



## ML Strategies Update

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## Africa Update

### Leading the News

#### **Burundi**

On January 12<sup>th</sup>, the Burundian Justice Ministry indicated the verdict on the trial of former Defense Minister Cyrille Ndayirukiye and 27 others accused of plotting the failed coup attempt in May would be handed down on Thursday. While the defendants pleaded guilty to attempting a coup, they have denied other charges of killing police officers and providing weapons to civilians to stroke an insurgency. More information can be found [here](#).

On January 13<sup>th</sup>, Army Captain Idi Omar Bahenda and police Brigadier Jean Claude Niyongabo, two Burundian security officers who defected from the government, were killed in firefight with military forces in Bujumbura. The men, who were traveling in a car with other renegade police officers, were stopped by police, who found explosives, a rocket-propelled grenade, and a rifle in their possession. Gunfire broke out when the suspects tried to flee. The incident was reported [here](#).

#### **Central African Republic**

On January 7<sup>th</sup>, the National Election Authority (ANE) in the Central African Republic (CAR) announced provisional results in the December 30<sup>th</sup> presidential contest, indicating the need for a runoff election. According to ANE President Marie-Madeleine Nkouet, former Prime Minister Anicet Georges Dologuele won 23.78 percent of the vote, followed by former Prime Minister Faustin Archange Touadera with 19.42 percent of the vote. In the absence of a majority, a second round of voting will be held on January 31<sup>st</sup>. The results were announced [here](#).

On January 7<sup>th</sup>, United Nations (U.N.) Special Representative for the CAR and head of the U.N. Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the CAR (MINUSCA) Parfait Onanga-Anyanga welcomed the ANE's announcement of the results in the first round of the country's presidential election held on December 30<sup>th</sup>. He encouraged the two leading candidates, former Prime Minister Anicet Georges Dologuele and former Prime Minister Faustin Archange Touadera, to prepare their supporters for a peaceful second round of voting. Special Representative Onanga-Anyanga's remarks were recorded [here](#).

On January 8<sup>th</sup>, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry issued a statement on the first round of elections in the CAR. Secretary Kerry said the peaceful conduct and high turnout in the first round of parliamentary and presidential elections are clear signs that Central Africans seek a new beginning for their country, and a future based on democratic governance and free from the violence and instability that has plagued the country. As the CAR moves towards the second round of elections, Secretary Kerry reiterated the U.S. Government's desire to see a continued

spirit of peace, tolerance, and free expression, and called on all parties and their supporters to peacefully address any disputes through the Central African legal system. Secretary Kerry's comments were transcribed [here](#).

On January 11<sup>th</sup>, *The Washington Post* provided an update on the U.N.'s investigations into new allegations of sexual abuse by peacekeepers in the CAR. In the latest case of misconduct, at least four U.N. peacekeepers have been accused of paying girls as little as 50 cents in exchange for sex. In the past year, MINUSCA peacekeepers have been accused of 22 other incidents of alleged sexual abuse or sexual exploitation. The status of the most recent investigation was discussed [here](#).

On January 13<sup>th</sup>, MINUSCA reported the final provisional results for the legislative elections in the CAR had been announced by the ANE, with 21 candidates being elected by an absolute majority during the first round of voting. A second round of voting will be held in 113 constituencies. Leading up to the elections, MINUSCA will continue to register ex-combatants and collect surrendered weapons. More information can be found [here](#).

On January 13<sup>th</sup>, Andrew Kolingba and Martin Ziguele, the third and fourth place finishers in the CAR's presidential contest, called for a recounting of the ballots cast in the December 30<sup>th</sup> presidential election. Kolingba and Ziguele, both members of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for Transition (AFDT) party, filed complaints of voting irregularities with the constitutional court following the recent announcement of provisional results. The court is charged with certifying those results and is expected to make a ruling within the next week. Details were posted [here](#).

On January 13<sup>th</sup>, news broke of two raids carried out by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) over the weekend in a remote part of the CAR. In the first attack, the LRA raided a mine near Diya, kidnapping ten people. Six of those abducted in the first raid were eventually freed. In a second wave, the LRA fighters abducted 20 others. According to local authorities, one person was killed and a vehicle was burned during the attacks. Details were reported [here](#).

## **Libya**

On January 7<sup>th</sup>, U.N. Special Representative for Libya and head of the U.N. Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) Martin Kobler condemned the deadly terrorist attack on a security center in Zilten, stating the incident shows the urgent need for all stakeholders to take action to launch the agreed upon Government of National Accord. In the aftermath of the attack, which killed at least 50 people and wounded many others, Special Representative Kobler noted the U.N. was working with local health authorities to ensure the availability of medical supplies for victims. Special Representative Kobler also expressed concern for ongoing fighting at oil facilities in Sidra. His response to the situation in Libya was articulated [here](#).

On January 8<sup>th</sup>, the U.N. Security Council condemned the recent terrorist attack on a security training center in Zilten, Libya and urged all Libyan parties to join together to combat terrorist threats by implementing the recent agreement on a unity government. The Security Council also condemned the recent attacks on Libya's oil infrastructure by a group that has claimed allegiance to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), again pressing for implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement. The Security Council's reaction was posted [here](#).

On January 11<sup>th</sup>, Italy evacuated 15 Libyans who were wounded in last week's ISIL truck bomb attack against a police training center in Zilten. The Italian Government said the evacuations are a concrete gesture of solidarity and attention by Italy for the Libyan people at a particularly delicate moment for the stabilization of the country. Details on the evacuations can be accessed [here](#).

On January 12<sup>th</sup>, U.N. Deputy Special Representative and Humanitarian and Resident Coordinator of the U.N. in Libya Ali Al-Za'tari condemned the recent attacks against a major power plant in Benghazi, Libya, noting these attacks directly affect civilian life. Expressing concern for the security situation, Deputy Special Representative Al-Za'tari emphasized the citizens of Benghazi are now without electricity for more than four hours a day, resulting in repercussions on hospitals, community services, and households. His comments were captured [here](#).

## **Nigeria**

On January 8<sup>th</sup>, the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) announced a second \$7 million grant from the U.N. Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) to aid nearly 200,000 people in Chad, including

50,000 Nigerian refugees, who have been uprooted by violence perpetrated by Boko Haram. The latest assistance will be targeted to those who have had to flee their homes on the islands of Lake Chad for refuge sites in the prefectures of Baga-Sola, Bol Daboua, Kangelom, and Liwa. The grant was announced [here](#).

On January 13<sup>th</sup>, the U.N. CERF announced new grants totaling \$31 million to Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger to help address the development crisis related to the uprooting of civilians by Boko Haram terrorists. Approximately \$10 million has been allocated to Nigeria, with about \$7 million each for Cameroon, Chad, and Niger. The new grants will provide life-saving aid to almost 1.7 million people who are in urgent need of food, drinking water, shelter, health care, protection, and education. Details can be seen [here](#).

On January 13<sup>th</sup>, a suicide bomber attacked a mosque in Kouyape, Cameroon, killing 13 people and wounding one other. While no group claimed immediate responsibility for the attack, the explosion occurred in an area frequently beset by Boko Haram violence. The suicide bombing was detailed [here](#).

On January 13<sup>th</sup>, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon condemned the deadly Boko Haram suicide bombing that took place at a mosque in Kouyape, Cameroon during morning prayers. In light of the attack, Secretary-General Ban reiterated his call for a comprehensive approach to preventing and countering terrorism and addressing its root causes. He also welcomed the announcement of the African Union (AU) Donor Conference to mobilize resources for the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) to combat Boko Haram, to be held on February 1<sup>st</sup> in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Secretary-General Ban's reaction to the attack was articulated [here](#).

On January 13<sup>th</sup>, Sarah Chayes of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace authored an op-ed for *Defense One* criticizing Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari's approach to fighting Boko Haram. Chayes argued that President Buhari has failed to make the connection between the biggest threats to his nation: Boko Haram and endemic corruption. The full op-ed was published [here](#).

### **South Sudan**

On January 8<sup>th</sup>, the U.N. refugee agency (UNHCR) reported an uptick in fighting between armed groups and government soldiers in South Sudan's Equatoria state. Over the past five weeks, the violence has seen hundreds of houses burned down or looted and more than 15,000 people displaced from their homes. Further, UNHCR reported refugees entering into Uganda at a rate of 500 people per day, in addition to sporadic gunfire, an increase in time, attacks on government property, and sexual assaults. More information was provided [here](#).

On January 8<sup>th</sup>, Festus Mogae, the chair of the commission monitoring the implementation of the August peace deal for South Sudan, reported that President Salva Kiir and former Vice President turned rebel leader Riek Machar had agreed to share ministerial positions in a transitional government of national unity. Chair Mogae reported the South Sudanese Government will nominate 16 ministers, including the ministers for finance, defense and justice, while the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) will nominate ten ministers, including those for petroleum and interior. An article on the transitional government can be read [here](#).

On January 12<sup>th</sup>, the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) reported more than half of South Sudanese children are not in school because of two years of violent clashes between government forces and rebels. According to U.N. data, at least 51 percent of children in South Sudan between the ages of 6 and 15, or roughly 1.8 million children, are not in school, which is a rate higher than any other country. Since the start of the conflict, more than 800 schools have been closed throughout the country. The situation was described [here](#).

### **West Africa Ebola Outbreak**

On January 13<sup>th</sup>, on the eve of Liberia being declared Ebola-free, U.N. officials highlighted the global cooperation that was effective in ending the epidemic and called for continued vigilance against future flare-ups of the virus in West Africa. Speaking to a General Assembly meeting on Ebola recovery and response, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, WHO Director-General Dr. Margaret Chan, and U.N. Development Programme (UNDP) Administrator Helen Clark, among others, urged the international community to make good on its pledges to support the survivors of Ebola in Africa. Details can be seen [here](#).

On January 13<sup>th</sup>, Ron Klain, who served as the White House Ebola Response Coordinator from October 2014 to February 2015, authored a blog post for *The Huffington Post* outlining the lessons learned from the Ebola crisis in West Africa. Coordinator Klain said the outbreak did not have to be as bad as it was, but it also could have been much worse. He noted the effectiveness of the U.S. Government in managing cases of Ebola in the U.S. and providing assistance to West Africa and cautioned that much work remains to be done to prepare for the next global pandemic. The blog post can be accessed [here](#).

On January 14<sup>th</sup>, after 42 days without any new cases of Ebola reported, the WHO declared Liberia Ebola-free. Guinea and Liberia were declared free from the virus last year, meaning that all known chains of transmission have now been stopped in West Africa. The WHO warned, however, that West Africa may be susceptible to future flare-ups of the virus. Since March 2014, the Ebola epidemic has claimed the lives of more than 11,300 people and infected over 28,500. The declaration was announced [here](#).

On January 14<sup>th</sup>, World Bank President Jim Yong Kim issued a statement following the announcement of the end of Ebola transmission in Liberia and the conclusion of the epidemic in West Africa. President Kim encouraged Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia to take pride in their perseverance, while remaining vigilant to ensure that West Africa stays at zero Ebola cases. President Kim noted the Ebola crisis exacted an enormous toll on all three countries, taking thousands of lives, devastating economics, and reversing years of development gains. His full statement can be read [here](#).

### ***African Migrant Crisis***

On January 11<sup>th</sup>, the Italian Coast Guard reported the recovery of the body of a drowned Somali woman thrown into the water by people smugglers off the coast of Italy. As many as five other migrants may remain missing. The victims were among a group of Somalis who had made it to Greece and were seeking to reach Italy. The boat carried 37 survivors, all Somalis, who reached the Italian shores. The full story is available [here](#).

On January 14<sup>th</sup>, Italian police arrested Diaw Cheik Tidiane, an illegal Senegalese immigrant believed to have killed Ashley Olsen, a U.S. woman found dead in her apartment in Florence last weekend. Prosecutors believe Olsen and Tidiane had consensual sex in her home under the influence of alcohol, and possibly drugs, before he killed her. Meanwhile, Tidiane reportedly told police he had not meant to kill Olsen, but she fell during an argument. An article on the case was published [here](#).

## **United States – Africa Relations**

### ***White House***

On January 11<sup>th</sup>, President Barack Obama nominated Stephen Schwartz to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Somalia. Schwartz currently serves as Director of the State Department's Office of Australia, New Zealand, and Pacific Island Affairs and has previously served as Director of the Office of West African Affairs. He has also held positions in Zambia, South Africa, Kenya, Burundi, and Ethiopia. A press release on Schwartz's nomination was issued [here](#).

On January 12<sup>th</sup>, President Barack Obama delivered his annual State of the Union address. During his speech, President Obama discussed the need to fight ISIL, and warned that even without ISIL, instability will continue for decades in many parts of the world, including in parts of Africa. He also said that U.S. engagement in the fight against Ebola in West Africa has demonstrated the importance of U.S. involvement in preventing future pandemics from reaching the U.S. President Obama's speech was transcribed [here](#).

### ***State Department***

On January 8<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield was on overseas travel to Comoros, Madagascar, and Mauritius. In Comoros, Assistant Secretary Thomas-Greenfield participated in high-level bilateral meetings to discuss elections, security, and combatting trafficking in persons and met with Peace Corps Volunteers. In Madagascar, she discussed governance, security issues, and health care challenges with top officials, visited the American Center, and met with Madagascar's Mandela Washington Fellows from President Obama's Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI). In Mauritius, Assistant Secretary Thomas-Greenfield

discussed climate change and trafficking in persons with Mauritian officials and also met with Mauritian women political leaders and YALI fellows. Her trip was announced [here](#).

On January 11<sup>th</sup>, U.S. Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region of Africa Thomas Perriello departed on an extended trip including stops in Belgium, Italy, Tanzania, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi, and Ethiopia, focused on supporting regional efforts to resolve the crisis in Burundi and to support upcoming elections in the DRC. During his trip, Special Envoy Perriello will engage with Burundian stakeholders and East African Community (EAC) leadership about next steps for advancing the dialogue, including moving the dialogue to Arusha, Tanzania. He is also scheduled to meet with Congolese stakeholders to discuss next steps in the electoral process and the importance of respecting human rights throughout an electoral cycle, including the rights to peaceful assembly and free speech. While in the DRC, Special Envoy Perriello will also continue to work to resolve the impasse over adoptions and engage with stakeholders working to counter the illegal trade in Congolese natural resources and promote conflict-free minerals. Finally, in Ethiopia, Special Envoy Perriello will join the U.S. delegation to the AU Summit. His trip was outlined [here](#).

### ***Department of Defense***

On January 7<sup>th</sup>, the Marines highlighted the recent, six-month deployment of a detachment of KC-130J Hercules with Special-Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force Crisis Response – Africa (SPMAGTF-AF) to Moron Air Base in Spain. During their deployment, U.S. Marines conducted sorties with Spanish pilots, helping them to achieve their NATO aerial refueling certificates. More information can be found [here](#).

On January 8<sup>th</sup>, following Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) Marine General Joseph Dunford's visit to U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) headquarters last week, the Department of Defense (DOD) provided insights on AFRICOM's five-year theater campaign plan. The plan identifies five lines of effort, including neutralizing Al Shabaab, containing instability in Libya, fighting Boko Haram in West Africa, disrupting illicit activity in the Gulf of Guinea and in Central Africa, and building African partners' peacekeeping and disaster assistance capabilities. Details were shared [here](#).

### ***Office of the U.S. Trade Representative***

On January 7<sup>th</sup>, U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) Michael Froman released a statement after teams from the U.S. and South Africa reached an agreement to resolve longstanding barriers to U.S. poultry, beer, and pork exports to South Africa. Ambassador Froman said the agreement is a positive outcome for both countries and will help to deepen the bilateral trade and investment relationship. However, he said the true test of the agreement will be based on the ability of South African consumers to buy American products in local stores and noted USTR will be working to ensure this final benchmark of entry of poultry is achieved so that South Africa continues to have the advantage of full African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) benefits. His full statement can be read [here](#).

On January 12<sup>th</sup>, South Africa's Department of Trade and Industry said it will soon begin importing U.S. chicken, despite concerns about salmonella in order to avert President Barack Obama's threat to impose duties on South African agricultural products. Should South Africa fail to comply by March 15<sup>th</sup>, President Obama has warned this Monday he will suspend the duty-free treatment of South African agricultural goods, as opposed to terminating the designation of South Africa as an AGOA beneficiary. Developments were noted [here](#).

### ***Department of Justice***

On January 12<sup>th</sup>, the Department of Justice (DOJ) held a meeting of the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission on issuance of proposed decisions in claims against Libya. The Commission is a quasi-judicial, independent agency within DOJ tasked with adjudicating claims of U.S. nationals against foreign governments. The meeting was noticed [here](#).

### ***Department of the Interior***

On January 14<sup>th</sup>, the Department of the Interior confirmed Interior Secretary Sally Jewell will travel to Africa next week. Secretary Jewel will visit Gabon, Kenya, and South Africa for meetings on global cooperation in the fight against wildlife trafficking. Details of Secretary Jewell's travel were confirmed [here](#).

## **Congress**

On January 7<sup>th</sup>, Senators Chris Coons (D-DE) and Johnny Isakson (R-GA), co-chairs of the Senate Chicken Caucus applauded the Obama Administration's announcement that South Africa has agreed to eliminate longstanding barriers to U.S. poultry imports, enabling U.S. poultry to be imported into South Africa for the first time in 15 years. Senators Coons and Isakson observed South Africa's decision to finally fulfill the obligations of the settlement reached last summer means that American poultry will be able to enter the South African market, spurring tens of millions of dollars more in annual export sales. Their feedback was shared [here](#).

On January 8<sup>th</sup>, House Select Committee on Benghazi Communications Director Jamal Ware released a statement in response to media inquiries regarding the State Department's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) release of a 2011 email from Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Director Ware noted it is the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) that is investigating the mishandling of classified information in connection with Secretary Clinton's use of an unsecure private server to conduct official U.S. government foreign policy, but argued those emails would not be discovered if it were not for the work of the Committee. His statement was posted [here](#).

On January 8<sup>th</sup>, Ranking Member of the House Select Committee on Benghazi Elijah Cummings (D-MD) issued a statement on Committee Republicans' decision to proceed with interviewing former Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta. Congressman Cummings said the Republicans wanted to talk to Secretary Panetta back in 2014, but abandoned their own plans last year when they decided to try to derail former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign. He also expressed his opinion that the 11-hour hearing with Secretary Clinton was disastrous for Republicans. Congressman Cummings' full statement can be read [here](#).

On January 8<sup>th</sup>, Majority Staff for the House Selected Committee on Benghazi penned an op-ed accusing Committee Democrats of wasting taxpayer dollars playing politics. The Majority Staff argued Committee Democrats have all endorsed former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton for president, and as a result have no interest in assisting with the investigation. The op-ed was published [here](#).

## **U.S. Supreme Court**

On January 11<sup>th</sup>, the U.S. Supreme Court rejected a bid by food maker Nestle to throw out a lawsuit seeking to hold them liable for the use of child slaves to harvest cocoa in Cote d'Ivoire. The plaintiffs, originally from Mali, argue Nestle and two other companies aided and abetted human rights violations through their purchase of Ivorian cocoa. While aware of the child slavery problem, the lawsuit suggests the companies offered financial and technical assistance to farmers to help guarantee low cocoa prices. The case was outlined [here](#).

## **North Africa**

On January 7<sup>th</sup>, an AU-U.N. Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) peacekeeping patrol was ambushed by an unidentified armed group in the Darfur region. According to reports, the peacekeepers were greatly outnumbered, allowing the attackers to seize a machine gun, four rifles, and rounds of ammunition before fleeing the scene. One peacekeeper was injured in the clashes. The attack was reported [here](#).

On January 7<sup>th</sup>, the World Bank called attention to the Basic Education Recovery Project, which is helping to improve education for some of the most vulnerable children in Sudan. The project, which is supported by a grant from the Global Partnership for Education, has funded hundreds of new classrooms, as well as new textbooks, teacher monitoring and support, and school grants to help encourage some of the poorest households to enroll their children in schools. Details can be seen [here](#).

On January 8<sup>th</sup>, Egyptian Minister of Religious Endowments Mohamed Mokhtar Goma warned against holding protests to mark the anniversary of the January 2011 uprising against President Hosni Mubarak. His comments came in response to the Muslim Brotherhood calling for mass demonstrations against President Abdul Fattah Al-Sisi's rule on January 25<sup>th</sup>. Security concerns around the anniversary were noted [here](#).

On January 8<sup>th</sup>, Moroccan security forces reported the arrest of seven suspected ISIL militants, including a leader who had been recruiting fighters. According to the Interior Ministry, those detained had been in contact with ISIL

leadership in Iraq and Syria and had tried to send fighters there for training so they could return to carry out attacks on Moroccan soil. The arrests were announced [here](#).

On January 9<sup>th</sup>, armed men claiming allegiance to ISIL shot dead a police officer and a soldier who were on patrol outside of Cairo. The incident came just a day after suspected ISIL fighters attacked three European tourists with knives at a Red Sea resort. In response to both incidents, Egyptian Tourism Minister Hisham Zaazou said the government will announce additional security measures aimed at protecting tourists in the coming days. His feedback to the attacks was shared [here](#).

On January 10<sup>th</sup>, the new Egyptian parliament met and elected Ali Abdelaal, a prominent lawyer loyal to President Abdul Fattah Al-Sisi and who helped draft the constitution and election law, to serve as speaker. Speaker Abdelaal will now be tasked with leading the body through its consideration of more than 200 laws issued by executive order while the parliament was suspended. Additionally, Speaker Abdelaal is now the first in line to succeed President Sisi if he should become unable to execute his duties. His election was reported [here](#).

On January 11<sup>th</sup>, following 28 resignations from Tunisia's ruling Nidaa Tounes party, the country's main Islamist party, Ennahda reemerged as the dominant faction in parliament, holding 68 seats compared to 58 seats held by Nidaa Tounes. The resignations came in protest to Tunisian President Beji Caid Essebsi's son's position as party chief. While the division within the secular Nidaa Tounes party is not expected to bring down the coalition government, a cabinet reshuffle and generally a shift in political dynamics in Tunisia is expected. For further analysis, click [here](#).

On January 12<sup>th</sup>, UNAMID expressed concern over continued tension in El Geneina town in West Darfur following an armed attack on Mouli village. On January 9<sup>th</sup>, an unidentified armed group attacked the village, displacing residents and triggering demonstrations that forced the closure of schools and commercial business in the area. Receiving continued reports of unrest, UNAMID called on government authorities to contain the situation and investigate the incidents. More information can be found [here](#).

On January 13<sup>th</sup>, the U.N. World Food Programme welcomed contributions from donors, including the Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF), the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civic Protection Department (ECHO), and the Governments of the United Kingdom (U.K.), Sweden, and Switzerland in support of U.N. Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) operations in Sudan last year. Donor support has allowed UNHAS to transport 3,500 passengers and 20 metric tons of light cargo, including food aid, each month to more than 40 locations throughout the country. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On January 14<sup>th</sup>, Egyptian security forces arrested the administrators of 47 Facebook pages the Interior Ministry said were run by the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood. As the anniversary of the uprising against President Hosni Mubarak approaches, the Egyptian Government has also been accused of arresting activists, shutting down cultural spaces to prevent activists from convening, and deploying government-appointed clerics to preach against protests. For details, click [here](#).

## **[East Africa](#)**

On January 8<sup>th</sup>, the World Bank suspended the disbursement of funds for the North Eastern Road-Corridor Asset Management Project and the Albertine Regional Sustainable Development Project in Uganda. The decision was made following the cancellation of the World Bank-supported Uganda Transport Sector Development Project, overseen by the Uganda National Roads Authority (UNRA). In the interim, the World Bank pledged to work with Ugandan authorities to strengthen the capacity of UNRA to adhere to the required environmental and social standards. More information was provided [here](#).

On January 8<sup>th</sup>, Kenyan Minister for Information and Communication Joseph Mucheru indicated the government is drafting legislation that would direct mobile operators to share their infrastructure to boost competition. The legislation, which Minister Mucheru argued should be implemented within six months, is designed to address concerns that Safaricom, which has about 67 percent of Kenyan subscribers, is pushing competition out of the market. Additionally, Minister Mucheru noted the government is also preparing legislation on access to information and data protection in a bid to attract more investors. His comments were recorded [here](#).

On January 8<sup>th</sup>, the Kenyan Communications Authority published new broadcast regulations imposing strict limits on the airing of sexual content. As part of an effort to protect children, explicit content will only be permitted on the airwaves between 10PM and 5PM. The new broadcast code also bans preachers from soliciting money from audiences in exchange for blessings. The new regulations were discussed [here](#).

On January 8<sup>th</sup>, Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported at least 140 people have been killed by Ethiopian security forces over the past two months in a crackdown on demonstrations held to protest the government's plan to expand Addis Ababa's boundaries into nearby farmland. Last month, HRW reported 75 people had been killed in the clashes and many others wounded. Meanwhile, the Ethiopian Government reported only five deaths. The situation was described [here](#).

On January 8<sup>th</sup>, *The Washington Post* observed that a growing number of ethnic Somalis in Kenya have disappeared or been found dead after being detained as part of a government crackdown targeting Islamist extremists. While parliamentarians representing the predominantly ethnic Somali counties in the northeastern part of the country argued those missing or found dead were purposely targeted by Kenyan security forces, the Kenyan Interior Minister has denied the allegations, suggesting Al Shabaab is to blame. The full story is available [here](#).

On January 8<sup>th</sup>, independent Ugandan presidential candidate Amama Mbabzi accused incumbent President Yoweri Museveni of ordering killings and torture to suppress the opposition. Speaking to supporters, Mbabzi cited nine cases of his supporters who were arrested, assaulted, gone missing, or killed. While President Museveni is currently projected to win reelection, this is anticipated to be his toughest race yet, with Mbabzi and prominent opposition figure Kizza Besigye providing stiff competition. An article on the race was published [here](#).

On January 8<sup>th</sup>, Mauritius reported a 10.8 percent increase in tourists visiting the country in 2015, with revenue from tourism estimated at roughly \$1.37 billion. In particular, Mauritius recorded an increase in visitors from Europe, which typically accounts for two thirds of tourists, and China. Additional data was analyzed [here](#).

On January 11<sup>th</sup>, Zanzibar's Second Vice President Seif Sharrif Hamad, the presidential candidate for the opposition Civil United Front (CUF), warned that violence could erupt if the government holds a new election. Tanzania held presidential and parliamentary elections on October 1<sup>st</sup>, although the votes in Zanzibar's presidential contest were ultimately annulled after the election commission identified gross violations at the polls. While the CUF claims it fairly won the poll, the party has indicated it would be open to dialogue to resolve the dispute. An article on the elections in Zanzibar can be read [here](#).

On January 12<sup>th</sup>, International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutors indicated they will continue to look at evidence in the case of war crimes charges against Kenyan Deputy President William Ruto. Deputy President Ruto's legal team has been pressing judges to throw out charges for crimes against humanity committed after Kenya's 2007 elections in light of six witnesses withdrawing their testimony, undermining the case. The status of proceedings was discussed [here](#).

On January 12<sup>th</sup>, the World Bank highlighted the launch of a new project in Djibouti aimed at reducing the consumption of qat by youth and raising awareness of its consequences while also boosting the skills young people need for employment. Qat is a mild narcotic. While it is not considered to be a seriously addictive drug, the WHO has found that qat affects sleep and causes persistent hallucinations, leading to rebound effects such as late awakening, decreased productivity, and sleepiness. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On January 12<sup>th</sup>, the Evangelical Alliance of Kenya objected to government proposals that would require all religious bodies to register and for preachers to have police clearance. Under some policy proposals, religious institutions would also be required to submit their statements of faith to a government-backed body for examination. According to evangelical churches throughout the country, the proposed policies will make it tougher for religious bodies and clerics from all faiths to operate. The opposition to the proposals was detailed [here](#).

On January 12<sup>th</sup>, despite the urging of the political opposition, Zanzibar's President Ali Mohammed Shein said a re-vote in the semi-autonomous region's presidential election will move forward. An exact date for the election has yet to be announced and will be determined by the local electoral commission. The polls are anticipated in February. More information can be found [here](#).

On January 13<sup>th</sup>, as human rights groups continued to draw attention to deadly protests in opposition to the Ethiopian Government's plans to expand the country's capital city, the ruling Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO) decided to drop the expansion plans following three days of talks with local stakeholders. Meanwhile, authorities continued to dispute the death toll of the demonstrations. For more information, click [here](#).

On January 14<sup>th</sup>, Kenyan Deputy President William Ruto appeared before the ICC for a hearing during which his legal team again requested the charges against him be thrown out. His lawyers contend that the withdrawal of six witnesses diminishes the foundation of the prosecution's case. Acquittal would leave Deputy President Ruto freer to campaign with President Uhuru Kenyatta in the 2017 elections, as possibly as a presidential candidate himself in the future. The hearing was summarized [here](#).

## **West Africa**

On January 7<sup>th</sup>, the World Bank published a recap of the World Trade Organization's (WTO) 10<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference held in Nairobi, Kenya in December. At the Conference, Zambia and five other countries ratified the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), which was designed to help lower trade costs and ease customs cooperation for member countries while generating more trade and investment globally. Additional outcomes of the Conference were highlighted [here](#).

On January 7<sup>th</sup>, following a series of meetings with Nigerian official in Abuja, African Development Bank (AfDB) Director of Agriculture and Agroindustry Chiji Ojukuwu disclosed the AfDB and the Government of Nigeria will invest \$300 million in the Enable Youth Empower Agribusiness Program over the next 18 months. The project is intended to create 250,000 jobs in Nigeria's agricultural sector and promote training for university graduates interested in farming. A press release was issued [here](#).

On January 8<sup>th</sup>, during her visit to Cameroon, International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Christine Lagarde addressed ministers of finance and economy of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC). Managing Director Lagarde observed over the past few years the region has seen robust growth and macroeconomic stability. She also noted new challenges, including the slump in oil prices and the decline in infrastructure investment. Her speech was transcribed [here](#).

On January 8<sup>th</sup>, Nigerian Minister of Health Dr. Isaac Adewole urged Nigerians not to panic over an outbreak of Lassa fever that has killed 35 people in the past six weeks. According to Minister Adewole, 81 suspected cases of Lassa fever have been identified since mid-November as part of the government's efforts to contain the virus. Lassa fever has symptoms that are similar to Ebola and also requires health care workers to wear personal protective equipment. Details can be accessed [here](#).

On January 10<sup>th</sup>, IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde concluded her visit to Cameroon. In her meetings with Cameroonian authorities, Managing Director Lagarde complimented government officials on their resilient economic performance under trying circumstances, including sustained low oil prices and unexpected terrorist attacks in the northern part of the country and offered the provision of policy advice and technical assistance. In her meeting with Central Bank officials, Managing Director Lagarde reported exploring how the IMF may continue to assist in promoting economic convergence and regional integration. Highlights from her visit were noted [here](#).

On January 10<sup>th</sup>, Nigerian communications operator MTN announced its acquisition of Visafone, the company which runs Nigeria's only remaining CDMA network. Despite facing record fines for its failure to disconnect unregistered sim cards from its network, MTN said the acquisition is intended to help develop broadband services, accelerate MTN's launch of 4G LTE services in the country, and improve voice and data services. More information can be found [here](#).

On January 10<sup>th</sup>, hundreds of voodoo practitioners gathered in Ouidah, Benin to recognize a voodoo holiday by praying for calm during the elections scheduled for February. The holiday came as David Kofi Aza, a prominent priest, said last month an oracle predicted dozens of deaths in post-electoral violence because the loser would refuse to cede to the winner. With term limited President Thomas Boni Yayi stepping down, the opposition has been holding talks aimed at forming a collation to defeat ruling party candidate Prime Minister Lionel Zinsou in the presidential race. The election was analyzed [here](#).

On January 11<sup>th</sup>, the World Bank's Board of Directors approved a new financing agreement of \$27 million for the Liberia Renewable Energy Access Project (LIRENAP). The goals of the project are to increase access to affordable and reliable electricity and to foster the use of renewable energy sources in Liberia. Project funding will be used to construct a mini hydropower plant to benefit about 50,000 people, and to support small businesses, associations, and public institutions in Lofa Country through connections to the mini hydroelectric grid. LIRENAP is also anticipated to benefit 100,000 others who will gain access to standalone solar systems and lanterns. Details were shared [here](#).

On January 11<sup>th</sup>, Nigerien opposition leader Hama Amadou was denied release from prison after submitting a plea to the country's appeals court. Amadou, who was among 15 candidates approved by Niger's constitutional court this weekend to stand in the February presidential election, was jailed in November for alleged complicity in a baby trafficking ring upon returning from exile. Amadou has denied the charges, claiming they are politically motivated. The full story is available [here](#).

On January 11<sup>th</sup>, Nigerian scientists expressed concern that some foods sold in Nairobi, such as bananas, apples, poultry, sukuma wiki, and milk, may be unsafe because they are laced with toxic chemicals. Tests on food samples uncovered dangerous levels of toxins, likely due to toxic chemicals being mixed with feeds for poultry, added to dairy products, or used for deep frying. The problem was outlined [here](#).

On January 12<sup>th</sup>, former AU Chairman Jean Ping announced plans to run in Gabon's upcoming presidential election, hoping to unseat President Ali Bongo, who was elected following his father, President Omar Bongo's, death in 2009. Ping plans to run a platform focused on making government more accountable, including through the adoption of term limits, and by investing in health, education, and infrastructure. At the moment President Bongo is favored to win a second term, although analysts predict Ping's entrance could make the race more competitive. Additional analysis was provided [here](#).

On January 12<sup>th</sup>, after coming under fire from Christian leaders for recently accepting the transfer of two Yemeni prisoners from the U.S. military detention facility in Guantanamo Bay (GTMO), Ghanaian President John Dramani Mahama fired back, saying concerns that the men could endanger Ghana's national security were misplaced. He argued GTMO has been a blot on the human rights record of the world and indicated the government will closely monitor the former GTMO detainees. For details, click [here](#).

On January 12<sup>th</sup>, Ivorian President Alassane Ouattara announced a cabinet reshuffle. Among key changes, President Ouattara replaced his justice and foreign ministers, along with the deputy ministers for finance and defense. The defense and finance portfolios are overseen directly by President Ouattara and Prime Minister Daniel Kablan Duncan. The cabinet reshuffle was reported [here](#).

On January 12<sup>th</sup>, in a speech delivered before Malian President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, Malian Army Chief General Didier Dackouo said delays in the implementation of the peace agreement achieved in June are making it harder for the military to country armed groups throughout the country. Since the agreement, which envisioned the confinement of armed groups and their reintegration into Malian society, was signed, tensions between armed movements have persisted. Meanwhile, the government has been viewed as dragging its feet in doing its part on implementation. Excerpts from the speech were highlighted [here](#).

On January 13<sup>th</sup>, following a briefing from U.N. Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Herve Ladsous on the situation in Mali, the U.N. Security Council called on all parties to the June peace agreement to proceed with implementation of the deal. Beyond implementing the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, the Security Council called on the Government of Mali and other armed groups to cooperate in launching joint security patrols to advance disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of armed combatants, as well as to advance the decentralization process. The Security Council's feedback was posted [here](#).

On January 13<sup>th</sup>, U.N. Special Representative for Cote d'Ivoire and head of the U.N. Operation in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI) Aichatou Mindaoudou briefed the U.N. Security Council on developments in the country. Special Representative Mindaoudou highlighted the peaceful conclusion of the October 25<sup>th</sup> elections, which resulted in President Alassane Ouattara being reelected for a second term in office. She also observed that national reconciliation must be a priority for President Ouattara moving forward. The briefing was summarized [here](#).

On January 13<sup>th</sup>, the Executive Board of the IMF completed the second review of Ghana's economic performance under the program supported by an Extended Credit Facility (ECF) arrangement, allowing a disbursement of \$114.6 million. Ghana's three-year, \$918 million arrangement, approved in April 2015, was designed to restore debt sustainability and macroeconomic stability in the country to support economic growth, job creation, and social spending. Noting the economic outlook remains difficult, the IMF noted Ghanaian authorities' fiscal consolidation efforts are on track and that electricity generation is increasing. Details can be seen [here](#).

On January 14<sup>th</sup>, the World Bank highlighted its Agricultural Competitiveness and Diversification Project (ACDP), which has supported training for Malian farmers on effective livestock production practices. Through the project, farmers have been able to boost their incomes by adopting new cattle fattening techniques in healthier and more sanitary conditions. The project has also resulted in improvements in agricultural infrastructure, enabling traders to build fences, sheds, and troughs on their lots. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On January 14<sup>th</sup>, Nigerien Defense Minister Mahamadou Karidio announced four people arrested for ties to an attempted coup in Niger had confessed to the plot and asked for clemency. President Mahamadou Issoufou announced in late December that a coup plot had been foiled, and since then at least 13 people have been arrested in connection with the planning. For more information, click [here](#).

## [Sub-Saharan Africa](#)

On January 11<sup>th</sup>, *Voice of America* reported Mozambican refugees continued to enter Malawi six months after Renamo fighters carried out two attacks in Tete province. While 700 refugees were recorded entering Malawi's Kapise II camp in Mwanza district, it is estimated the camp now houses as many as 2,500 refugees and continues to register almost 40 new refugees each day. More information was posted [here](#).

On January 12<sup>th</sup>, South African Paralympian Oscar Pistorius filed paperwork to appeal his conviction in the murder of his girlfriend, Reeva Steenkamp. Pistorius has spent the last three months under house arrest at his uncle's home in Pretoria. The latest developments in the case were noted [here](#).

On January 13<sup>th</sup>, the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) condemned the closure and destruction of the Mokoto camp for displaced persons in the North Kivu province of the DRC. According to OCHA, the 4,300 people who had been living at the camp have been left with no place to live. According to local authorities, the camp was closed after a firearm was discovered in one of the huts last week, prompting broader security concerns. The full story is available [here](#).

On January 13<sup>th</sup>, newly elected President of Burkina Faso Roch Marc Christian Kabore announced a new cabinet of 30 ministers. Notably, 25 members of the new cabinet did not serve under President Blaise Compaore, who was toppled in October 2014. In announcing his cabinet, President Kabore kept the post of Defense Minister for himself, as well as Minister of Veterans Affairs. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On January 13<sup>th</sup>, opposition groups and activists in the DRC rallied together to announce they will not participate in the National Dialogue facilitated by President Joseph Kabila, whose second term is due to conclude later this year. As the DRC's constitution limits a president to just two terms, the opposition has accused President Kabila of making moves to delay the elections planned for November in an effort to cling to power. As a result, the coalition of President Kabila's opponents announced a series of rallies to be held next week. The Catholic Church has also called for marches on February 16<sup>th</sup>. The tensions in the DRC were analyzed [here](#).

On January 14<sup>th</sup>, U.N. Special Representative to the DRC Maman Sidikou briefed the U.N. Security Council on preparations for the country's presidential and legislative elections scheduled for November. Special Representative Sidikou warned of a significant potential for violence leading up to the elections, especially due to deteriorating security in the eastern part of the country. He also observed that formal preparations for a National Dialogue announced by President Joseph Kabila to achieve consensus on the electoral process had yet to begin, due to strong opposition from many opposition groups. Excerpts from the briefing were highlighted [here](#).

On January 14<sup>th</sup>, George Charamba, a spokesperson for Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, denied rumors that President Mugabe had recently suffered from a heart attack. This week, an online news website reported that President Mugabe collapsed from a heart attack while on vacation with his family, leaving the leader in critical

condition and his family anticipating the worst. As President Mugabe is 91 years old, the media frequently speculates on his declining health. The latest rumors were addressed [here](#).

On January 14<sup>th</sup>, after it was revealed the Zimbabwean Government has filled the hangman position for federal executions, a position that has been vacant since 2005, human rights groups expressed concern that Zimbabwe will once again pursue executions. In response, Justice Minister Patrick Chinamasa said 76 inmates on death row will be referred to the cabinet to make a recommendation to President Robert Mugabe on potentially altering the death sentences to life imprisonment. An article on the situation can be read [here](#).

On January 14<sup>th</sup>, DRC army spokesman Lieutenant General Mak Hazukay announced suspected Ugandan rebels with the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) had killed four government soldiers. The attack took place a military post near the village of Opira. Seven additional soldiers were gravely wounded. News of the attack broke [here](#).

On January 14<sup>th</sup>, South Africa's national weather service reported the country suffered its driest year on record in 2015, with a third less rainfall than average. The statistics were released as the drought that continues to threaten maize crops showed no sign of abating. The dry weather patterns in South Africa were discussed [here](#).

## **General Africa News**

On January 12<sup>th</sup>, the AfDB published the "African Tourism Monitor: Unlocking Africa's Tourism Potential." This annual report offers a comprehensive overview of the continent's tourism sector, identifying key opportunities and challenges. This year's report finds that tourism in Africa is growing, with a total of 65.3 million international tourists visiting the continent in 2014. It also identifies the most popular tourist destinations in Africa as Egypt, Morocco, and Cote d'Ivoire. The full report can be downloaded [here](#).

On January 13<sup>th</sup>, Chinese officials reported that African exports to China fell by almost 40 percent in 2015. China has traditionally been Africa's largest trading partner. The new statistics are thought to signal a slowing down of the Chinese economy, leaving African economies pressured to find new trading partners and address the impacts of declining trade on their currencies. Additional analysis was provided [here](#).

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