg rebels by U.N. peacekeepers in Mali by occupying the airport. According to witnesses, the protesters were violent and engaged in throwing stones and setting fires. U.N. troops positioned at the Kidal airport were ultimately forced to retreat for the U.N. base nearby. The incident was reported [here](#).

On January 21st, MINUSMA confirmed it used force in response to machine gun fire directed at its troops and towards the town inhabited by civilians in Tabankort. The attack was carried out with a heavy-vehicle mounted machine gun belonging to the Mouvement national de liberation l'Azawad (MNLA). According to MINUSMA, before using force, peacekeepers fired warning shots at the vehicle, which went unheeded. The vehicle was eventually disabled. The incident was noted [here](#).

On January 21st, the Government of Cameroon announced the release of a German citizen who was kidnapped by Boko Haram in Adamawa State, Nigeria in July. According to the Government, the victim's release was secured by a special operation conducted by Cameroonian armed forces and the security services of allies. The success of the operation was announced [here](#).

On January 29th-31st, IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde will visit Dakar, Senegal. While in Senegal, Director Lagarde is scheduled to meet with President Macky Sall and his team. In addition to meeting with representatives of the Senegalese business community and civil society, Director Lagarde will also meet with senior officials of the Banque Centrale des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (BCEAO). Director Lagarde's upcoming travel to Senegal was detailed [here](#).

Sub-Saharan Africa

On January 16th, OCHA reported the U.N. is ramping up relief efforts in response to the heavy rains in Malawi and Mozambique that have caused heavy flooding, displacing thousands and killing scores more. Following the emergency declaration in Malawi on January 13th, the U.N. dispatched a U.N. Disaster and Coordination (UNDAC) team to help support national response efforts. Flooding has caused extensive damage to crops and livestock and left homes and other infrastructure severely damaged. The U.N. response in Malawi and Mozambique was described [here](#).

On January 16th, after touring regions affected by heavy rain and flooding, Malawian Vice President Saulos Chilima reported the death toll had climbed to 176 and noted that figure is likely to increase with several people still reported missing and many areas still inaccessible. Flash flooding, which is likely to continue over the next two to three weeks, has already swept away roads and bridges, destroyed crops, and heightened concerns of a cholera outbreak in the southern part of the country. For an update on the situation in Malawi, click [here](#).

On January 16th, South African President Jacob Zuma asked parliament to reconsider a mineral and petroleum bill that would give the state a free 20 percent stake in gas and oil revenues, expressing his belief that such legislation could violate South Africa's constitution. While parliament passed the changes to its main petroleum bill early last year, industry officials continue to argue adoption of the revisions would hurt investment in South Africa's mineral sector. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On January 21st, U.N. Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman briefed the U.N. Security Council on efforts related to the organization of elections in Burundi. Under-Secretary-General Feltman observed that Burundi has made significant progress since the end of its civil war, but cautioned that preparations for the 2015 elections will continue to present a challenge. He noted the U.N. Electoral Observation Mission (MENUB) will continue to support Burundi's Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) in its efforts to ensure the elections are peaceful and credible. The Security Council briefing was summarized [here](#).

On January 21st, the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) warned that funding for battling a plague of locusts in Madagascar is running out, putting 13 million people at risk of food insecurity. In partnership with the Government of Madagascar, the FAO launched a three-year anti-locust program in the country in 2013. While the program is thought to have already seen some success, the FAO has cautioned that the risks of relapse increase during the rainy season. An update on the program was provided [here](#).

On January 22nd, South African Environmental Affairs Minister Edna Molewa said that the Government has moved around 100 rhinos to unspecified neighboring states as part of its efforts to protect the animals from poaching. The announcement came as the Ministry of Environmental Affairs also unveiled new data on the poaching crisis. The latest report finds that South Africa lost a record 1,215 rhinos last year to poaching, an increase of 20 percent from 23. Additionally, 49 rhinos have been poached already this year. More information can be found [here](#).

On January 22nd, Timon Shava, a leader in Zimbabwe's land reform movement said that police acting on behalf of First Lady Grace Mugabe destroyed dwellings on a farm north of Harare that poor black has seized from white landowners in 2000. Allegedly, the police involved said the land was earmarked for the First Lady for the purposes of building a wildlife conservancy to raise money for an orphanage. The tensions surrounding evictions and land takeovers in Zimbabwe were described [here](#).

On January 26th-29th, IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde visited Kigali, Rwanda. In Kigali, Director Lagarde will meet with Rwandan President Paul Kagame and other senior policy makers. She is also expected to meet with business leaders, parliamentarians, prominent women, and other civil society leaders. Director Lagarde's visit to Rwanda was announced [here](#).

General Africa News

On January 17th, FAO announced a U.N.-supported video campaign to fight hunger in Africa will be featured at the matches throughout the 2015 Africa Cup of Nations tournament. The campaign, titled "African Football Against Hunger," was launched through a partnership between the FAO and the Confederation of African Football (CAF). The initiative was detailed [here](#).

On January 19th, economic experts predicted that falling oil prices may result in an opportunity for resource-poor African nations to play a larger role in the global economy. While African countries have primarily served a role as providers of basic raw materials, such as oil, gas, minerals, and agricultural products, a new trend could emerge this year of African economies rebalancing away from traditional commodity-driven growth to more balanced, consumer driven wealth. Additional analysis was provided [here](#).

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