



ML Strategies Update

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Africa Update

Leading the News

West Africa Ebola Outbreak

On January 8th, the United Nations (U.N.) World Health Organization (WHO) announced the most advanced Ebola vaccine candidate will enter Phase III clinical trials in West Africa in January and February 2015. If proven effective, the vaccine will be available for deployment just a few months later. Details on the announcement can be read [here](#).

On January 8th, the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) provided an update on Operation United Assistance, which has cost \$385 million to date. The Pentagon announced that 450 U.S. military personnel are in the process of returning from deployments to West Africa to contain the Ebola virus. U.S. service members returning from Ebola-affected countries in Africa are currently in quarantine at the Army base in Baumholder, Germany, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Virginia, and at Fort Hood and Fort Bliss in Texas. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) General Martin Dempsey will brief Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel later this month on recommendations related to the continuation of the quarantine policy. More information can be found [here](#).

On January 8th, the Department of State announced the U.S. Government has contributed \$1 million to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for a new project that will improve and streamline efforts to diagnose the Ebola virus in Africa. The IAEA project will provide high-quality training and cutting-edge equipment based on nuclear sciences to teams of virologists in 11 African countries, including Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, and Uganda, to help them more quickly and safely diagnose emerging diseases, including Ebola. The U.S. contribution was announced [here](#).

On January 8th, Doctors Without Borders (MSF) admitted its first patients to a new Ebola treatment center in Kissy, Sierra Leone. The new treatment center, which will hold up to 80 patients, was constructed with the goal of improving access to quality Ebola care on the outskirts of Freetown. In addition, the new facility will target maternal cases, seeking to treat pregnant women who are very vulnerable when infected with Ebola. A press release was issued [here](#).

On January 9th, following a meeting convened in Geneva, Switzerland, to discuss Ebola vaccine trials, the WHO announced two Ebola vaccines under development have been deemed safe. The vaccines – one developed by GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) in collaboration with the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the other by Merck and NewLink Genetics – will soon begin clinical testing in West Africa. Trials are due to begin in Liberia in the next few weeks, while trials in Sierra Leone and Guinea will likely begin in February. The full story is available [here](#).

On January 9th, the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) top representative in Liberia Charles Amo-Yartey indicated the IMF is preparing \$150 million in additional support to Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea in response to the Ebola outbreak. In Guinea and Sierra Leone, existing IMF financial programs will be augmented to provide more resources, while in Liberia, a one-off disbursement under the IMF's Rapid Credit Facility is being considered. Amo-Yartey's comments were captured [here](#).

On January 9th, U.S. Senator Chuck Schumer (D-NY) called on the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to prioritize federal spending to reimburse five state-designated Ebola treatment centers and 82 other hospitals in New York for the over \$10 million in expenses incurred to prepare for potential Ebola cases. Senator Schumer suggested the funding could be derived from the \$5.4 billion in emergency appropriations for Ebola response that Congress approved in December. Feedback from Senator Schumer was recorded [here](#).

On January 12th, the World Bank reported the socio-economic impacts of Ebola in Liberia and Sierra Leone are far-reaching and persistent, with the latest surveys highlighting job losses, growing food insecurity, and other long-term welfare concerns. In Liberia, the economy continues to shed jobs faster than they are replaced and households are increasingly reporting not having enough money to afford rice, regardless of price. In Sierra Leone, the largest job losses have been reported among wage and non-farm self-employed workers in urban areas, while evidence has also emerged of a decrease in utilization of health services for non-Ebola conditions in Freetown. The survey findings were presented [here](#).

On January 12th, U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) Directorate of Logistics (ACJ4) detailed its activities in support of Operation United Assistance. Since the start of the operation on September 16th, ACJ4 has developed four major lines of effort, including command and control, log support, training, and engineering support to help bolster the U.S. Agenda for International Development's (USAID) on-the-ground response in Ebola-affected countries. More information was provided [here](#).

On January 12th, *Reuters* reported that China has quietly toughened restrictions on travelers arriving from Ebola-affected countries in West Africa, even as efforts to contain the spread of the virus advance. The restrictions are primarily affecting students and businessmen. No cases of Ebola have been reported in China to date. The full story is available [here](#).

On January 13th, House Foreign Affairs Africa Subcommittee Ranking Member Karen Bass (D-CA) hosted a January Africa Policy Breakfast titled, "The Ebola Crisis in West Africa: An Update on Progress, Challenges, and the Road to Recovery." Speakers included U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Director Dr. Tom Frieden, Director of USAID Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance Jeremy Konyndyk, Senior Vice President for International Operations of International Medical Corps Robih Torbay, and Founder and Chief Executive Office of FACE Africa Saran Kaba Jones. The panel was moderated by Dr. Gwendolyn Mikell of Georgetown University. Event details were shared [here](#).

On January 13th, the Center for Global Development (CGD) held an event on "Liberia After Ebola." Keynote remarks were delivered by Senate Foreign Relations Africa Subcommittee Chairman Jeff Flake (R-AZ) and Liberian Minister of Public Works Gyude Moore. Additional panelists included Chief Economist for the Africa Region at the World Bank Francisco Ferreira, Director of USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance Jeremy Konyndyk, and CGD Senior Fellow Mead Over. The panel was moderated by CGD Senior Fellow and Director of Global Health Policy Amanda Glassman. More information can be viewed [here](#).

On January 13th, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) sponsored another Ebola

event. The event, “Where Do We Stand in The Fight Against Ebola,” featured a keynote address by CDC Director Dr. Tom Frieden on his recent trip to assess the Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Guinea. Additional speakers included Director of Global Health Policy at the Kaiser Family Foundation Josh Michaud and Senior Vice President and Director of the Global Health Policy Center at CSIS Stephen Morrison. Event logistics can be seen [here](#).

On January 13th, CDC Director Dr. Tom Frieden said the CDC lab technician thought to have been exposed to Ebola during an incident at CDC headquarters in December concluded his three-week monitoring period without any signs of infection. Officials initially feared the technician may have been exposed when a small amount of live Ebola virus was accidentally moved into a low-level lab. A report on the incident is expected later this month. For details, click [here](#).

On January 13th, *Vanity Fair* published a full account of the experience diagnosing and treating the first U.S. Ebola patient, Thomas Eric Duncan, in September, before he ultimately succumbed to the virus. The article details the work of Dallas County epidemiologists, led by Dr. Wendy Chung, in overcoming challenges to confirm the Ebola diagnosis. The full article can be read [here](#).

On January 14th, a second test on a Fort Hood soldier found dead less than a week after returning from West Africa showed no presence of the Ebola virus. The unidentified soldier was found dead outside of his residence on Tuesday. He had been granted emergency leave from the standard, 21-day controlled monitoring period for family reasons, but had continued to report his medical status twice daily during his leave. An autopsy has been ordered to determine the cause of death. The full story is available [here](#).

Nigeria

On January 9th, the U.N. refugee agency reported the number of Nigerians seeking safety in Chad has nearly quadrupled in the last ten days as a result of the most recent attacks by Boko Haram. A spokesperson for the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said the Government of Chad has requested international assistance to better handle the influx of 7,300 Nigerian refugees. Humanitarian agencies are currently in the area assessing needs. Details on the humanitarian needs in Nigeria can be found [here](#).

On January 9th, the U.S. Department of State issued a press statement condemning the recent escalation of attacks on civilians carried out by Boko Haram in Borno state Nigeria, and urging that those responsible for these recurring terrorist attacks must be held accountable. The State Department observed the ongoing violence has taken a terrible toll on the people of Nigeria and Cameroon. In addition, the State Department reiterated the U.S. commitment to working with Nigeria and its neighbors to end the scourge of Boko Haram and cautioned that terrorist organizations, like Boko Haram, must not distract Nigeria from carrying out credible and peaceful elections. The full statement can be read [here](#).

On January 9th, Amnesty International unveiled a new report about the recent series of attacks carried out by Boko Haram, killing thousands of people in Nigeria. According to the report, last week’s assault on Baga might constitute the insurgent group’s most deadly act yet. In addition to the incident in Baga, Boko Haram is thought to have wiped out another 16 Nigeria towns, displacing roughly 10,000 civilians. The full report can be downloaded [here](#).

On January 10th, a bomb strapped to a ten-year-old girl exploded in a busy marketplace in Maiduguri, Nigeria, killing at least 19 people and wounding more than 20 others. The same market was hit twice by female suicide bombers late last year. According to witnesses, the explosives detonated as the girl was being searched at the entrance to the market. There was no immediate claim of responsibility, but Boko Haram militants have increasingly sought women and girls to carry out suicide bombing attacks. The incident was described [here](#).

On January 11th, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Anthony Lake, Director of the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), condemned the reported use of child suicide bombers by Boko Haram in the terrorist group’s most recent attacks. Secretary-General Ban emphasized that Nigeria is a top priority and that the U.N. stands ready to assist the Nigerian Government. Feedback from the U.N. was posted [here](#).

On January 11th, two female suicide bombers attacked a crowded market in Potiskum, Nigeria, killing

three people and wounding at least 26 others. The second bomb went off shortly after the first, hitting those helping the earlier victims. Investigators believe the women were in their early 20s and that the bombs were detonated remotely. No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attacks, but Boko Haram has a history of using female suicide bombers in similar attacks in the region. The latest attack was detailed [here](#).

On January 12th, the Catholic Archbishop of Jos, Nigeria, Ignatius Kaigama accused the West of ignoring the threat of Boko Haram in Africa. Following last week's Boko Haram assault on Baga and other suicide bombing attacks this week, Archbishop Kaigama called on the international community to show the same spirit and resolve for the situation in Nigeria as it has done for the recent terrorist attacks in France. Archbishop Kaigama's comments were recorded [here](#).

On January 13th, the U.N. called on the Government of Nigeria to restore law and order in the northeastern part of the country and to investigate the mass killings of civilians by Boko Haram insurgents. While the Nigerian military has said that 150 civilians had been killed by Boko Haram in Baga, U.N. officials highlighted other accounts suggesting that as many as 2,000 people were slain. Feedback from the U.N. was posted [here](#).

On January 13th, the U.N. human rights office condemned the most recent attacks by Boko Haram in Borno state, Nigeria. Accounts of the violence say that girls as young as ten were forced to carry out attacks. Ravina Shamdasani, a spokesperson for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), called the behavior morally repugnant. For more details on the events, click [here](#).

On January 13th, a suicide bomber blew himself up outside of a mosque in the northeastern Nigerian city of Gombe. Two people were killed in the attack and at least 14 others were wounded. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack. Gombe is just outside the main area of operations of Boko Haram, which has launched several attacks this month around the upcoming February 14th presidential election. The incident was noted [here](#).

On January 13th, Nigeria re-registered roughly ten million voters who were accidentally removed from voter rolls a year ago due to technical glitches associated with Nigeria adopting new voter cards linked to biodata. According to the electoral commission, 68.8 million Nigerians are now eligible to vote in next month's presidential election in which incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan will face off against former military ruler Muhammadu Buhari. The situation was detailed [here](#).

On January 13th, U.S. Department of State Deputy Spokesperson Marie Harf said the U.S. Government believes Nigeria's February 14th presidential election is a factor behind the sharp increase in attacks by Boko Haram in the northeastern part of the country. Despite the vote's supposed connection to the violence, Deputy Spokesperson Harf said the elections should proceed as planned. Deputy Spokesperson Harf's comments were recorded [here](#).

On January 14th, Nigerian security forces repelled an attack launched by Boko Haram rebels against the northeastern town of Biu. According to witnesses, several dozen fighters drove into the town in pick-up trucks and on motorcycles and began shooting at random. It is believed that all but three Boko Haram fighters who escaped into the Bush were killed. Nigerian soldiers are continuing to pursue those insurgents. An account of the attack can be viewed [here](#).

Cameroon

On January 9th, as part of a New Year speech delivered to diplomats in attendance at the presidential palace, Cameroonian President Paul Biya appealed for international military assistance to help fight Boko Haram, which this week threatened to step up its cross-border raids from Nigeria into Cameroon. President Biya said Boko Haram is part of a global movement that has also been present in Mali, the Central African Republic (CAR), and Somalia. As a result, he called on the international community, the African Union (AU), and other regional organizations to react with a global response. Excerpts from President Biya's address were highlighted [here](#).

On January 13th, Cameroonian Information Minister Issa Tchiroma Bakary reported on the efforts of the Cameroonian military to deflect a Boko Haram attack on a military camp in Kolofata after hundreds of

militants crossed the border from Nigeria. The fight lasted five hours and left 143 Boko Haram fighters dead. A Cameroonian corporal was killed in the attack and four other Cameroonian soldiers were wounded. Minister Bakary's account of the attack was reported [here](#).

On January 15th, the Government of Chad publically announced it will provide assistance to Cameroon in the country's fight against Boko Haram militants. Earlier this week, Cameroon's President Paul Biya asked for international military assistance. Hassan Sylla Bakari, a spokesman for the government, said the Chadian Government will not stand by as the Boko Haram militants threaten the security and stability of the region. More details on the announcement can be read [here](#).

Democratic Republic of Congo

On January 8th, the U.N. Security Council called on the authorities in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to quickly approve plans for joint operations between the Congolese military and U.N. peacekeeping forces targeting rebels. The deadline for the unconditional surrender of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) came and went on January 2nd. The U.N. hopes to neutralize the rebel group as swiftly as possible through collaborative efforts. Information on the planned joint operations can be accessed [here](#).

On January 12th, police in the DRC fired tear gas at demonstrators attempting to protest parliamentary debate on a proposed census in the country that could delay next year's elections. The protestors argued the proposal was part of President Joseph Kabila's effort to remain in office, as he is ineligible under the DRC constitution to run for another term in 2016. Meanwhile, lawmakers loyal to President Kabila have suggested the census will need to be completed to ensure transparent elections. An article on the situation was published [here](#).

On January 13th, National Assembly President Aubin Minaku announced that lawmakers in the DRC had approved a bill requiring a census before the 2016 election. While lawmakers loyal to President Joseph Kabila attest that the census can be completed within one year, the opposition argues the process could delay the presidential election for years. The proposal will now proceed to a special commission before a final vote in parliament. Developments related to the bill were noted [here](#).

On January 14th, following talks with South Africa Defense Minister Nosiviwe Masipa-Nqakula, Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete said Tanzania is ready to take on FDLR rebels in the eastern DRC. The U.N. Security Council recently backed plans for a 3,000-strong South Africa, Tanzanian, and Malawian intervention force to engage in military operations against the FDLR. The launch of the joint offensive now seems imminent, especially following the failure of FDLR rebels to meet the January deadline to surrender. For details, click [here](#).

Libya

On January 9th, U.N. Special Representative for Libya Bernardino Leon met with stakeholders expected to participate in the proposed dialogue between Libyan factions scheduled to kick off in the coming days. Special Representative Leon stressed that time is running out to stabilize the political and security crisis in Libya. As fighting between rival groups continues, he called for no further delay in peace efforts. Details on the meeting can be seen [here](#).

On January 10th, Libyan parties agreed to meet in Geneva, Switzerland, to begin a new round of political dialogue, facilitated by the U.N. To further promote the efficacy of the talks, U.N. Special Representative for Libya and Head of the U.N. Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) Bernardino Leon proposed a freeze in military operations by all parties. Additional details on the upcoming dialogue can be read [here](#) and [here](#).

On January 10th, the Governments of France, Germany, Italy, Spain, the United Kingdom (U.K.), and the U.S. applauded the efforts of U.N. Special Representative for Libya Bernardino Leon related to his announcement of a new round of political dialogue in Geneva, Switzerland. The world leaders urged the parties to engage seriously in this process to avert a further deterioration in the humanitarian crisis suffered by ordinary Libyans as a result of the ongoing conflict, and to prevent further erosion of Libya's sovereignty and security. The full statement was issued [here](#).

On January 13th, the Tripoli-based government of Libya Dawn indicated its plans to postpone a decision on whether to participate in U.N.-backed negotiations planned with the internationally recognized Libyan Government based in Tobruk in Geneva, Switzerland. A spokesman for the Tripoli-based government indicated there were concerns related to how the negotiations were organized, including the date of the dialogue and its mechanisms. The delay was announced as a delegation from Prime Minister Abdullah al-Thinni's government was on its way to Geneva. More information was shared [here](#).

On January 14th, peace talks brokered by U.N. Special Representative for Libya Bernardino Leon began in Geneva, Switzerland, despite part of a Tripoli faction's decision to delay its decision on participation until this weekend. The talks are aimed at reaching a political settlement to form a unity government and to build support for a ceasefire to support the process. The start of the talks was observed [here](#).

On January 15th, a fishing trawler carrying gasoline to Benghazi, Libya, was attacked by a Libyan warplane. According to a military official, the internationally recognized government ordered the attack under suspicions that the trawler was supplying Islamist militants. No details on the ownership or origin of the vessel have been uncovered. Details on the incident can be read [here](#).

Central African Republic

On January 13th, a spokesperson for the U.N. World Food Programme (WFP) said the CAR is in dire need of additional humanitarian assistance. At a press conference, Elisabeth Byrs said the WFP's most recent reports indicate that 30 percent of the country's population is experiencing moderate to severe food insecurity. Findings of the WFP report were summarized [here](#).

On January 13th, U.S. Department of State Deputy Spokesperson Marie Harf commended the Governments of the CAR and Uganda for their cooperation following the taking of senior Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) leader Dominic Ongwen into custody last week. Deputy Spokesperson Harf also confirmed that, per an agreement between the AU and the Governments of the CAR and Uganda, Ongwen would be transferred to the custody of the AU Regional Counter-LRA Task Force (AURTF). Additionally, Deputy Spokesperson Harf reported that local governments are in agreement to eventually transfer Ongwen to the International Criminal Court (ICC) to face justice for his alleged crimes. Her comments were transcribed [here](#).

On January 14th, the U.S. Embassy in Uganda confirmed that U.S. Special Forces in Obo, CAR, have handed over Ugandan LRA commander Dominic Ongwen to ARTF authorities in the CAR for transfer to The Hague to stand trial for war crimes and crimes against humanity at the ICC. Ongwen's transfer was confirmed [here](#).

United States – Africa Relations

State Department

On January 8th, Acting Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman officiated the swearing-in ceremony for U.S. Ambassador to Senegal and Guinea-Bissau James Peter Zumwalt, at the Department of State. The swearing-in ceremony was noticed [here](#).

On January 8th, Chief of Protocol Ambassador Pete Selfridge hosted a farewell reception for the Ambassador of Algeria to the U.S. Abdallah Baali, at Blair House. The reception was included on the State Department's daily appointment schedule, which can be accessed [here](#).

On January 8th, Under Secretary of State for Management Patrick Kennedy officiated a swearing-in ceremony for U.S. Ambassador to Cabo Verde Donald Heflin, at the Department of State. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield also participated. The swearing-in ceremony was listed [here](#).

On January 9th, State Department Spokesperson Jen Psaki condemned the recent kidnapping of 20 Coptic Egyptians in Libya. She said the incident underscores the need for the international community to continue to support the Libyan people and their government during this challenging time. Spokesperson

Psaki reiterated the U.S. remains committed to helping the Libyan people and Government build an inclusive system of government to address the core needs of the Libyan people, to provide stability and security, and to address ongoing threats. Spokesperson Psaki's comments were transcribed [here](#).

On January 12th, Assistant Secretary of State for International Security and Nonproliferation Thomas Countryman departed on foreign travel, including a stop in Egypt, for consultations on nonproliferation issues and cooperative programs to address proliferation-related challenges in the Middle East. Assistant Secretary Countryman's travel was announced [here](#).

On January 12th, the State Department's Bureau of Overseas Building Operations (OBO) announced the design architect for the new U.S. Embassy in Niamey, Niger. The multi-building complex will be situated on a 10-acre site in the neighborhood of Yata haut, and will include a chancery, a Marine Security Guard residence, a utility building, parking, community facilities, and street improvements. A design/build construction award to complete the design and build the facility is expected before the end of this fiscal year. More information was shared [here](#).

On January 13th, Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights Sarah Sewall delivered remarks at CSIS on "Fragile States, Vulnerable People: The Human Trafficking Dimension." Under Secretary Sewall described how USAID is supporting an assessment to measure the scope and nature of human trafficking in the artisanal mining industry in the South Kivu and Katanga provinces of the DRC. In Nigeria, USAID is also providing psycho-social counseling and healing for women and young girls abducted by Boko Haram in Borno State. Under Secretary Sewall's remarks can be read [here](#).

On January 14th, Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources Heather Higginbottom hosted a Roundtable on the Future of Development with USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah as part of the launch of a global coalition called action/2015. The Roundtable included 30, 15-year-old students who will be tasked with lobbying high-profile celebrities and leaders in dozens of countries around the world, including Nigeria, Kenya, and Uganda on the new Sustainable Development goals. A press release was issued [here](#).

On January 15th, Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs Charles Rivkin met with Central Bank of Libya and Libyan Investment authority officials at the Department of State. Assistant Secretary Rivkin's meetings were noticed [here](#).

U.S. Agency for International Development

On January 13th, Health Systems Strengthening Advisor in USAID's Office of HIV/AIDS Diana Frymus wrote for USAID's *Impact Blog* on efforts to address health worker shortages in countries with a high HIV burden. The post highlighted a public-private partnership between USAID and the Touch Foundation in Tanzania to expand training of health workers and strengthen management capacities of the Catholic University of Health and Allies Sciences and Bugando Medical Center. The full blog post can be viewed [here](#).

On January 14th, USAID Deputy Assistant Administrator for African Affairs Linda Etim and Director of the Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives Mark Brinkmoeller traveled to South Sudan to meet with community leaders. Deputy Assistant Administrator Etim and Director Brinkmoeller met with representatives from religious groups, civil society, and women's organizations to discuss how they can ensure diverse voices are heard in South Sudan and how they can work towards peace and reconciliation. They also received information on the progress of current initiatives on the ground and brainstormed on additional ways that USAID can provide support to the people of South Sudan. Deputy Assistant Administrator Etim and Director Brinkmoeller' visit to South Sudan was noticed [here](#).

Department of Defense

On January 8th, AFRICOM published its annual year in review to highlight the top events of 2014. This year's review focused on U.S. military involvement in relocating personnel from the U.S. Embassy in Juba, South Sudan, the execution of Flintock 2014 in Niger, the completion of Western Accord 2014 in Senegal, military assistance with the relocation of U.S. Embassy staff in Tripoli to Tunisia, and the

launch of Operation United Assistance to respond to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. The full review was published [here](#).

On January 9th, a mission and manning conference hosted by AFICOM, Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA), and Navy Region Europe, Africa, concluded at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti. The meeting brought together 45 action officers to review, validate, and consolidate the personnel and aircraft required to support the U.S. and partner military operations and Camp Lemonnier, especially as the base reaches its maximum threshold for water, power, billeting, and aircraft parking space. More information was shared [here](#).

On January 12th, AFRICOM detailed the five-day certification course completed by the more than a thousand new Marines and sailors that began deploying last week to staff Special-Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force Crisis Response-Africa. Conducted at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, the training challenged commanders to coordinate with personnel dispersed throughout the region, recreating the geographic distances, austere conditions, and logistical difficulties the current rotations are experiencing across Africa and Europe. An article on the certification course can be read [here](#).

On January 12th, a Spanish newspaper reported that DOD is looking to establish a permanent presence of up to 3,000 Marines at the base in Moron that is currently hosting the Special-Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force Crisis Response-Africa. According to Spanish media, the U.S. is planning to maintain a routine presence of 850 Marines, but allow for a surge of up to 3,000 troops in the event of a crisis in Africa. The unit was first created in 2013 in response to the September 2012 attacks on U.S. facilities in Benghazi, Libya. Excerpts from the Spanish reporting were highlighted [here](#).

U.S. Trade and Development Agency

On January 12th, the U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) announced the U.S.-Africa Clean Energy Finance (ACEF) initiative has reached a key milestone in deploying millions of dollars for renewable energy in Africa. In December, USTDA and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) reached commitment of 100 percent of the initial project funds administered under the ACEF. Since the program's launch, USTDA and OPIC have committed funds to 30 renewable energy projects across ten African countries. The initial \$20 million in funding has the potential to lead to more than 400 megawatts of new renewable power in Africa and could mobilize more than \$1.5 billion in project capital. A press release was issued [here](#).

Overseas Private Investment Corporation

On January 13th, OPIC Chief of Staff John Morton authored a post for *The OPIC Blog* on the ACEF. Conceived in 2012 as a \$20 million initiative to provide small amounts of funding to early-stage renewable projects, the program has now fully disbursed its initial funding to 30 projects across ten Africa countries. The blog post also highlights projects that have been funded under ACEF, including a project in Tanzania that will provide more than 14,000 Tanzanian homes with lighting and electricity, a project in Nigeria that will provide students with small, solar-powered lights for reading and studying after dark, and a project in Rwanda to construct the country's first utility-scale solar facility. The blog post can be accessed [here](#).

Congress

On January 8th, House Foreign Affairs Africa Subcommittee Ranking Member Karen Bass (D-CA) focused her biweekly Africa newsletter on African elections in 2015. The newsletter highlights the 14 presidential and legislative elections currently scheduled for 2015, including those in Burkina Faso, Burundi, the CAR, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Guinea, Lesotho, Nigeria, Somaliland, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, and Zambia. The full newsletter was posted [here](#).

North Africa

On January 8th, OCHA announced it had received reports of significant civilian displacement in North and South Darfur. U.N. Spokesman Stephane Dujarric told press that an inter-agency mission was planned for later this week to verify these and other reports. Details were posted [here](#).

On January 9th, the Human Rights Division of the U.N. Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) reported there is evidence to believe that at least 353 civilians were murdered and another 250 were wounded during attacks in the Unity and Jonglei states between April 15th and 17th of last year. No perpetrator has been held accountable in the nine months since the attacks. Highlights from the recently published UN report can be seen [here](#).

On January 9th, the New America Foundation hosted a discussion titled, “Algeria and the Sahel in the Arab Spring Aftermath.” The discussion featured Hannah Armstrong, a New America Fellow with the International Security Program based in Algeria, and Peter Bergen, Director of New America’s International Security Program. More information can be accessed [here](#).

On January 12th, a Libyan affiliate of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) claimed responsibility for the abduction of 21 Coptic Christians last month in Sirte, Libya. The claim and photos of the captives were posted online on jihadi forums used by ISIL supporters. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On January 13th, a Cairo court accepted former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak’s appeal against corruption charges and sent the case to retrial. The move culminates President Mubarak’s success in successfully fighting all of the charges brought against him following his removal from power, including a life sentence for complicity in the murder of anti-regime protestors during the 2011 uprising against him and the embezzlement of millions in government funding. In light of the court’s decision, President Mubarak’s attorney indicated he should soon be released, pending the retrial. For details, click [here](#).

On January 13th, Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shukri said that a presidential pardon for three jailed *Al Jazeera* journalists who are facing a retrial may still be possible if deemed appropriate by President Adul Fattah Al-Sisi. The journalists, Mohamed Fahmy, Baher Mohamed, and Peter Grete were sentenced in June to seven to ten years for spreading lies in support of the Muslim Brotherhood. President Sisi first indicated he would be willing to consider pardoning the journalists in November. The full story is available [here](#).

On January 13th, the Sudanese army announced it had recaptured areas in Darfur and South Kordofan from rebels as part of a mission to drive the remnants of the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) rebel faction from the region. The army also retook the area of Abu Gamra. According to the Sudanese military, 100 rebel fighters were killed in Angarto, with rebel forces also suffering heavy losses in equipment. A number of Sudanese soldiers were also killed and wounded. An update from the Sudanese army was provided [here](#).

On January 13th, Frontier Economics said the ongoing conflict between rival political parties in South Sudan could cost regional nations Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, Uganda, and Tanzania a combined \$53 billion should it continue for another five years. The costs to neighboring countries would be associated with addressing refugees, security needs, and other spillover effects. South Sudan’s economy will also be damaged by ongoing fighting. It is estimated the country’s economy contracted by 15 percent last year due to the civil war. Additional analysis by Frontier Economics was highlighted [here](#).

East Africa

On January 9th, *Reuters* reported that Ethiopia is planning to launch a national initiative this year aimed at treating children at risk of infection from parasitic worms. In Ethiopia, more than ten million children are at risk for schistosomiasis, caused by parasites found in water, and another 18 million children are at risk for infection from soil-based parasites. These infections prevent children from benefitting from the nutrients in their food, leading to anemia, malnourishment, impaired development, and other health problems. The new initiative was described [here](#).

On January 10th, Al Shabaab militants carried out an attack against a troop convoy in the port city of Kismayo using a remote-controlled bomb. Three soldiers were killed in the attack. Witnesses reported that troops in the convoy opened fire after the blast, killing two women who were passing by. Al Shabaab also attacked a police station in the port of Bosasso on Saturday with grenades and guns, injuring one woman in the fighting. Accounts of both attacks were reported [here](#).

On January 14th, in response to the recent kidnapping of a four-year-old albino girl, the Government of Tanzania announced a ban on witch doctors, who have sought the body parts of albinos for witchcraft. In the past decade, more than 70 albinos have been murdered in Tanzania for black magic purposes. Additionally, Tanzanian Home Affairs Minister Mathias Chikawe said the government has formed a national task force involving the police and members of the Tanzania Albino Society to arrest and prosecute witch doctors defying the ban. The ban on witch doctors was detailed [here](#).

On January 15th, two police officers were killed in northern Somalia. Having been forced out of the central and southern regions by AU peacekeepers and the Somali army, Al Shabaab rebels have been increasingly targeting cities in the north. The attack in Basasso was confirmed by Abdiasis Abu Musab, Al Shabaab's military spokesman. More details can be read [here](#).

On January 15th, Kenya's military stated that its army had killed five suspected Al Shabaab militants during an attack on Wednesday. David Obonyo, the Kenya Defense Force Spokesman, said Kenyan soldiers were en route to their operation base in Ras Kiamboni when attackers emerged from the forest and opened fire. One soldier died in the event. For more details, click [here](#).

West Africa

On January 8th, Mohamed Ibn Chambas, head of the U.N. Office for West Africa (UNOWA) told the U.N. Security Council that the political situation in West Africa is a precarious one as a result of insecurity, terrorist threats, and tensions. As the region heads toward presidential and legislative elections in 2015 and 2016, Special Representative Chambas referred to political instability across the area, citing recent events in The Gambia and Burkina Faso. He also noted the elections to be held in Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Nigeria, and Togo. Excerpts from the briefing were highlighted [here](#).

On January 8th, Gambian President Yahya Jammeh replaced Minister of Justice Basiru Mahoney in the second cabinet reshuffle since the failed coup attempt in late December. The announcement, which aired on state television, included no reason for Minister Mahoney's dismissal. He will be replaced by former Minister for Higher Education, Research, Science, and Technology Aboubacarr Senghore. Secretary General and Minister for Presidential Affairs and the Civil Service Kalilou Bayo was also dismissed and replaced with Lamin Nyabally. The cabinet changes were announced [here](#).

On January 9th, seven U.N. peacekeepers were wounded by a blast that hit their vehicle as they were traveling in Kidal, Mali. A witness said the troops involved were Senegalese and the area to the east of the town has been cordoned off. An investigation will determine if the vehicle hit a landmine or was otherwise the target of another kind of explosive device. The incident was reported [here](#).

On January 9th, the U.N. Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) condemned the attack that wounded seven Senegalese peacekeepers. The attack occurred near the Kidal airstrip, where an explosive device struck the U.N. vehicle. The area has since been secured and experts have begun an investigation. The most recent attack is one of several recent attacks targeting peacekeepers. The reaction from the U.N. can be read [here](#).

On January 11th, Gambian President Yahya Jammeh apologized to the U.K. for comments he made after the failed coup attempt in December accusing dissidents from Britain of involvement in the plot. The speech was delivered before Gambian armed forces near the presidential palace. The Gambia was previously a British colony. President Jammeh's apology was summarized [here](#).

On January 12th, the World Bank Group's Board of Executive Directors approved a new \$80 million grant from the International Development Association (IDA) to help Burkina Faso expand access to clean water and sanitation services for the poor in urban communities surrounding Ouagadougou. The additional financing will be used to scale up components of the ongoing Burkina Faso Urban Water Sector Project (UWSP), which launched in 2009 and has already provided 434,000 additional people access to piped water and 403,000 additional people access to improved sanitation services. A press release was issued [here](#).

On January 12th, a liquefied natural gas (LNG) tanker ran aground off Nigeria after taking on cargo at Nigeria's Bonny Island export plant. The Magellan Spirit tanker, owned by Teekay LNG Partners, ran

aground trying to leave the port bound for South Korea. The incident was not anticipated to disrupt inbound or outbound traffic at Bonny Island. The issue was noted [here](#).

On January 13th, Aichatou Mindaoudou, U.N. Special Representative for Cote d'Ivoire and head of the U.N. Operation in Cote d'Ivoire (UNCOI), briefed the U.N. Security Council. While commending the country's progress towards peace and economic recovery, Special Representative Mindaoudou emphasized that efforts in key areas must not waver in order for progress in the country to continue. She said that national reconciliation in Ivory Coast and criminal activities such as armed robbery and banditry are two key challenges requiring vigilance by the Government. The briefing was detailed [here](#).

On January 14th, the IMF concluded a mission to The Gambia. While the country continues to remain free of Ebola, the regional crisis has severely impacted the country's economy, specifically in the tourism sector. In a press release, Bhaswar Mukhopadhyay, who led the mission, said that the decline in tourism is projected to be 60 percent. Furthermore, delayed rains last year affected crop production, which will require greater support from the international community. Additional analysis was provided [here](#).

On January 15th, the World Bank forecasted that Nigeria's economic growth rate will slow to 4.6 percent in 2015, down from an average of 6-7 percent in recent years, due to the slowdown of other large economies in Africa, notable South Africa. While Nigeria is the continent's largest economy, many African economies have been affected by the risks associated with the West African Ebola epidemic, insurgencies, global financial uncertainties, and softer commodity prices. Further economic analysis was provided [here](#).

On January 15th, a Cameroon criminal court sentenced the country's former finance and economy minister to 25 years in prison for embezzling \$11 million to buy houses and cars. The court will now seize 30 properties, eight vehicles and three tractors in addition to bank accounts formerly in control of Polycarpe Abah Abah. For details on the court decision, click [here](#).

Sub-Saharan Africa

On January 9th, the Meningitis Vaccine Project (MVP) closed down after achieving success in rolling out a tailor-made vaccine to end the meningitis epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa. The vaccine, MenAfriVac, was produced by the Serum Institute of India and cost just 50 cents per shot. In conjunction with MVP shutting down, the WHO authorized MenAfriVac for use in routine child immunizations in Africa. For information on the vaccine, click [here](#).

On January 12th, the United Nations Electoral Observation Mission in Burundi (MENUB) began its activities in the capital of Bujumbura. Burundi will hold elections later this year amid an air of reconciliation. At the request of the Government of Burundi, MENUB was created in February 2014 and will observe before, during and after presidential, parliamentary and local polls, scheduled between May and September 2015. More on the commencement of observation activities can be read [here](#).

On January 12th, health authorities in Mozambique reported at least 56 people in Tete province died from apparent poisoning over the weekend after consuming the traditional beer known as phombe at a funeral. Another 49 people were admitted to the hospital and 149 treated for the poisoning in the chitima and Songo districts. Authorities believe the drink was poisoned with crocodile bile during the course of the funeral. Blood and beer samples have been collected for testing. The full story is available [here](#).

On January 13th, Malawian President Peter Mutharika reported that 48 people were killed and 23,000 others displaced by heavy flooding in Malawi. In response to the recent heavy rainfall, which is expected to continue over the coming days, President Mutharika declared a third of the country as a disaster zone and appealed to the international community for assistance. An update on the situation in Malawi was provided [here](#).

On January 13th, the National Endowment for Democracy hosted a presentation on "How Civil Society Engagement Can Strengthen Democracy in Zimbabwe." Presenters included Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellow Arthur Gwagwa, Jeffrey Smith of the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights, and Eric Robinson, of the National Endowment for Democracy. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On January 14th, President of Madagascar Hery Rajaonarimampianina accepted the resignation of Prime Minister Roger Kolo and his government, which was submitted on Monday. In submitting his resignation, Prime Minister Kolo said his resignation was based on mounting public frustration about regular power cuts and the government's failure to contain an outbreak of the plague. In response to the resignation, parliament development a list of 14 potential candidates to serve as prime minister. Among them was former President Marc Ravalomanana, who was ousted by a coup in 2009. More information can be seen [here](#).

On January 15th, South Africa's state-run power company Eskom warned the country's power reserves are nearly depleted and blackouts are imminent. Eskom Chief Executive Tshediso Matona said that margins are so small that the loss of even 1,000 megawatts would trigger power outages. The situation was described [here](#).

On January 15th, Air Force Commander and businessman Jean Ravelonarivo was named by Madagascar's President as the new Prime Minister. Prime Minister Ravelonarivo will be tasked with addressing the public outcry over blackouts and other issues that led former Prime Minister Roger Kolo to resign. For more details, click [here](#).

General Africa News

On January 12th, the World Bank reported on its engagement with faith-based organizations as partners for TerrAfrica, an African-driven global partnership that aims to address land degradation and promote a multi-sectoral, coordinated approach that involves governments, international organizations, and civil society. In particular, the Alliance of Religion and Conservation (ARC) has emerged as a leading stakeholder in promoting conservation and sustainable natural resources management to help make ecosystems and livelihoods more resilient. Additional information was shared [here](#).

On January 12th, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi continued a five-country tour in Africa, making scheduled stops in Kenya, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Sudan, and the DRC. In response to criticism from African leaders that China has sought to tap African resources to fuel its own economic growth, Foreign Minister Wang pledged that China will not sacrifice Africa's ecological environment and long-term interests and that China will continue to cooperate with African nations on agriculture, health care, and infrastructure projects. Foreign Minister Wang's visit to Africa was outlined [here](#).

On January 13th, Italy's Hermes Center for Transparency and Digital Human Rights and the Africa Network of Centers for Investigative Journalism (ANCIR) launched their Afrileaks project, which is based on Wikileaks and intended to securely connect whistleblowers with media organizations across Africa. Another goal of the project is to help train a new generation of African investigative journalists about how to safely use leaked material. The launch of Afrileaks was noted [here](#).

On January 13th, the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, in partnership with the Carter Center, opened a new exhibit titled, "Countdown to Zero: Defeating Disease." The exhibit highlights the 30-year campaign to eradicate Guinea worm disease. Speaking at the exhibit's unveiling, former U.S. President Jimmy Carter reported that just 126 cases were reported in 2014, down from 148 in 2013, and 3.5 million from 1986 when the campaign first launched. The 2014 cases were in South Sudan, Chad, Mali, and Ethiopia. The new exhibit was previewed [here](#).

On January 15th, the Brookings Institution hosted an event on "Top Priorities for Africa in 2015." Moderated by Straight Talk Africa's Shaka Ssali, the panel included remarks from Michael O'Hanlon of *Foreign Policy*, and Mwangi Kimenyi, Witney Schneidman, Vera Songwe, and Amadou Sy of the Brookings Institution's Africa Growth Initiative. More information can be found [here](#).

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