



ML Strategies Update

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Africa Update

Leading the News

Burundi

On January 22nd, during a visit to Bujumbura, the United Nations (U.N.) Security Council met with Burundian President Pierre Nkurunziza to advocate for peace talks and the deployment of an international force to promote stability in the wake of ongoing political violence. According to U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Samantha Power, little was achieved during the meeting. President Nkurunziza reiterated his government will not negotiate with those who attempted a coup last year and again turned down the African Union's (AU) offer to deploy a peacekeeping force. Reflections on the meeting were shared [here](#).

On January 26th, the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) reported that a team of independent experts mandated to probe violations and abuses in Burundi has not been able to enter the country. High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein recently appointed a team of three U.N. experts on to travel to the country to engage in a dialogue with Burundian authorities and other relevant actors of the ongoing crisis. The team was not able to deploy due to the lack of response from the Government of Burundi, including the issuance of visas. Details can be found [here](#).

On January 27th, AU diplomats indicated they are continuing to try to persuade Burundian President Pierre Nkurunziza to accept the AU's proposal to send 5,000 peacekeepers to Burundi, where more than 400 people have been killed since President Nkurunziza decided to run for a third term. Should President Nkurunziza continue to oppose the AU's offer, the AU may consider sanctions during the upcoming AU Summit. More information was posted [here](#).

South Sudan

On January 21st, OHCHR delivered a new report documenting hundreds of extra-judicial killings, enforced disappearances, gang raps, sexual slavery, forced abortion, massive child soldier recruitment, and indiscriminate attacks against civilians committed by both sides of the conflict in South Sudan. In response to the report, senior U.N. officials said accountability must be a fundamental element in the country's ongoing peace process. The report's findings were detailed [here](#).

On January 21st, the U.S. Department of State welcomed the appointment of former Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Guinea Francois Lounceny Fall as Deputy Chairperson of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC) for South Sudan. The State Department pledged to continue to work closely with the JMEC

Chair and Deputy Chair to support the South Sudanese people in reconciling their differences, implementing meaningful reforms, and rebuilding their nation. A full statement can be read [here](#).

On January 22nd, leaders in South Sudan failed to meet a key deadline to create a transitional government, as outlined by the August peace deal signed by President Salva Kiir and former Vice President turned opposition leader Riek Machar. While both sides accuse each of violating the agreement, most analysts believe President Kiir's decision to increase the number of provinces in the country from ten to 28 and appoint new governors are the main blockades to progress. More information can be found [here](#).

On January 22nd, the Governments of the U.S., United Kingdom (U.K.), and Norway expressed their concern for delays in forming the Transitional Government of National Unity in South Sudan, due to be delivered by January 22nd. The Members of the Troika said advancing implementation of the peace agreement, reviving the economy, and implementing critical reforms depend on the formation of the transitional government. Additionally, they noted the Presidential Decree establishing 28 states created an obstacle to consensus, and urged all parties to make immediate efforts to form the transitional government as soon as possible. A joint statement was issued [here](#).

On January 25th, acknowledging that South Sudanese parties missed the deadline to set up a Transitional Government of National Unity, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called on the country's African partners to step in to save the peace process. Secretary-General Ban encouraged the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and AU member States to seize the opportunity of the forthcoming AU Summit to address the political impasse in South Sudan. Secretary-General Ban's remarks were recorded [here](#).

On January 25th, U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee Ranking Member Eliot Engel (D-NY) issued a statement on South Sudan's failure to form a transitional government. Congressman Engel said the formation of a Transitional Government of National Unity, which was to be completed by January 22nd, could have been a critical point in the history of South Sudan. However, he said the failure to demonstrate a genuine commitment to peace is further evidence that President Salva Kiir and former Vice President Riek Machar continue to place their personal interests above the well-being of their citizens. Congressman Engel urged both parties to cease finding roadblocks to peace and instead work towards a political solution to the ongoing conflict. His statement was posted [here](#).

On January 26th, a report completed by U.N. sanctions monitors called for the U.N. Security Council to impose an arms embargo on South Sudan. An arms embargo has been under consideration, but Russia and Angola have expressed opposition. The report also observed South Sudanese President Salva Kiir and rebel leader Riek Machar are still completely in charge of their forces and can be held to blame for the killing of civilians and other violations that warrant sanctions. The report's findings were discussed [here](#).

Nigeria

On January 22nd, U.N. Special Rapporteur on the sale of children Maud de Boer-Buquicchio, U.N. Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery Urmila Boohla, and Special Rapporteur on the right to health Dainius Puras concluded an official visit to Nigeria. Upon the conclusion of their trip, the U.N. experts called on the Government of Nigeria to assist in the rehabilitation and reintegration of women and children liberated from Boko Haram captivity into Nigerian society. Observations from their visit to Nigeria were shared [here](#).

On January 25th, suspected Nigerian Boko Haram suicide fighters attacked a market near the town of Bodo, Cameroon, along the border with Boko Haram's stronghold in Nigeria. Following four explosions near the entrance to the market, 32 people were reported dead and 66 others wounded. The incident marks one of the worst attacks in Cameroon perpetrated by the extremist group. Cameroon is part of a regional task force standing up an 8,700-strong force to take on Boko Haram. The suicide bombings were detailed [here](#).

On January 27th, at least 12 people were killed when two female suicide bombers blew themselves up in a market in the Nigerian town of Chibok, the same town where Boko Haram fighters abducted more than 200 schoolgirls in 2014. While there was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack, the suicide bombing bore the hallmarks of similar attacks carried out by Boko Haram. The suicide bombings were reported [here](#).

On January 28th, two suicide bombers targeted a school in Kerawa, Cameroon. Only the attackers were killed in the explosion, though an unknown number of people were injured. According to witnesses, the school had been housing Nigerian refugees. It is believed that Boko Haram was behind the attack. Details can be seen [here](#).

Libya

On January 25th, the Libyan House of Representatives (HOR), the country's internationally recognized parliament, voted to reject the unity government proposed last week under the U.N.-backed peace plan. Of the 104 members attending the HOR session in Tobruk, 89 voted against the plan presented by Libya's Presidential Council. The vote was recorded [here](#).

On January 25th, Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) Marine Corps General Joseph Dunford Jr. met with his French counterpart, General Pierre de Villiers, at the French defense headquarters in Paris to discuss the framework for military action in Libya against Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorists. As a member of the coalition fighting ISIL, France conducts airstrikes against terrorist targets and recently sent an aircraft carrier into the fight. Roughly 3,500 French troops have been deployed as part of the effort. The meeting was summarized [here](#).

Central African Republic

On January 25th, the Constitutional Court in the Central African Republic (CAR) certified the first round of voting in the country's December 30th polls. As expected, two former prime ministers, Anicet-Georges Dologuele and Faustin Archange Touadera, will compete in a runoff election. In the first round of voting, Dologuele won 23.74 percent of the votes cast, while Touadera won 19.05 percent of the vote. A date for the runoff has yet to be announced. The court's certification of the vote count was announced [here](#).

On January 26th, the CAR's Constitutional Court annulled the results of the December 30th legislative election, citing irregularities and calling for a rescheduling of the vote. Despite observers praising the peaceful nature of the polls, according to the Court, more than 400 complaints of voting irregularities had been filed. The Court's ruling raises questions regarding next steps in the CAR's electoral process, especially as the Court has already validated the results in the country's presidential election. As a result, the CAR could find itself with a new president, but without a parliament. The full story is available [here](#).

On January 27th, the U.N. Security Council renewed sanctions against individuals or groups in the CAR implicated in ongoing sectarian tensions. The sanctions, which include an arms embargo, travel ban, and asset freezes, were renewed through January 2017 and target those designated by the Sanctions Committee as engaging in or providing support for acts that undermine the peace, stability, or security of the CAR, including acts that threaten or impede the political transition process, or the stabilization and reconciliation process, or that fuel violence. More information can be accessed [here](#).

Kenya

On January 26th, the Kenyan Defense Forces reported soldiers supporting the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) abandoned a camp in El Adde, Somalia, after they came under attack from Al Shabaab on January 15th. While the death toll from the attack has yet to be confirmed, it is believed the Kenyan forces suffered heavy losses. According to defense officials, the troops are now stationed at a post nearby. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On January 27th, after the recent attack on Kenyan forces supporting AMISOM, Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta said his country was committed to remain a part of the AU's peacekeeping force in Somalia. The Al Shabaab attack on an army base along the border with Kenya is believed to have left more than 100 soldiers dead. Meanwhile, Kenya's political opposition called for the withdrawal of Kenyan troops from Somalia. President Kenyatta's remarks, delivered at a memorial service for the fallen soldiers, were captured [here](#).

Burkina Faso

On January 22nd, armed men attacked a Burkinabe weapons warehouse in Yimdi, outside of Ouagadougou. Firefight was recorded for 30 minutes. It was not immediately clear if any weapons were stolen. According to the

army, the attackers are thought to be members of Burkina Faso's former presidential guard, which staged a short-lived coup in September 2015. For more information, click [here](#).

West Africa Ebola Outbreak

On January 26th, riots broke out after police in Sierra Leone closed a market in Barmoi town where someone died of Ebola earlier this month. Three people protesting against Ebola restrictions were admitted to the hospital after suffering gunshot wounds in clashes with police. The police denied firing at the demonstrators, but admitted to using teargas in an attempt to disperse the protest after their station was attacked. So far, only seven of the 50 contacts tied to Sierra's Leone's latest Ebola case have been found and quarantined. The situation was described [here](#).

African Migrant Crisis

On January 25th, a European Union (EU) task force supported by the Italian coast guard rescued 723 African migrants from boats in the Mediterranean. The majority of the migrants were refugees from Eritrea, Senegal, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Somalia, and The Gambia. Among the migrants were 20 pregnant women and 29 unaccompanied children. The rescues were reported [here](#).

On January 27th the Italian coast guard reported it had coordinated the rescue of 1,271 migrants from rubber and wooden boats in several operations off the coast of Libya. The rescues were completed by vessels from the Italian navy and coast guard and a Slovenian military ship working as part of an EU task force created to address the refugee crisis in the Mediterranean. For more information, click [here](#).

World Economic Forum

On January 20th, at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, Switzerland, the African Development Bank (AfDB) presented its New Deal on Energy for Africa and launched a Transformative Partnership on Energy. The New Deal on Energy for Africa aims to foster partnerships between governments, the private sector, and bilateral and multilateral organizations to develop a Transformative Partnership on Energy, a platform for public-private partnerships to provide financing for Africa's energy sector. The initiative aims to achieve universal access to energy in Africa by 2025. Details were shared [here](#).

On January 20th, the WEF unveiled a new report titled, "The Future of Jobs," finding that 65 percent of children around the world entering primary school today will ultimately end up working in completely new jobs that do not yet exist. This trend is expected to be a huge opportunity for Africa, so long as countries on the continent can quickly redesign their education systems and adapt to new technologies. Additional analysis was provided [here](#).

On January 21st, Nigerian Oil Minister Emmanuel Ibe Kachikwu used his appearance on a panel at the WEF to call for an urgent meeting of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to address falling oil prices. Minister Kachikwu suggested a meeting was necessary to help convince oil producing countries to join forces in limiting production in order to bolster prices. His comments were captured [here](#).

On January 22nd, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry delivered remarks at the WEF in Davos, Switzerland. During his remarks, Secretary Kerry described U.S. efforts to help stand up a government in Libya that can stand up to ISIL. He also noted Nigeria's struggles in the fight against Boko Haram and how those efforts have been hampered by corruption. Secretary Kerry's speech was transcribed [here](#).

United States – Africa Relations

Office of the U.S. Trade Representative

On January 28th, U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) Ambassador Michael Froman participated in a USTR-sponsored hearing on the post-African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) review. In the reauthorization of AGOA last year, Congress mandated that USTR explore how to advance trade relations with Africa beyond one-way trade preferences. The hearing also included testimony from Senators Chris Coons (D-DE) and Johnny Isakson (R-GA). Ambassador Froman's participation was noted [here](#).

State Department

On January 25th-28th, U.S. Acting Special Envoy to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Arsalan Suleman and Special Advisor for Religious Minorities in the Near East and South/Central Asia Knox Thames traveled to Morocco to participate in “The Rights of Religious Minorities in Predominantly Muslim Lands: Legal Framework and a Call to Action” conference. During their visit, Acting Special Envoy Suleman met with Moroccan officials, religious leaders, representatives of OIC member countries, officials from the OIC’s affiliated Islamic Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), and university students. Special Adviser Thames also met with Moroccan government officials, religious and interfaith leaders, and members of the Jewish community. Their travel was outlined [here](#).

On January 27th-February 2nd, Ambassador-At-Large for Global Women’s Issues Catherine Russel will travel to Tunisia and Egypt. In Tunisia, Ambassador Russel’s meetings with government officials, members of Parliament, entrepreneurs, and members of civil society will focus on women’s roles in peace, security, and politics, as well as gender-based violence and women’s economic empowerment. In Egypt, Ambassador Russell will meet with government officials, members of civil society, business leaders and entrepreneurs to discuss gender-based violence, women’s economic and political participation, and adolescent girls’ education. Her trip was announced [here](#).

U.S. Agency for International Development

On January 25th, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Administrator Gayle Smith planned to host a discussion on the future of power on the African continent. Scheduled participants included U.S. National Security Advisor Ambassador Susan Rice, Deputy Secretary of Energy Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall, World Bank President Jim Yong Kim, AfDB President Akinwumi Adesina, and Power Africa Coordinator Andrew Herscowitz. The event was also intended to include the launch of a roadmap to pave the way forward for the Power Africa initiative. The event was ultimately canceled due to the snowstorm in Washington, DC. Details can be seen [here](#).

On January 27th, USAID and its partners announced 16 prize winners under the Wildlife Crime Tech Challenge, awarding \$10,000 to each winner and offering technical support to help them advance their solutions to stamp out illegal trade in wildlife. Among the winners was the University of Pretoria in South Africa, which proposed the DNA- and IT-based Rhino DNA Indexing System (RhODIS) and Electronic Rhino DNA Indexing System (eRhODISTM) to provide forensic tracing for African rhinos and their parts, linking parts back to source animals and criminals to specific crimes. The awardees were profiled [here](#).

On January 27th-29th, USAID participated in the annual Powering Africa Summit (PAS) held in Washington, DC. The PAC brought together decision makers from the American and African public and private sectors to explore how project bankability can be increased and to showcase power, trade, and infrastructure investment opportunities across the continent. Power Africa partners opened the PAS with an in-depth conversation about the Power Africa Roadmap, which outlines how they will reach President Barack Obama’s goals of adding 30,000 new megawatts (MW) of cleaner electricity generation and connecting 60 million homes and businesses to electricity in sub-Saharan Africa. USAID participants also highlighted the Power Africa Tracking Tool (PATT), a mobile app that provides previously unavailable data to increase transparency and drive more deals in the African energy sector. More information was shared [here](#).

On January 28th, USAID announced USAID Administrator Gayle Smith will lead the U.S. delegation to the 26th Annual AU Summit. Joining the delegation will be Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield, Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Tom Malinowski, National Security Council (NSC) Senior Director for Africa Cathy Byrne, USAID Assistant Administrator for Africa Linda Etim, U.S. Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan Donald Booth, and U.S. Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region of Africa Thomas Perriello. Following the Summit, Administrator Smith will visit sites in Ethiopia where the U.S. Government is working with local and international partners to respond to the drought and build resilience to extreme weather events like El Nino. For details, click [here](#).

Department of Defense

On January 20th-22nd, the Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) hosted the 2016 East Africa Security Synchronization Conference (EASSC) at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti. The EASSC is the only conference between the U.S. Department of State and U.S. military representatives dedicated to aligning military and political priorities for East Africa. The event brought together more than 70 U.S. embassy representatives from East African countries and organizations, including the AU, as well as U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) components to prioritize U.S. activities in the region. The conference was summarized [here](#).

On January 27th, Naval Forces Europe and Africa highlighted Cutlass Express 2016, which will be held January 30th - February 6th off the coasts of Djibouti and Seychelles. The exercise is designed to build and help maintain the capability to protect the free flow of trade by countering maritime illicit activities. Participating nations will include Australia, Canada, Comoros, Djibouti, France, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, the U.K., and the U.S. More information can be found [here](#).

Department of Commerce

On January 25th-26th, during a visit to Nigeria, Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker addressed U.S. and African business leaders at an event hosted by the Tony Elumelu Foundation and the United Bank for Africa titled, “Unleashing Africa’s Entrepreneurs: Strengthening the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem to Empower the Next Generation of Africa’s Business Leaders.” Event participants included members of the President’s Advisory Council on Doing Business in Africa (PAC-DBIA), along with local entrepreneurs from the agricultural, medial, entertainment, transportation, health care, and financial services sectors. Following her remarks, Secretary Pritzker moderated a panel discussion with four of the Tony Elumelu Entrepreneurship Programme (TEEP) Fellows. Secretary Pritzker’s activities in Nigeria were outlined [here](#).

On January 26th, the Department of Commerce, in partnership with Bloomberg Philanthropies, announced plans to host the second U.S.-Africa Business Forum during the 71st Session of the U.N. General Assembly, which will be held the week of September 19th. The Forum will bring together nearly 50 heads of state or government and more than 150 global CEOs to further develop trade and business opportunities between the U.S. and Africa. The Forum will focus on U.S. private sector engagement in Africa in sectors including finance and capital investment, infrastructure, power and energy, agriculture, consumer goods, health care, and information communication technology. More information was posted [here](#).

On January 27th-28th, Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker visited Rwanda with members of the PAC-DBIA. As part of their visit, the U.S. delegation met with Rwandan President Paul Kagame during a roundtable discussion on the opportunities presented by regional integration. The conversation focused on how East African governments, in partnership with the U.S., can foster deeper regional economic and trade ties to overcome challenges related to power, access to capital, and infrastructure, among others. The roundtable discussion was summarized [here](#).

Department of the Interior

On January 21st-29th, Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell was on overseas travel to Gabon, Kenya, and South Africa. While in Africa, Secretary Jewell discussed U.S. leadership in combatting wildlife trafficking both in Africa and throughout the world. Secretary Jewell also participated in meetings with government officials, NGOs, and conservation leaders to continue U.S. efforts to combat the illegal trade of wildlife products, including ivory, rhino horn, and other flora and fauna, in the U.S. and abroad. Her trip was outlined [here](#).

Overseas Private Investment Corporation

On January 22nd, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) highlighted its partnership with Silverlands Fund to improve livestock health in Africa. Silverlands invests in a variety of agricultural businesses in sub-Saharan Africa, including multiple cattle farms, where it has invested in vaccinations and more nutritious feedstock to help dramatically reduce disease. Silverlands has taken this same approach to improve yields at small-holder produce and livestock farms throughout Southern and Eastern Africa. OPIC approved financing to the Silverlands Fund in 2011. Details were posted [here](#).

Congress

On January 21st, the congressional delegation led by House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Ed Royce (R-CA) and Ranking Member Eliot Engel (D-NY) concluded their mission to Africa with a stop in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The delegation met with DRC Prime Minister Augustin Ponyo, cabinet members, and leaders of parliament, during which members of Congress repeatedly pressed for the release of 400 adopted children. The delegation also attended a reception with families at the U.S. Embassy in Kinshasa hosted by U.S. Ambassador to the DRC James Swan. The delegation's visit to the DRC was summarized [here](#).

On January 27th, Senators Mark Kirk (R-IL), Roy Blunt (R-MO), James Lankford (R-OK), and Steve Daines (R-MT) sent a letter to appropriators requesting that language be included in the FY17 State and Foreign Operations spending bill to reduce assistance to Ghana. Earlier this month, the Pentagon transferred two Yemeni prisoners held at Guantanamo Bay (GTMO) to Ghana. The Senators are seeking to reduce assistance to Ghana by \$10 million per detainee if either escapes from confinement or re-engages in terrorism while in Ghana's custody, in order to incentivize Ghanaian authorities to closely monitor the activities of the detainees. Excerpts from the letter were highlighted [here](#).

North Africa

On January 21st, protests over youth unemployment spread to several towns and cities across Tunisia, leading to the death of a police officer when the clashes in the town of Feriana turned violent. Demonstrations began in Tunisia's Kasserine region after a man was electrocuted while protesting at being rejected from a government job. Unemployment has been a growing problem since the country's 2011 revolution. More information was posted [here](#).

On January 22nd, ISIL posted a statement on Twitter claiming responsibility for an explosion in Giza, Egypt. The explosion occurred after a joint police force raided an apartment where Egyptian authorities claimed the banned Muslim Brotherhood was making and storing explosives. According to the Egyptian Interior Ministry, six people were killed and 13 others were injured. Meanwhile, ISIL claimed to have killed ten security officers and wounded 20 others. The full story is available [here](#).

On January 24th, eight Egyptian museum workers appeared in a disciplinary court to face charges of gross negligence related to the botched repair of the famed golden burial mask of King Tut. In 2014, the workers are thought to have knocked off the pharaoh's beard and left scratches on the face of the 3,300-year old mask. As the case moves forward, the workers face potential fines and dismissal. An article on the case was published [here](#).

On January 25th, U.N. Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Herve Ladsous briefed the U.N. Security Council on recent developments in Darfur. Under-Secretary-General Ladsous reported limited progress on resolving conflict in the region, with major armed movements and opposition parties continuing to boycott the current national dialogue framework. With the uptick in clashes, Under-Secretary-General noted the U.N. estimates tens, if not hundreds of thousands of Darfuris and been killed and close to two million displaced since 2003. Excerpts from the briefing were highlighted [here](#).

On January 25th, on the fifth anniversary of the 2011 uprising that toppled Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, Egyptian authorities stepped up security throughout Cairo. A heavy police presence was reported near Tahrir Square, where the uprising was centered. There were also reports of raids on homes throughout the capital, with security forces looking for activists thought to be planning demonstrations against Egyptian President Abdul Fattah Al-Sisi. The situation was described [here](#).

On January 26th, the Algerian civilian aviation authority suspended flights to Tripoli, Libya, effective January 29th. While no justification was provided for the suspension of service, the announcement came a few days after Algeria detained hundreds of Moroccans believed to be trying to travel to Libya to join ISIL fighters in Sirte. Details can be accessed [here](#).

On January 26th, panic spread throughout the Egyptian village of Mina Safour after dozens of houses were burnt in a series of mysterious fires. Police are investigating the incidents, but many villagers believe the cause of the fire is supernatural. As a result, several families in the area have abandoned their homes over fears they could be the next victims. More information can be found [here](#).

On January 27th, the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) expressed concern over the impact of the ongoing hostilities in Darfur on thousands of civilians who have been forced to flee their homes amid the surge in the conflict that began two weeks ago. According to OCHA, 19,000 civilians have fled into North Darfur state, and up to 15,000 into Central Darfur state. A more than 50 percent increase in movement followed reports of ongoing clashes in the Jebel Marra region and intensified aerial bombings. Details were posted [here](#).

On January 27th, the AfDB's Board of Directors approved a loan of \$112.3 million to Morocco for the improvement of infrastructure on the Tangier-Casablanca-Marrakech railway route. Allocated to the Moroccan National Railways Office (ONCF), the funds will be used to dual the line linking the cities of Settat and Marrakech, allowing for increased passenger and freight traffic along the corridor. A press release was issued [here](#).

On January 27th, the Tunisian Interior Ministry reported it had broken up a cell recruiting fighters to join ISIL's ranks in Libya and Syria. A Tunisian counter-terrorism unit dismantled a cell that included nine extremists in Bizerte. Upon their arrest, the recruiters confessed to supporting ISIL. For details, click [here](#).

On January 27th, Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir ordered the opening of the Sudanese border with South Sudan for the first time since the countries split in 2011. The announcement came just days after reports that South Sudan had ordered its troops to withdraw from the border and as President Bashir indicated he was considering lowering the fee paid by South Sudan for the use of Sudanese infrastructure to export oil. Developments were reported [here](#).

East Africa

On January 22nd, the Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) completed the third review of Tanzania's economic performance under the program supported by a Policy Support Instrument (PSI) approved in July 2014. While noting that macroeconomic performance in Tanzania remains strong, the Executive Board observed performance under the PSI has been mixed. As a result, the IMF encouraged better coordination of fiscal and monetary policy to help control inflation and encouraged authorities to put TANESCO, the public power utility, on sound financial footing. Feedback from the IMF was shared [here](#).

On January 22nd, Al Shabaab fighters attacked the Liido Beach restaurant in Somalia. According to witnesses, the extremists entered the restaurant from the beach, which has become a symbol for the resurgence of Mogadishu, shouting in Arabic as they indiscriminately forced people to their knees before shooting at them. It was estimated at least 20 people were killed in the attack. According to Somali Security Minister Abdirizak Omar Mohamed, the suspected leader of the attack was quickly brought into police custody. The situation was reported [here](#).

On January 22nd, the U.N. Security Council condemned the deadly Al Shabaab attack carried out on a beachside restaurant in Mogadishu, Somalia. Beyond offering condolences to those affected by the attack, the Security Council praised Somali security forces for their prompt response. The Security Council also underlined the need to bring the perpetrators of the attack to justice, in addition to other organizers and financiers of terrorism. Additional feedback can be seen [here](#).

On January 25th, Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika dissolved the country's Department of Intelligence and Security (DRS) and created a new agency, the Direction of Security Services, under direct control of the president. The move is seen as part of a trend in President Bouteflika's administration to ease the military out of politics. Retired DRS Chief General Athmane Tartag is expected to lead the new agency. More information can be accessed [here](#).

On January 25th, scientists in Kenya uncovered evidence of a massacre that occurred 10,000 years ago. The remains of 27 people from a Stone Age hunter-gatherer culture were unearthed at a site known as Naturuk in the northern part of the country. According to researchers, the fossils showed the people who were killed were attacked with arrows, clubs, and stone blades, representing the oldest evidence of human warfare. The full story is available [here](#).

On January 26th, OCHA warned that despite the response to El Nino-induced drought in Ethiopia, the developing emergency exceeds resources. As a result, the U.N. called for additional funding to support food distribution and

child protection in light of ongoing malnutrition and water shortages. The current appeal of \$1.2 billion for food relief for 10.2 million people is only a third funded. The situation was described [here](#).

On January 26th, critics of Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni argued the President treats the treasury as personal funds to support his effort to extend his three decades in office. President Museveni, who is running for reelection in the February 18th presidential contest, has denied the allegations and touted his achievements in bringing peace and stability to the country since he was first elected in 1986. For more information, click [here](#).

On January 27th, U.N. Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator Kyung-wha Kang completed a three-day visit to Eritrea, where she urged broader support for the Government's efforts to meet basic needs and build resilience in vulnerable communities. During her visit, Assistant Secretary-General Kang met with Minister for Foreign Affairs Osman Saleh, Head of Political Affairs of the People's Front for Democracy and Justice and Presidential Advisor Yemane Gebreab, Minister for Information Yemane Gebremeskel, Minister of Agriculture Arfaime Berhe, Minister of Health Amna Nurhusein, Minister of Education Semere Russom, and Minister of Labor and Human Welfare Kahsay Gerehiwet. Assistant Secretary-General Kang's trip to Eritrea was summarized [here](#).

On January 27th, Kenyan authorities launched an investigation into allegations the Supreme Court Judge Phillip Tunoi accepted a \$2 million bribe to rule in favor of Evans Kidero, whose election as Nairobi governor was challenged in 2014. Both Judge Tunoi and Governor Kidero have denied any wrongdoing. A committee to investigate the accusations will be appointed within seven days. An article on the allegations can be read [here](#).

On January 27th, five Kenyan police officers were killed when their truck hit an improvised explosive device (IED) planted on a road in Lamu by Al Shabaab fighters. Al Shabaab quickly claimed responsibility for the explosion, claiming to have killed eight soldiers. This represents the latest in a string of Al Shabaab attacks along Kenya's border with Somalia. The incident was reported [here](#).

On January 27th, Transparency International released its Corruption Perceptions Index 2015, covering the perceptions of public sector corruption in 168 countries. Somalia tied North Korea as the country with the most corruption, primarily due to the presence of conflict, poor governance, weak public institutions, and a lack of independent media. The Index's findings were analyzed [here](#).

West Africa

On January 21st, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon welcomed the holding of a trilateral ministerial meeting on the dispute between Equatorial Guinea and Gabon regarding the Mbanie, Cocotiers, and Congas islands. Secretary-General Ban congratulated both parties for their demonstrated political will to achieve a special agreement for submission to the International Court of Justice. Secretary-General Ban's remarks were recorded [here](#).

On January 21st, Africa's richest man, Aliko Dangote, and tech billionaire Bill Gates announced a \$100 million initiative aimed to cut malnutrition in Nigeria. The campaign will fund projects through 2020 aimed at eradicating malnutrition in children across the country. Nigeria ranks 12th in the world for countries with children who are unhealthily underweight. The project was launched [here](#).

On January 21st, Ivorian President Alassane Ouattara met with Pascal Affi Nguessan, leader of the opposition Ivorian Popular Front. At the end of the meeting, Nguessan reported real progress in the talks, which were centered on national reconciliation and the release of the remaining political prisoners arrested after disputed presidential elections in 2010 and 2011. Another meeting between the government and opposition groups is likely to be held within the next few weeks. More information was posted [here](#).

On January 21st, Senegalese Prime Minister Mahammad Boun Abdallah Dionne told parliament federal authorities will not extradite Papa Massata Diack, the son of former International Athletics Federation (IAAF) President Lamine Diack, wanted for alleged corruption and money laundering. Interpol issued an arrest warrant last month, adding that French authorities wanted Diack for prosecution. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On January 25th, U.N. Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Sahel Toby Lanzer concluded a visit to Mali, where he met with members of the Malian Government, local authorities, civil society organizations, and humanitarian partners. He also visited Gao and Kidal to meet people affected by the crisis in the country and to visit aid projects. At the end of his visit, Coordinator Lanzer reported both progress and challenges on security and access to basic services for crisis-affected communities and underscored the importance of full commitment from local and international authorities to move the country forwards. Coordinator Lanzer's observations were summarized [here](#).

On January 25th, *The Guardian* reported sales of rat poison have risen in Nigeria following an outbreak of Lassa fever that has killed at least 76 people and sparked fears of contagion across the country. According to Nigerian Health Minister Isaac Adewole, 212 suspected cases of the hemorrhagic virus have been recorded since November last year. Because the virus is spread through contact with food or household items contaminated with rat urine or feces, sales of poisons to kill rats have increased fourfold. An update on the situation in Nigeria was provided [here](#).

On January 26th, Nigerian Telecommunications Minister Adebayo Shittu announced President Muhammadu Buhari will make the final decision on a \$3.9 billion fine on South African cell operator MTN. Minister Shittu also said MTN might be advised to withdraw a court case filed against the fine to create a better environment for the resolution of the dispute. His comments were captured [here](#).

On January 26th, Senegal's national police force announced it had interrogated 925 people over the weekend in Dakar and Thies as part of an effort to prevent attacks by Islamist militants in the country in the wake of recent high profile attacks in Mali and Burkina Faso. Most of those questioned were subsequently released, but some were held and charged with a range of crimes not related to militant activity, such as drunkenness and traffic offenses. Senegal's national security campaign was described [here](#).

On January 27th, the Organization for the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa (OHADA) and the Government of Benin, in collaboration with the World Bank and the International Organization of La Francophonie, launched a regional workshop to share experiences on the implementation of the Entrepreneur Status in the OHADA space. The two-day workshop allowed OHADA member States to study Benin's approach to implementation. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On January 27th, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) released a video of Beatrice Stockly, a Swiss nun kidnapped three weeks ago in Timbuktu, Mali. The video, which is viewed as the latest evidence of the deterioration of the security situation in northern Mali, outlines AQIM's demands for Stockly's release, including the release of prisoners by the Malian Government. The video can be watched [here](#).

On January 28th, Gambian President Yahya Jammeh fired three cabinet ministers, including Minister of Fisheries Lamin Nyabally, Minister of Energy Edward Sanneh, and Minister of Presidential Affairs Yam Keita. President Jammeh also decided to merge the Ministries of Energy and Petroleum and to integrate the Ministry of Fisheries into the Ministry of Environment, Water, Resources, Park and Wildlife, and Climate Change. The changes were summarized [here](#).

On January 27th, West African talent recruitment agency Jobberman released the findings of a new survey examining the economic crisis in Nigeria. Notably, the survey found 47 percent of the country's university graduates are unemployed. By some estimates, Nigeria's educational institutions produce up to 500,000 graduates every year. The survey results were analyzed [here](#).

On January 28th, the International Criminal Court (ICC) opened the trial against former Ivorian President Laurent Gbagbo. Prosecutors accused President Gbagbo of using murders and gang rapes carried out by his supporters in 2010 and 2011 as tactics to cling to power after losing an election. Both President Gbagbo and his co-accused, youth leader Charles Ble Goude, pleaded innocent and said they did not recognize the charges. President Gbagbo is the highest ranked politician to ever appear before the ICC. The case was discussed [here](#).

[Sub-Saharan Africa](#)

On January 22nd, OCHA warned a spike in kidnappings and general insecurity in the eastern DRC continues to make the delivery of assistance a difficult task. OCHA raised its concern just days after Doctors Without Borders

(MSF) suspended its operations in the area in the wake of an attack on one of its convoys last month. According to the U.N., 7.5 million people in the DRC will require humanitarian assistance this year. Feedback from the U.N. can be seen [here](#).

On January 22nd, OHCHR expressed concern about developments in Malawi, after People's Party spokesperson Kenneth Msonda made comments calling for gay and lesbian people to be killed. According to OHCHR, Msonda posted comments on his personal social media earlier this month expressing his belief that LGBTI persons are worse than dogs. OHCHR also expressed concern that Malawi's director public prosecutions declined to take up a criminal case related to Msonda's comments. For details, click [here](#).

On January 22nd, the South African municipality of Uthukela announced a new policy scheme that will offer a grant to girls who remain virgins during their university studies. Under the policy, grant beneficiaries will be subject to regular virginity tests. The policy was immediately criticized by human rights groups who argued the new policy scheme would use taxpayer money to violate girls' rights. The grants were discussed [here](#).

On January 24th, Equatorial Guinea President Teodoro Obiang Nguema traveled to Harare to meet with Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe. Following their discussion, the two leaders called for U.N. reforms that would provide Africa with representation as a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council, giving the AU veto power. Their meeting came as President Mugabe prepares to hand over the rotating AU chairmanship to President Nguema. Their discussion was summarized [here](#).

On January 25th, South African authorities challenged Paralympian Oscar Pistorius' appeal against his conviction for the murder of his girlfriend, Reeva Steenkamp. The prosecutors challenging the appeal argued the Supreme Court of Appeal had correctly found Pistorius guilty. If his appeal fails, Pistorius faces a possible minimum 15-year jail sentence. Developments in the case were noted [here](#).

On January 25th, the South African Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) set to zero all leopard hunting permits and canceled all export permits for 2016, effectively banning the hunting of leopards in the country. The move follows an alert from South Africa's Scientific Authority that the number of the leopards in the country was unknown and that trophy hunting poses a high risk to the survival of the species. More information can be found [here](#).

On January 26th, IMF Deputy Managing Director Min Zhu departed for Botswana to attend a regional conference on Small and Middle-Income Countries (SMICs). While in Botswana, Director Zhu also met with President Ian Khama, senior government officials, and representatives of civil society and the private sector. Following his visit to Botswana, Director Zhu will travel on to Ghana, where he will deliver a keynote speech at a conference on the value of Enhanced Data for Better Macro-Policies in Africa. He will also meet with President John Dramani Mahama and other senior leaders, along with business leaders, economists, and civil society representatives. Director Zhu's travel was announced [here](#).

On January 26th, the ruling Congolese Party of Labor (PCT) officially designated incumbent President Denis Sassou Nguesso as its candidate for the March presidential election in the Republic of Congo (ROC). Having secured the right to seek a third consecutive term in a constitutional referendum last year, President Nguesso is expected to win reelection. An article on the presidential contest can be read [here](#).

On January 26th, police in Kigali, Rwanda shot and killed Muhammad Mugemangango, a deputy imam at Kimironko Mosque who was accused of recruiting Rwandan youths to join ISIL. While no formal charges had been brought against Mugemangango, he clashed with police forces when he tried to escape custody. According to police, the case remains under investigation. Details can be seen [here](#).

On January 27th, a document drafted by the DRC's National Independent Elections Commission (CENI) and published on Twitter said it would take 13 months and ten days to carry out a partial revision of voter lists, at a cost of \$122 million. The document further explained that a full revision of voter rolls would take 16 months and cost up to \$290 million. Critics of President Joseph Kabila have long feared he might use administrative procedures related to the elections to delay the 2016 presidential contest. The issue was discussed [here](#).

On January 27th, RwandAir, the state-run Rwandan airline, announced plans to add a European destination, such as London, Paris, or Frankfurt, to its flight plans this year. Additionally, CEO John Mirenge noted the company will expand its fleet by four aircraft this year, including purchases and leases from Airbus and Boeing, allowing RwandAir to carry a record 1 million passengers. An article on RwandAir's expansion plans was published [here](#).

On January 28th, Julius Malema, the leader of South Africa's Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) opposition party, called for all opposition parties to unite against the ruling African National Congress (ANC) in anticipation of municipal polls this year. The ANC remains dominant and is likely to maintain power. However, Malema argued the weak economy and the ANC's inability to produce results could cause the party to suffer at the polls in Johannesburg and Pretoria. Details were reported [here](#).

General Africa News

On January 22nd, the African Legal Support Facility (ALSF) and its partners concluded a five-day training focused on public-private partnerships for infrastructure projects. The training was attended by infrastructure experts from Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal, Togo, the ROC, Mauritania, and Nigeria. The workshop was designed to provide African governments with the capacity to structure effective public-private partnerships in order to efficiently bridge Africa's infrastructure financing needs. The training was highlighted [here](#).

On January 22nd, African capital market research group StratLink released a report titled, "January 2016 Africa Market Update: Navigating the Commodity Oddity: Speed Bump not Dead End." The report finds the lead growth economies in Africa, including Zambia, Angola, Tanzania, Rwanda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, Gabon, and Uganda, will continue to suffer from elevated monetary pressures, fiscal vulnerabilities, and the effects of falling global commodity prices. Additional data was analyzed [here](#).

On January 22nd, Coca Cola CEO Muhtar Kent discussed the company's growth in Africa. According to Kent, the company now has 145 bottling plants in Africa and employs over 70,000 people, making it one of the largest private employers on the continent. Further, he said Africa will continue to become a larger and larger part of Coca Cola's revenue. Kent's remarks were recorded [here](#).

On January 24th, *Africa Business Magazine* released its rankings of the top 100 companies to work for in Africa. Topping this year's list is Procter and Gamble, based on an independent survey of all 54 African markets. Also near the top of the list of the best employers were DSTv, Total, Shell, JP Morgan, Ecobank, General Electric (GE), and Dangote. The list was unveiled [here](#).

On January 25th, the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and its partners appealed to donor nations for more than half a billion dollars this year to fund assistance for thousands of people forced to flee conflicts in Nigeria and the CAR. According to UNHCR, the funding raised for both response plans will be used to provide protection, education, food, security, health and nutrition, livelihoods, shelter, basic aid and water, hygiene, and sanitation. More information can be found [here](#).

On January 25th, British Finance Minister George Osborne and tech billionaire Bill Gates announced a new partnership aimed at eradicating malaria. Over the next five years, the U.K. foreign aid budget will include more than \$500 million each year towards programs designed to eliminate the disease. Additional donations will follow from The Gates Foundation. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), there were 438,000 malaria deaths in 2015, and most of them were children in Africa. Details can be viewed [here](#).

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