



ML Strategies Update

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Africa Update

Leading the News

West Africa Ebola Outbreak

On January 28th, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) issued its 18th fact sheet on the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. The latest fact sheet highlights the opening of a temporary unit for treating non-Ebola infections in Monrovia, Liberia, on January 23rd. It also notes the Government of Senegal's decision to reopen land border crossings with Guinea on January 26th. The fact sheet can be accessed [here](#).

On January 29th, the United Nations (U.N.) World Health Organization (WHO) provided an update on the number of Ebola cases in West Africa, noting that the number of new cases recorded fell below 100 for the first time in seven months, with 65 cases in Sierra Leone, 30 in Guinea, and four in Liberia. According to the WHO, the latest figures evidence a shift in the global response from slowing transmission to ending the epidemic. The update from the WHO can be downloaded [here](#).

On January 29th, *The Washington Post* reported that White House Ebola Response Coordinator Ron Klain will step down on February 15th. While President Obama's selection of Klain to lead the U.S. Government Ebola response was initially met with criticism, public health experts and others overseeing critical aspects of the response give Coordinator Klain high marks. Upon leaving the White House, Klain is expected to return to his private sector job as President of Case Holdings. The full story is available [here](#).

On January 30th, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon addressed a roundtable on the West African Ebola outbreak held on the sidelines of the African Union (AU) Summit. In his remarks, Secretary-General Ban lauded the AU for being on the frontlines of the response and expressed his belief that the global response to Ebola is now at a turning point. He assured West African leaders of continuing U.N. support for ending the epidemic and recovery assistance for the affected countries. Excerpts from Secretary-General Ban's comments were highlighted [here](#).

On January 30th, during a visit to West Africa, International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director

Christine Lagarde noted the IMF is in talks with donor countries aimed at reaching a deal to forgive some of the debt of West African nations affected by the Ebola crisis. Managing Director Lagarde also indicated she expects the Executive Board of the IMF to approve a zero-percent-interest loan of \$160 million for Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone early this month. Managing Director Lagarde's comments were captured [here](#).

On January 30th, Birte Hald, leader of the Ebola coordination and support unit of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, said Ebola is flaring up and cases continue to go unreported in parts of West Africa that continue to be suspicious of aid workers, especially in Guinea. Because these cases inevitably lead to small new chains of transmission, the disease could flare up again at any time. In addition, the Red Cross reported there are still parts of Guinea where it does not have access to the local population. The situation was described [here](#).

On January 31st, *The New York Times* reported on behavioral changes observed in Liberia now that the Ebola crisis appears to be ebbing. At the height of the Ebola epidemic, schools in Liberia were closed and used as Ebola holding centers. Now, students are returning to school for a delayed and shortened academic year. While the WHO has warned the epidemic will not be over until there are zero cases in West Africa, it has also reported that the number of Ebola cases in Liberia is currently in the single digits. The full article can be seen [here](#).

On February 1st, pharmaceutical company Chimerix Inc. stopped the testing of its experimental antiviral therapy, brincidofovir, in Ebola patients in Liberia. The study was stopped because the drop in new Ebola cases in Liberia has resulted in just a few patients being enrolled in the study. While more than 22,000 people in West Africa have been infected with Ebola and more than 8,800 have died, the trouble that Chimerix has seen in accessing patients in Liberia has raised concerns about the testing of other antivirals and vaccines in the region. The full story is available [here](#).

On February 2nd, Public Health England reported that a second British health care worker in Sierra Leone was being flown to London after being exposed to Ebola from a needle injury while treating an Ebola patient. Another British health worker was also flown back to London following a similar encounter with the virus on Saturday. Neither patient has been diagnosed with Ebola nor are they showing any symptoms. Both patients will continue to be monitored by the Royal Free Hospital, which has already successfully treated two Ebola patients. Details were shared [here](#).

On February 2nd, the first large-scale trials of two experimental vaccines against Ebola developed by GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) and Merck began in Liberia. As part of the trials, the vaccines will be used to immunize as many as 30,000 volunteers, including frontline health workers. The Liberia trials began with the injection of 12 healthy volunteers. Trials to test the safety of the vaccines have already taken place in the United Kingdom (U.K.) and Switzerland, while trials for two antiviral drugs have started at Ebola treatment facilities run by Doctors Without Borders (MSF). The start of vaccine trials in Liberia was noted [here](#).

On February 3rd, the WHO announced the appointment of Dr. Bruce Aylward as the new Special Representative for Ebola Response. In this role, Dr. Aylward will work closely with the U.N. Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER), the AU, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and other partners to continue efforts to control the epidemic. Details can be found [here](#).

On February 3rd, the Director General of African Risk Capacity (ARC), Africa's sovereign disaster risk insurer, said ARC has launched a new initiative with Metabiota, which works to manage and mitigate pandemic threats, to develop insurance products following the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. The partnership was announced [here](#).

On February 4th, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released a report on the late December breach involving a study on Ebola at a CDC high-level biosecurity lab. While no one was infected with Ebola as a result of the incident, the report found the facility's workflow plan did not sufficiently minimize the possibility that human error could result in potential exposure to the virus. In addition, the report included recommendations to improve specimen labeling and monitoring. The report can be downloaded [here](#).

On February 4th, a senior member of MSF said the charity made a mistake in focusing on treatment instead of public health education early on in the Ebola outbreak. Instead of asking for more beds, MSF Ebola Emergency Coordinator for Guinea Claudia Evans said MSF should have asked for more sensitization activities. Her comments were captured [here](#).

On February 5th, the WHO reported a rise in the number of new Ebola cases in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone over the past week, reversing the trend of declining new cases since the start of the year. New figures for the week ending on February 1st showed 124 new cases, compared to just 99 new cases from the previous week. Sierra Leone accounted for 80 new cases, Guinea for 39, and Liberia for five. The WHO attributed disease transmission to persistent suspicion of aid workers and unsafe local practices. More information can be seen [here](#).

On February 5th, Sierra Leone's President Ernest Bai Koroma directed schools throughout the country that were closed due to the Ebola epidemic to prepare to reopen March 30th. As part of preparations, the Government of Sierra Leone ordered that water and sanitation be made available in all schools, as well as Ebola screenings and psychosocial support. Meanwhile, in Liberia, school re-openings have been delayed from February 2nd to February 16th in order to give parents more time to register their children, as well as to ensure that Ebola-related safety protocols are in place. The situation was detailed [here](#).

On February 5th, *USA Today* reported the U.S. military mission to Liberia to fight Ebola will end next month. While 3,000 U.S. troops were in Liberia in December, those numbers have fallen to 1,300 this week and will continue to decline through March. Liberian Defense Minister Brownie Samukai said the drawdown will occur on a visible timeline. While the U.S. military presence in Liberia will be scaled back, other assistance is expected to continue as the Ebola crisis comes to an end. An article on the military drawdown can be read [here](#).

On February 5th, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) hosted an event titled, "Creating UNMEER: A Discussion with Anthony Banbury." As part of the event, Special Representative Banbury discussed his leadership of UNMEER and how lessons learned from the Haiti Earthquake, the conflict in the Central African Republic (CAR), and the elimination of chemical weapons in Syria apply to the current Ebola crisis. The event was noticed [here](#).

Nigeria

On January 29th, angry protestors upset by the President's handling of Boko Haram stoned Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan's motorcade. The protestors hurled stones at the convoy as it left the palace of a traditional chief in Jalingo, where President Jonathan was expected to appear at a rally as part of his presidential campaign. Several cars were damaged in the incident. Police used tear gas to disperse the protestors. The situation was described [here](#).

On January 29th, *The Washington Post* published an editorial authored by Assistant Director of the Atlantic Council's Africa Center Joshua Meservey on the crisis created by Nigerian refugees fleeing the Boko Haram violence in the northeastern part of the country. As Boko Haram has advanced, tens of thousands of people have fled into neighboring countries, such as Cameroon, Chad, and Niger that are ill equipped to provide shelter. The op-ed can be accessed [here](#).

On January 30th, the U.N. World Food Programme (WFP) appealed for an increase in funding to help address the recent exodus of refugees into Cameroon from Nigeria. The warning from the WFP follows last month's Boko Haram attacks against several cross-border villages in northern Cameroon. The increase in the number of cross border attacks has made it increasingly difficult for the WFP to provide humanitarian assistance to those in the areas targeted by Boko Haram. More information can be seen [here](#).

On January 30th, the AU endorsed a proposal developed earlier this month by the Governments of Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger, Chad, and Benin to set up a regional task force of 7,500 to fight Boko Haram. Speaking on the margins of the AU Summit, Commissioner of the AU's Peace and Security Council Smail Chergui indicated the next step would be to submit the plan to the U.N. Security Council for approval. A U.N. mandate could help draw international assistance for the regional force. For details, click [here](#).

On January 31st, while on travel to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to participate in the AU Summit, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon welcomed the decision of the AU to join forces to stop the advance of Boko Haram. Secretary-General Ban expressed support for a multinational joint task force that would operate consistent with U.N. human rights due diligence policies. Secretary-General Ban's views on the multinational force to combat Boko Haram were articulated [here](#).

On February 2nd, a car bomb exploded near a stadium in Gombe, Nigeria, shortly after President Goodluck Jonathan made an appearance for a campaign rally. At least one person was killed and seven others wounded in the attack. While there was no immediate claim of responsibility, suspicion fell largely on Boko Haram, which executed a suicide bombing near a mosque in Gombe on Sunday that left another five people dead and eight more wounded. Both bombings were reported [here](#).

On February 3rd, the U.N. Security Council condemned the escalation of attacks perpetrated by Boko Haram in Nigeria and Cameroon. In addition, the Security Council reiterated its belief that the activities of Boko Haram are undermining the peace and stability of the West and Central African region. In response, the Security Council urged the region to enhance regional military operations and coordination to more effectively and immediately combat Boko Haram, applauding the Chadian army's swift assistance in Cameroon. The Security Council's views on the Boko Haram violence were articulated [here](#).

On February 3rd, Nigerian police attributed the recent bombing outside of an election campaign rally in support of President Goodluck Jonathan in Gombe to the work of a female suicide bomber. While no group had yet come forward to take responsibility for the attack, police indicated the use of a woman as a suicide bomber only increased suspicions of Boko Haram's involvement. An update on the investigation of the attack was provided [here](#).

On February 3rd, Chadian troops clashed with Boko Haram fighters in Gambaru, Nigeria. Chad has deployed 2,500 troops as part of a regional effort to take on the Islamist fighters in northeastern Nigeria that have killed approximately 10,000 people in the last year. The attack followed days of intense fighting between Chadian forces in Cameroon and Boko Haram fighters who had attacked a border bridge and as Chadian soldiers also massed in Diffa, Niger, to protect Lake Chad. Meanwhile the Nigerian Defense Ministry claimed that Gambaru, as well as Mafa, Mallom Fatori, Abadam, and Marte, had all been liberated by Nigerian forces. The clashes were outlined [here](#).

On February 3rd, the French Defense Ministry said French military aircraft are carrying out surveillance missions to help countries bordering Nigeria take down Boko Haram militants. While French President Francois Hollande has previously said the French military was operating over Nigeria, the French Defense Ministry clarified that French support is currently limited to Chad and Niger. For the time being, direct French military involvement has not been considered. More information can be seen [here](#).

On February 4th, a Nigerian electoral commissioner told press that the presidential election, slated to be held next week, may be delayed if an insufficient number of voter identification cards are distributed. Currently, only 44 million out of 68.8 million have been handed out. Amina Zachary, a Commissioner for the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), said the situation would be evaluated on February 8th. For more information on the presidential election, click [here](#).

On February 4th, Chad's army reported that it had killed over 200 Boko Haram militants in the Nigerian towns of Gambaru and Ngala. A report on the latest operations carried out by Chadian forces in Nigeria can be seen [here](#).

On February 4th, Chadian state television reported that nine Chadian soldiers were killed and an additional 21 were wounded in clashes with Boko Haram militants in northeastern Nigerian towns. The casualties from the military operations against Boko Haram were reported [here](#).

On February 4th, Cameroon's Information Minister reported the country's army killed at least 50 Boko Haram insurgents and lost six of its own soldiers during an early morning attack in the border town of Fotokol, Cameroon. Boko Haram was eventually driven out of the town. Information on the incident can be viewed [here](#).

On February 5th, a Greek-owned tanker was attacked by gunmen off the coast of Nigeria. According to the coastguard, the Greek deputy captain was killed and three of the 23 crew members were taken hostage. The full story is available [here](#).

On February 5th, it was reported that Boko Haram militants killed more than 100 people in Fotokol, a town located in the north of Cameroon on the border with Nigeria. According to a civic leader, people were killed inside their homes and a mosque during the early morning hours. Accounts of the massacre were recorded [here](#).

Egypt

On January 29th, Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis, an Egyptian militant group with allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and more recently referred to as Sinai Province, carried out four separate attacks on security forces in North Sinai. While the death toll was expected to rise, initial estimates suggested that as many as 30 people may have been killed in the attacks, with the most casualties occurring in the bombing of a military hotel and base in al-Arish. Once the attacks were reported, Egyptian President Abdul Fattah Al-Sisi cut short his visit to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, for the AU Summit. The attacks were reported [here](#).

On January 29th, the U.S. Department of State issued a statement condemning the terrorist attacks in Egypt's North Sinai Governorate in which at least 29 Egyptian citizens were killed and dozens others wounded. State Department officials said that a prosperous and strong Egypt requires an environment of security and stability and the U.S. remains steadfast in its support of the Egyptian Government's efforts to combat the threat of terrorism as part of its continuing commitment to the strategic bilateral partnership. The statement was released [here](#).

On January 29th, *The Washington Post* Editorial Board published an opinion piece arguing the Obama Administration has been too complacent in response to ongoing human rights abuses and repression in Egypt. The Editorial Board argued this is especially true as more than 20 protestors were killed by police on the fourth anniversary of the revolution that overthrew President Hosni Mubarak and as many journalists and activists remain unfairly imprisoned. The Obama Administration has recently won congressional approval for fully resuming aid to Egypt. The full article can be read [here](#).

On January 30th, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the U.N. Security Council condemned the terrorist attacks in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula that killed and injured dozens of Egyptian soldiers and civilians. Secretary-General Ban conveyed condolences to the families of the victims and expressed his solidarity with the people of Egypt, while the Security Council reaffirmed that terrorism in all of its forms and manifestations constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security. The U.N. also underscored the need to bring the perpetrators of the attacks to justice. The U.N. reaction to the terrorist attacks in Egypt was posted [here](#).

On February 1st, *Al Jazeera* journalist Peter Greste was deported from Cairo, Egypt, apparently bound for his native Australia. Greste and two other *Al Jazeera* reporters, Mohamed Fahmy and Baher Mohamed, were convicted last year on charges of abetting the Muslim Brotherhood and their trial was widely criticized by global human rights groups. While Greste was released, following repeated urging by the Government of Australia, the fate of his colleagues remained unclear. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On February 2nd, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon applauded the decision by Egyptian authorities to release *Al Jazeera* journalist Peter Greste, ending his 400-day imprisonment. While Secretary-General Ban welcomed Greste's release, he also noted that other journalists, including Greste's colleagues Mohamed Fahmy and Baher Mohamed, were still detained in Egypt and called for their immediate release. More generally, Secretary-General Ban reiterated the importance of safeguarding freedom of speech and association in Egypt. Secretary-General Ban's statement was posted [here](#).

On February 2nd, an Egyptian court sentenced 183 Muslim Brotherhood supporters to death for killing police officers in Kardasa in August 2013 during the uprising against President Mohamed Morsi. While the Muslim Brotherhood says it is committed to peaceful activism, Egyptian President Abdul Fattah Al-Sisi describes the group as a security threat and blames them for the recent violence in Egypt. The

sentences were reported [here](#).

On February 3rd, a bomb blast out front of the Mabaret Al-Asafra Hospital in Alexandria, Egypt, killed one person. The bombing occurred just hours after two devices were discovered at the Cairo airport and another went off in downtown Cairo without any casualties. More information was shared [here](#).

On February 3rd, *Al Jazeera* reported that jailed Canadian-Egyptian journalist Mohamed Fahmy's release appeared imminent, following Fahmy renouncing his Egyptian citizenship and creating a pathway for him to be deported under a presidential decree. Canadian Foreign Minister John Baird confirmed that Fahmy's release was imminent and that the journalist would be deported to Canada upon his release. Meanwhile, Fahmy's colleague, Bahar Mohamed, an Egyptian citizen, remained in jail in Cairo. Rumors of Fahmy's release can be seen [here](#).

On February 3rd, U.S. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel spoke with Egyptian Minister of Defense General Sedki Sobhy to exchange information about the security environment in the Middle East and North Africa, including concerns about terrorism. The two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to continuing a strong security partnership between the U.S. and Egypt. The discussion was summarized [here](#).

On February 4th, Ahmed Douma was sentenced to life in prison by an Egyptian court on charges of rioting, inciting violence, and attacking security forces. Douma was a prominent leader during the pro-democracy revolt that ousted Hosni Mubarak in 2011. The sentencing also included a fine of \$2 million. The court decision was detailed [here](#).

On February 5th, Egyptian courts upheld the death sentence for Mahmoud Hasan Ramadan, charged with murder following the ousting of President Mohamed Morsi. Ramadan was captured on film as he threw someone off a rooftop in Alexandria. More information can be viewed [here](#).

On February 5th, an Egyptian opposition party led by moderate Islamist and former presidential candidate Abdel Moneim Abol Fotouh announced it would boycott the upcoming elections. Fotouh said the Strong Egypt Party would not participate because the elections lack a truly competitive and democratic climate. Another party, The Popular Current, led by another ex-presidential candidate Hamdeen Sabahi, will also be boycotting the elections. Political developments in Egypt were analyzed [here](#).

South Sudan

On February 2nd, following talks in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, warring factions in South Sudan signed a ceasefire agreement outlining an interim administration for a 30-month transitional period. South Sudanese President Salva Kiir and former Vice President Riek Machar are due to meet again beginning on February 14th to shape the final details of the power-sharing agreement, with the goal of having a comprehensive peace deal in place by March. According to the preliminary agreement, President Kiir will lead the interim government while Machar will become Vice President. The deal was outlined [here](#).

On February 3rd, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called on South Sudan's President Salva Kiir and former Vice President Riek Machar to move swiftly into another round of negotiations in order to create a long-term peace agreement. The statement comes after the two leaders agreed to a ceasefire over the weekend. Excerpts from Secretary-General Ban's statement were highlighted [here](#).

On February 4th, the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) reported that without a commitment by South Sudan's warring factions to negotiate a long-term agreement, the country will face catastrophic food shortages. The ongoing conflict has made humanitarian access to remote areas impossible. It is estimated that approximately 229,000 children are currently suffering from severe acute malnutrition in South Sudan. For details, click [here](#).

Libya

On January 29th, the U.N. Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) reported that participants in the U.N. facilitated political dialogue held in Geneva, Switzerland, had agreed to convene future dialogue

sessions in Libya, pending appropriate logistical and security conditions. As a result, UNSMIL planned to start consultations with the parties on potential venues for new talks in Libya. An update on the peace talks can be viewed [here](#).

On February 3rd, new fighting broke out between rival factions in Libya seeking control of the oil port of Es Sider. Reports of violence surfaced shortly after the U.N. said it was seeking a ceasefire agreement to pave the way of a new round of peace talks to be held in country between the internationally recognized government in Tobruk and the Libya Dawn coalition in Tripoli. The clashes were instigated by airstrikes launched by Prime Minister Abdullah al-Thinni's government that were intended to stop a new advance of rival fighters on the port. The fighting was detailed [here](#).

On February 4th, UNSMIL condemned the attack by armed groups on a central Libyan oil field. In a statement, UNSMIL said the attack undermines peace efforts by Libyan leaders and called for an immediate ceasefire. A press release was issued [here](#).

On February 5th, an attack on Libya's Mabrook oilfield killed twelve people. Abdelhakim Maazab, commander of the force tasked to protect the field, said that most were beheaded and several were shot. Maazab and his team took back the field after the attackers left. More details can be read [here](#).

United States – Africa Relations

White House

On February 4th, President Barack Obama notified Congress of his decision to extend the national emergency declared with respect to the situation in Cote d'Ivoire beyond February 7th. President Obama observed that while the Government of Cote d'Ivoire and its people are continuing to make progress in preparing for a peaceful, fair, and transparent presidential election in 2015, conditions in the country continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the U.S. President Obama's message to Congress can be read [here](#).

State Department

On January 27th-31st, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield led the interagency U.S. observer delegation to the AU's 24th Ordinary Sessions of the Assembly of the Union and its related events, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. In addition to the Summit events, Assistant Secretary Thomas-Greenfield held bilateral meetings with senior Ethiopian leaders, AU member states, and the AU Commission to discuss the range of issues and challenges in Africa. More information can be seen [here](#).

On January 29th, the State Department welcomed the announcement by the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) of military operations against the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR). The State Department noted the U.N. Security Council has mandated the U.N. Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) to protect civilians and to neutralize armed groups, including the FDLR. On January 2nd, the FDLR failed to deliver on its promise to surrender and instead continued to commit human rights abuses, recruit new combatants, and pursue an illegitimate political agenda. Feedback from the State Department was shared [here](#).

On January 29th, the State Department expressed concern for the Ethiopian Federal High Court's recent decision to proceed with the trial of six bloggers and three independence journalists on charges under the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation. According to the State Department, the decision undermines a free and open media environment which is critical to the democratic elections in Ethiopia scheduled for May 2015. State Department officials urged the Ethiopian Government to ensure that the trial is fair, transparent, and in compliance with Ethiopia's constitutional guarantees and international human rights obligations. A statement was published [here](#).

On February 2nd, Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources Heather Higginbottom and USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah delivered a briefing on the FY16 budget request for the State Department and USAID. During the briefing, Deputy Secretary Higginbottom noted the budget proposal includes \$5 billion for international organizations and peacekeeping efforts, including contributions for 17

U.N. peacekeeping missions in Africa and the Middle East. She also discussed the humanitarian funding included in the budget to address the large-scale crises in South Sudan and the CAR. In addition, Administrator Shah highlighted USAID's Ebola response efforts in Liberia. The briefing was transcribed [here](#).

On February 2nd, the State Department's Office of Global Partnerships, along with Concordia and the University of Virginia Darden School of Business Institute for Business in Society (IBiS), opened the application process for the second annual P3 Impact Award, which honors exemplar public-private partnerships (P3s) from around the world. Last year's P3 Impact Award winner was CocoaLink, a partnership between The Hershey Company, the Ghana Cocoa Board, and the World Cocoa Foundation, which seeks to use mobile technology to give cocoa farmers more access to information and approved farming technical. For details, click [here](#).

On February 4th, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield met with Ambassador of Zimbabwe to the U.S. Ammon Mutembwa at the Department of State. The meeting was included on the State Department's daily appointment schedule, which can be accessed [here](#).

On February 5th, Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment Cathy Novelli met with Tanzanian Minister of Natural Resources and Tourism Lazaro Nyalandu at the Department of State. The meeting was listed [here](#).

U.S. Agency for International Development

On January 29th, USAID launched a new project to provide quality basic education to children in South Sudan who are currently not attending school. Following the onset of the political crisis in December 2013, roughly 1,200 schools closed in South Sudan's Jonglei, Upper Nile, and Unity states. Further an additional 400,000 children and adolescents dropped out due to the crisis and some 90 schools are occupied by fighting forces or internally displaced persons (IDPs). Implemented by BRAC International, the new project will establish 350 community schools over three years with the goal of providing access to education to 10,500 students and training for 350 community teachers. The project was launched [here](#).

On February 3rd, USAID, in partnership with World Vision and the Australian Government, announced 14 grantees for the second call of All Children Reading: A Grand Challenge for Development, which is intended to rally innovators to develop groundbreaking solutions to illiteracy. Two awards were made to entities in Zambia and one in Mali for mother tongue instruction and reading materials, while an additional award was made to a group in Mali to help promote family and community engagement. Groups in Lesotho and Morocco will also receive grants to help increase literacy among children with disabilities. Information on the awardees can be found [here](#).

Department of Defense

On February 2nd, Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) Lieutenant General Vincent Stewart said ISIL fighters are starting to create a growing international footprint that has reach in North Africa. According to the DIA, the Sunni extremist group is using ungoverned and under-governed areas to establish affiliates in Algeria, Egypt, and Libya. Lieutenant General Stewart's comments on ISIL's footprint in North Africa were recorded [here](#).

On February 2nd, U.S. Army Africa's Colonel Frances Hardison and Captain Christian Smith traveled to Dar Es Salaam and Arusha, Tanzania, to plan a gender integration seminar co-hosted by the Tanzanian Peoples Defense Forces. The event, scheduled for May, will bring together African partner nations for a weeklong seminar to discuss best practices, lessons learned, and explore ways forward with guest speakers from the U.N., AU, Southern African Development Community (SADC), East African Community (EAC), and ECOWAS. Planning was described [here](#).

On February 3rd, the President of Mauritius Kalish Purryag visited the guarded-missile frigate USS Simpson while it was moored in Port Louis, Mauritius to take part in Exercise Cutlass Express 2015. While touring the vessel and meeting with exercise personnel, President Purryag warned that piracy is impacting the lives of people and increasing the cost of living in the region. As part of Exercise Cutlass

Express 2015, the U.S. and 12 East Africa partner nations are participating in simulations aimed at combatting piracy and other illicit activity.

On February 3rd, U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) detailed a training program that U.S. Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal Soldiers held in December for the Congolese military and law enforcement units. As part of the training, U.S. soldiers participated in a humanitarian mine action mission with Congolese disaster response forces in the CAR. Explosives identification has become increasingly important in the Republic of Congo (ROC) following an arms depot fire in 2012 that set off a series of explosions, killing hundreds. An article on the training session can be read [here](#).

On February 3rd, Pentagon Press Secretary Rear Admiral John Kirby reported that the U.S. carried out a January 31st drone strike outside of Mogadishu, Somalia, targeting Al Shabaab chief of external operations and planning for intelligence and security Yusef Dheeq. The operation was conducted in cooperation with the Government of Somalia. Rear Admiral Kirby noted that intelligence officials were still assessing the outcome of the attack, which could represent a significant blow to Al Shabaab. The operation in Somalia was first acknowledged [here](#).

On February 4th, the Somali Government confirmed that a U.S. drone strike launched in Somalia last week against Al Shabaab leader Yusef Dheeq has been successful in killing the target. In announcing Dheeq's death, Somalia's national intelligence and security agency said Dheeq was the coordinator of guerilla attacks inside and outside Somalia, as well as one of the main leaders of Al Shabaab. Dheeq's death was confirmed [here](#).

On February 4th, AFRICOM provided additional information on a certification exercise completed by more than a thousand new Marines and sailors deploying in January and February in support of crisis and contingency response in the European and Africa Commands' areas of responsibility. The exercise simulated a wide range of real-world scenarios the service members will encounter while forward deployed with Special-Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force Crisis Response-Africa. Details were shared [here](#).

Overseas Private Investment Corporation

On January 27th, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) hosted a #PoweringAfrica Twitter Chat featuring officials from OPIC, the U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA), and other U.S. Government Power Africa partners. Tweets sent as part of the chat were posted [here](#).

On February 4th, OPIC issued a new fact sheet on the agency's activities. In addition to noting that OPIC committed \$2.96 billion to development projects in emerging markets in FY14, the fact sheet also highlights that commitments to Africa were 26 percent of OPIC's 2014 portfolio. The fact sheet can be viewed [here](#).

U.S. Trade and Development Agency

On January 30th, USTDA rolled out a video detailing the success of the partnership between USTDA and George Washington University Law School's Government Procurement Law Program forged under USTDA's Global Procurement Initiative (GPI). The program has had a significant impact in Botswana, where it has helped to increase understanding of best value in the procurement of goods and services. The video can be watched [here](#).

Congress

On February 4th, the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission (TLHRC) held a briefing on the human rights and governance situation in Nigeria and its relation to the growth of the extremist movement Boko Haram. Participants included Lauren Ploch Blanchard of the Congressional Research Service (CRS), Adotei Akwei of Amnesty International, and EJ Hogendoorn of International Crisis Group. More information can be found [here](#).

On February 4th, House Foreign Affairs Africa Subcommittee Ranking Member Karen Bass (D-CA) released her biweekly Africa Update. The most recent update highlights the Africa Policy Breakfast

Congresswoman Bass recently hosted on the reauthorization of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), as well as U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) Michael Froman's recent testimony before the Senate Finance and House Ways and Means Committees in support of AGOA reauthorization. Congresswoman Bass' Africa Update can be read [here](#).

North Africa

On January 29th, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon condemned the reported aerial bombardment and destruction of villages in central Darfur and expressed concern over the worsening security situation. According to U.N. estimates, as many as 36,000 civilians in the area have been displaced. While calling on the Government of Sudan and armed movements to exercise maximum restraint, Secretary-General Ban also urged all parties in Darfur to work with the U.N.-AU Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) and humanitarian partners to provide assistance to the civilian population. Secretary-General Ban's reaction to the violence in Darfur was posted [here](#).

On January 30th, the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) expressed concern for the alarming rates at which Sudanese refugees are entering South Sudan to flee aerial bombardments and ground attacks in the Nuba Mountains. UNHCR reported that settlement camps are reaching full capacity as more than 500 refugees are fleeing to South Sudan each week. In addition, UNHCR warned if the current rate of arrivals continues, more than 15,000 refugees may arrive by June 2015, exhausting funding for humanitarian operations. An update from UNHCR was provided [here](#).

On January 30th, state media in Morocco reported that at least six people drowned off Morocco after a boat carrying them sank close to a Spanish enclave that is the routine destination of African migrants. The bodies of the victims washed ashore on Morocco's Boukana beach. Meanwhile, another ten people were rescued near Melilla. Four others remain missing. The incident was reported [here](#).

On February 2nd, the crew of a U.N.-operated helicopter that was forced to land in South Sudan was returned safely to a WFP office. The helicopter was en route from Rumbek, South Sudan to Khartoum, Sudan when it came under fire from members of the Sudan People's Liberation Army – North (SPLM-N) and was forced to make an emergency landing in a remote part of Sudan's South Kordofan state. The SPLM-N held the crewmembers until negotiations for the crew's release reached a breakthrough. The incident was detailed [here](#).

On February 2nd, Tunisian Prime Minister-designate Habib Essid announced a new coalition government following what appeared to be the imminent defeat of an earlier proposal that did not include the main opposition party. The new proposal included the ruling Nida Tounes party, the Islamist Ennahda opposition, and smaller political parties. The proposal was ultimately approved on February 5th. For more information, click [here](#).

On February 3rd, Russian airline UTair said that two of its Russian employees were kidnapped in Darfur, Sudan. UNAMID has contracted with UTair for mission support. Sudan's Minister of State Kamal al-Din Ismail told a press conference that Sudanese officials have condemned the killing and dismissed the possibility of a ransom payment to secure the hostages' release. The situation was described [here](#).

On February 5th, French Justice Minister Christiane Taubira announced that France and Morocco will resume judicial cooperation. The development is important to both countries and signals an end to the dispute caused by a French investigation into alleged torture by Moroccan intelligence officials. With this renewed cooperation, Morocco will seek French support in the Western Sahara territorial dispute and France will pursue intelligence from North Africa on terrorist suspects. For details, click [here](#).

East Africa

On January 29th, the African Development Bank (AfDB) approved Guinea Bissau's Country Strategy Paper (CSP) for 2015-2019, which provides a framework for AfDB's support for post-crisis support to the country. The CSP, which was developed in response to Guinea-Bissau's return to constitutional order following legislative and presidential elections in April and May 2014 after the 2012 military coup, is centered on strengthening governance and state foundations and developing national infrastructure that will foster inclusive growth. A press release was issued [here](#).

On January 29th, the U.N. Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia Philippe Lazzarini issued a warning on malnutrition and food insecurity in Somalia. According to U.N. estimates, more than 200,000 Somali children require emergency nutrition, while another 730,000 Somalis face acute food insecurity. While Coordinator Lazzarini reported there have been improvements in some parts of the country, he observed southern and central Somalia continue to be the epicenter of the crisis. A statement on the crisis in Somalia was issued [here](#).

On February 2nd, the Executive Board of the IMF approved a \$497.1 million Stand-By Arrangement and a \$191.2 million arrangement under the Stand-By Credit Facility for Kenya for a combined total of roughly \$688.3 million. While Kenyan authorities' macroeconomic policies and major institutional and economic reforms have contributed to macroeconomic stability, higher growth, and increased external buffers, the newly announced, one-year arrangements will help Kenya to face shocks arising from Kenya's growing integration into global markets, security concerns, and extreme weather events. For more information, click [here](#).

On February 2nd, Ethiopia's Agricultural Transformation Agency (ATA) Chief Executive Khalid Bomba said that achieving Ethiopia's vision of becoming a manufacturing hub will be dependent upon luring rural farmers to manufacturing jobs. The country's agricultural sector currently employs 85 percent of Ethiopia's workforce. While Ethiopia's eight percent economic growth rate is among the highest in the region, agriculture accounts for more than 42 percent of gross domestic product (GDP). Details can be seen [here](#).

On February 4th, the latest World Bank figures indicated that primary school enrollment has reached 60 percent in Djibouti. Despite this progress, however, enrollment is lower and dropout rates are high for girls, as well as those living in rural areas and in poverty. Additional details on the education efforts and progress in Djibouti can be read [here](#).

On February 4th, U.N. Special Representative for Somalia Nicholas Kay briefed the U.N. Security Council on upcoming challenges for the country. Special Representative Kay said that 2015 would be a decisive year in terms of Somalia's future as a unified and peaceful state. He acknowledged that political progress had been made, but expressed concern over tensions that could arise as the country gets closer to the 2016 elections. The briefing was summarized [here](#).

On February 4th, the World Bank reported that Kenya's growth and prosperity outlook is improving as a result of devolution and increased investment in infrastructure. According to the most recent Public Expenditure Review, Kenya has recovered from the economic shocks it experienced between 2008 and 2009 with an average growth rate of six percent over the last five years. The World Bank report can be accessed [here](#).

West Africa

On January 29th, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon condemned last week's protests against a U.N. Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) compound in Gao that left several people dead and a number of others injured. Allegedly, demonstrators were reacting to the establishment of a temporary security zone in Tabankort. MINUSMA confirmed the crowd surrounded the compound and began launching stones and Molotov cocktails at the facility, forcing U.N. Police to respond with tear gas and warning shots. The incident was described [here](#).

On January 29th, the World Bank Group and the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in Dakar, Senegal, to strengthen their support for efforts to improve the performance of the School Management Committee (SMC) in Senegal's educational institutions. The new partnership will build on a successful pilot program implemented between 2010 and 2012 to help give local communities in Senegal a voice in school management. The signing of the MOU was noted [here](#).

On January 29th-31st, IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde visited Dakar, Senegal. While in Senegal, Director Lagarde met with President Macky Sall and his team. In addition to meeting with representatives of the Senegalese business community and civil society, Managing Director Lagarde

also met with senior officials of the Banque Centrale des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (BCEAO). Director Lagarde's travel to Senegal was detailed [here](#).

On January 30th, IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde delivered remarks to the Senegalese National Assembly titled, "Senegal on the Way to an Emerging Economy: Transformation, Inclusiveness, Equity." In her speech, Managing Director Lagarde highlighted Senegal's accomplishments, including the country serving as a model for democracy and diversity in its government institutions. In addition, Managing Director Lagarde applauded the country's new development strategy, Plan Senegal Emergent, which aims to accelerate, broaden, and deepen reforms to help achieve poverty reduction. Her remarks were transcribed [here](#).

On January 31st, IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde issued a statement upon the conclusion of her visit to Dakar, Senegal. Managing Director Lagarde complimented Senegalese authorities on their ambitious development plan, which she said will create economic space for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and foreign direct investment, help Senegal to diversify and expand exports, and create jobs that are the foundation for inclusive economic growth. In addition, she argued that efforts to improve the efficiency of public spending must be reinforced. Managing Director Lagarde's full statement was posted [here](#).

On February 3rd, Ghanaian President John Mahama said Ghana expects to secure a financial assistance agreement from the IMF by the end of March. With Ghana's economic growth anticipated to slow in 2015 as the government struggles to contain inflation, the budget deficit, and a high debt-to-GDP ratio, President Mahama was optimistic that an IMF program could help Ghanaian authorities stabilize the economy through the implementation of reforms. For more information, click [here](#).

On February 3rd, workers at the Soraz oil refinery in Zinger, Niger, launched a four-day strike in protest of an unfair discrepancy in salaries between local employees and their Chinese colleagues. The facility is a joint venture between the government and the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC). The plant employees close to 400 workers who are tasked with producing 20,000 barrels of oil per day. This is the third strike in less than two weeks. More information can be found [here](#).

On February 5th, the Interior Ministry of Gabon lifted the ban on the country's main opposition party, the Union Nationale. The party will now be able to put forth a candidate to run against President Ali Bongo in next year's election. Union Nationale had been dissolved by the government after the party's leader, Mba Obame, refused to recognize the 2009 election results and declared himself the winner. More information was reported [here](#).

Sub-Saharan Africa

On January 29th, the U.N. Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution renewing sanctions on the DRC to prevent the supply, sale or transfer of arms, training, and financing to armed groups. The resolution was proposed in response to the passage of the January 2nd deadline set by the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and the SADC for the FDLR to disarm. In addition, the Security Council called on the FDLR, as well as the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), and all other armed groups to immediately cease violence, lay down their arms, and demobilize children from their ranks. The resolution was outlined [here](#).

On January 30th, U.N. officials encouraged the international community to rapidly respond to the devastating flooding affecting Malawi with critical humanitarian aid and appropriate funding, especially as only a quarter of the urgently required \$81 million of a Preliminary Response Plan had been received to date. This year, flooding in Malawi has caused displacement of over 170,000 people, while an estimated 116,000 households have lost their crops and livestock. An update on the situation in Malawi was provided [here](#).

On January 30th, South African Minister of Justice Michael Masutha announced the release of apartheid death-squad leader Eugene de Kock on parole. Come to be known as Prime Evil, de Kock was involved in the torture and murder of black South African activists in the 1980s and early 1990s. While many in South Africa were upset about de Kock's release, Minister Masutha reported de Kock would be released in the interests of nation building and reconciliation and because he had expressed remorse for his

crimes and helped authorities recover the remains of some of his victims. Details can be seen [here](#).

On January 30th, the parents of 30 students at the Curro Foundation School in Roodeplaat, South Africa started a petition to oppose racial segregation in schools run by Cape Town-based Curro Holdings. The company has grown its portfolio to include more than 40 private schools as the demand for private education has increased among South Africa's growing black middle class. In response, Curro Chief Executive Chris van der Merwe said the schools are not segregating students based on race, but instead based on differences in culture. More information can be found [here](#).

On January 31st, *Forbes* reported on the increase in car sales in sub-Saharan Africa. Last year, the region was projected to see sales of two million new cars, leading auto manufacturers, such as Toyota, Tata Motors, and General Motors to look at possible growth opportunities on the continent. It is estimated there are approximately 21.6 million passenger vehicles operating in Africa, making the 1.2 billion population an attractive prospect for global automobile manufacturers to penetrate. Meanwhile, African automakers Kiira Motors Corporation, Innoson Vehicle Manufacturing Company, and Kantanka Automobile Company are striving to design cars that appeal most to African consumers. The full story is available [here](#).

On January 31st, as part of the AU Summit, Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe was appointed the new chairperson of the AU and will succeed Mauritanian President Mohamed Ould Aziz. As Chairperson, President Mugabe said he will focus on the issues of infrastructure, value addition, agriculture, and climate change. While some view President Mugabe's appointment as largely symbolic, others have criticized having a head of state who is often viewed as using widespread violence to win disputed elections at the top of the AU organization. Details on President Mugabe's appointment were shared [here](#).

On February 2nd, one person was killed and three others were wounded in a shootout between soldiers and two former bodyguards of Lesotho's Prime Minister Tom Thabane. The incident is largely thought to be related to the elections planned for this month as part of a deal brokered by the SADC to resolve political tensions in the country following an attempted coup by Deputy Prime Minister Mothetjoa Metsing in August. The police force remains loyal to Prime Minister Thabane, while the Lesotho Defense Force (LDF) is expected to show a preference for Deputy Prime Minister Metsing in the upcoming election. The tensions in Lesotho were detailed [here](#).

On February 3rd, Zambian President Edgar Lungu directed the government to promptly resolve disagreements with mining companies over new royalties and VAT returns. According to President Lungu's office, Finance Minister Alexander Chikwanda plans to discuss the issue with mining company representatives last week. Zambia is Africa's second-largest producer of copper. For more information, click [here](#).

On February 4th, U.N. Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman told press the U.N. will not tolerate any obstacles to the democratic transition of Burkina Faso. After his visit to the country, Under-Secretary-General Feltman commended the commitment of Transitional President Michel Kafando to the process and said the U.N. would continue to provide Burkina Faso with the necessary support to organize democratic elections. Observations from Under-Secretary-General Feltman's visit to Burkina Faso were recorded [here](#).

On February 4th, the Head of the U.N. Development Programme (UNDP) in Africa, Abdoulaye Dieye, travelled to the CAR for a weeklong visit. In a press release, Dieye said additional support is vital for the country to end the cycle of violence and poverty. Details on Dieye's visit to the CAR and UNDP efforts in the country were posted [here](#).

On February 4th, the WFP announced plans to increase efforts in Malawi to help the country deal with the devastating effects of recent floods. With heavy rains forecast for the next several days, the WFP said that additional resources are urgently required. Since the start of the rainy season, over 100,000 people in the region have been displaced or affected by flooding. The full story is available [here](#).

On February 4th, MONUSCO condemned the attack on civilians in the town of Beni, DRC. Mission Chief Martin Kobler said armed groups in the DRC will be neutralized and the U.N. will work with Congolese

authorities to prosecute those responsible for the killings. Feedback from MONUSCO was shared [here](#).

On February 4th, Them bani Bakula, a senior official at the National Energy Regulator of South Africa (NERSA), announced that approval had been given to Eskom to charge consumers more for power to make up for the diesel costs the company has experienced while running gas turbines to meet the electricity demand. The generating capacity of the state-owned company has experienced significant challenges, including technical faults with aging power plants, which have led to regular power cuts since March of last year. The situation was outlined [here](#).

On February 4th, approximately seven women and 14 men were killed in the town of Mayangose, DRC, by Ugandan militants from the ADF. Wielding machetes, the militants attacked villagers asleep in their homes, but, in an unusual move, spared young children. More details on the attack in the northeastern town can be read [here](#).

General Africa News

On January 28th-30th, EnergyNet hosted the Powering Africa Summit in Washington, DC. The Summit brought together African ministries, utility companies, and all investment agencies from the U.S. working across Africa to meet with the international community to discuss the progress of initiatives, such as Power Africa. The Program from the Summit can be downloaded [here](#).

On January 29th, *Defense One* outlined the topics addressed as part of the AU Summit recently held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Among the issues raised as part of this year's summit were women's empowerment, the Ebola crisis, the response to Boko Haram's rampage in Nigeria, and the role of the AU in elections scheduled across the continent in 2015. More information can be found [here](#).

On January 29th, speaking at a conference on tourism and investment in Africa held in Madrid, Spain, AfDB Acting Chief Economist and Vice President Steve Kayizzi-Mugerwa observed that few African countries have developed comprehensive plans for generating tourist interest. Chief Economist and Vice President Kayizzi-Mugerwa applauded the efforts of policymakers to address visa issues to reduce the bureaucratic hindrances to tourism, but also called for greater federal funding for promoting national museums, monuments, and landscapes. Excerpts from Chief Economic and Vice President Kayizzi-Mugerwa's remarks were highlighted [here](#).

On January 30th, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon addressed the AU Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Secretary-General Ban said that African Member States have been the backbone of the U.N. since achieving their independence. In addition, Secretary-General Ban said the U.N. will continue to stand with Africa as a partner and a supporter of the continent's efforts to achieve peace and security and sustainable development. Secretary-General Ban's speech at the AU Summit was summarized [here](#).

On February 1st, the U.N. and the AU released a joint report on the lost development opportunities in Africa resulting from the almost \$60 billion that leaves the continent illegally each year. Led by former South African President Thabo Mbeki, the panel was able to calculate the level of illicit outflows by adding up discrepancies between the reported value of African exports and the value those goods received when they arrived as imports to Africa's trading partners. The report also identifies the African countries that have the greatest illicit financial outflows, including Nigeria, Egypt, South Africa, Morocco, Angola, Algeria, Ivory Coast, and Sudan. The full report can be viewed [here](#).

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