



ML Strategies Update

David Leiter, djleiter@mlstrategies.com
Georgette Spanjich, gmspanjich@mlstrategies.com

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ML Strategies, LLC
701 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20004 USA
202 434 7300
202 434 7400 fax
www.mlstrategies.com

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Africa Update

Leading the News

Burundi

On December 30th, the African Union (AU) threatened to sanction rival factions in Burundi if they fail to attend the peace talks scheduled to take place in January. AU Commission Chairperson Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma warned all those whose action could jeopardize the inter-Burundian dialogue, including attacks by armed groups against government facilities and other targets will be subject to sanctions. Additionally, Chairperson Dlamini-Zuma continued to push Burundian authorities to accept the ramping up of the African Prevention and Protection Mission in Burundi (MAPROBU) to help maintain security. The AU's position was articulated [here](#).

On December 31st, United Nations (U.N.) Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon welcomed the resumption of talks between Burundian parties in Entebbe, Uganda under the leadership of East African Community (EAC) facilitator Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni. Secretary-General Ban called on all sides to engage in constructive dialogue to prevent renewed violence and collapse into civil war. Since President Pierre Nkurunziza's controversial decision to run for a third term, the U.N. estimates at least 400 people have been killed and 220,000 Burundians have fled to neighboring countries. More information can be found [here](#).

On January 5th, Permanent Secretary of the Burundian Foreign Affairs Ministry Joseph Bangurambona announced the Government of Burundi's decision not to participate in the peace talks with the opposition mediated by Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni scheduled to begin on January 6th. According to Permanent Secretary Bangurambona, the government opposed the talks because of the inclusion of individuals it believes are responsible for the violence in the country over the past several months, including Carine Kaneza, the leading representative of a local women's organization. Meanwhile, the opposition accused the Burundian Government of railroading the peace process as two people were injured in a grenade attack in Bujumbura. Developments in Burundi were noted [here](#).

Central African Republic

On December 30th, U.N. peacekeepers patrolled voting stations in the Central African Republic (CAR) as the country voted in presidential and legislative elections. Military and police units with the U.N. Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the CAR (MINUSCA) joined French soldiers and local security teams in monitoring the polls as part of a strategy intended to preempt elections violence. The elections in the CAR are widely viewed as a major step towards achieving stability after two years of intense fighting between Christians and Muslims in the country. For more information, click [here](#).

On December 31st, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said the December 30th presidential and legislative elections in the CAR were an undeniable success with a massive turnout after MINUSCA reported that polls closed in a positive atmosphere without any major security incidents. Despite the success of voting, U.N. Special Representative to the CAR Parfait Onanga-Anyanga expressed concern for reports that armed elements attacked Central African troops and MINUSCA police as they loaded electoral materials into trucks for processing. In response, U.N. officials called on all groups in the country to follow through on the first round of voting by selecting a new government and stressed that inclusive dialogue is vital to national reconciliation. Feedback from U.N. officials was provided [here](#).

On January 5th, U.N. Special Representative to the CAR and head of MINUSCA Parfait Onanga-Anyanga announced the U.N. is investigating new allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse and other misconduct by peacekeepers in the CAR. The latest accusations follow allegations that surfaced in spring 2014 implicating that international troops serving as peacekeepers had sexually abused children in the country in exchange for food or money. Special Representative Onanga-Anyanga also introduced new measures to help identify perpetrators, deter new cases, and protect whistleblowers. Details were posted [here](#).

On January 5th, 20 of the 30 candidates running for president in the December 30th elections in the CAR called for authorities to stop counting ballots, alleging voting irregularities. While the recent concerns about the vote signal the final results of the election are likely to be contested, some have suggested the demand to stop counting votes was orchestrated by candidates who had no chance of winning. As of Monday, 34 percent of the votes had been counted, with former Prime Minister Faustin Archange Touadera in the lead, followed by another former Prime Minister Anicet Georges Dologuele. Developments in the vote count were reported [here](#).

On January 6th, following the first round of voting in the CAR's presidential elections, U.N. Special Representative to the CAR Parfait Onanga-Anyanga met with 28 of the 30 presidential candidates in Bangui. Special Representative Onanga-Anyanga stressed the need for the electoral process to continue, while candidates committed to resolving any complaints with the processing of the election through the Constitutional Court. The meeting was noted [here](#).

On January 7th, contrary to demands made earlier this week that ballot counting in the CAR be stopped, nearly all of the 30 candidates running for president expressed support for the election and the resumption of ballot counting. As of Thursday, close to 77 percent of the votes cast in the December 30th election had been processed. The most recent tally has former Prime Minister Anicet Georges Dologuele ahead of former Prime Minister Faustin Archange Touadera. It is unlikely any of the other 28 candidates will become competitive as the remaining votes are counted. The latest developments in the vote count can be seen [here](#).

Libya

On January 2nd, U.N. Special Representative to Libya Martin Kobler held New Year's talks with a cross section of Libyan political leaders. Reflecting on 2015, Special Representative Kobler said the end of the year saw a ray of hope for the country with the signature of the Libyan Political Agreement to form a Government of National Accord. Special Representative Kobler also met with President of the Libyan House of Representatives (HOR) Agila Saleh and praised his acceptance and support for the agreement. Special Representative Kobler's comments were highlighted [here](#).

On January 4th, fighting between Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) fighters and members of the Petrol Facilities Guard militia broke out near the oil port in Sidra, Libya. The clashes began when ISIL militants launched a suicide bomb attack at a checkpoint entrance to the town, killing two guards, which was followed by an ambush by a convoy of ISIL vehicles that left another civilian and four ISIL members dead. Following the violence, Libyan authorities reported the extremists had been pushed out of Sidra, while ISIL claimed it had taken control of nearby Bin Jawad. An article on the clashes was published [here](#).

On January 5th, ISIL militants resumed shelling near the Libyan oil port of Es Sidra. According to security forces at the port, an oil storage tank was hit by a long-range rocket, causing a fire. The flames broke out just as local firefighters brought another oil tank fire started on Monday under control. An update on the situation was provided [here](#).

On January 6th, U.N. Special Representative to Libya Martin Kobler said the recent ISIL attacks on oil facilities in the country demonstrate the need for urgent implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement and the formation of the Government of National Accord. Special Representative Kobler said the oil resources sought by ISIL are the property of the Libyan people and future generations and all efforts must be undertaken to secure oil and to block ISIL from seizing it to finance its activities. Special Representative Kobler's comments were transcribed [here](#).

On January 6th, clashes between ISIL fighters and security forces worsened at the Libyan ports of Es Sidra and Ras Lanuf, with local guard reporting that four oil storage tanks had been set ablaze. As of the end of the day Tuesday, at least nine guards had been killed and more than 40 injured in the fighting. The latest developments can be seen [here](#).

On January 7th, a truck bomb exploded near a police base in Zilten, Libya, killing at least 60 police officers and wounding more than 200 others. The death toll from the attack is expected to climb. While no group immediately claimed responsibility for the bombing, local authorities observed that ISIL fighters have made recent efforts to gain a foothold in Zilten. The attack was reported [here](#).

On January 7th, the U.S. Department of State condemned the recent bombing of a security training center in Zilten Libya, as well as the attacks since January 4th on the oil terminals in Es Sidra and Ras Lanouf. The State Department observed these incidents show the urgent need for Libya's new leaders to formalize the Government of National Accord as outlined in the Libyan Political Agreement. State Department Spokesperson John Kirby noted the U.S. Government stands ready to help the new Presidency Council and other Libyan leaders implement the peace deal. A statement was issued [here](#).

Nigeria

On December 31st, admitting his government had gathered no new intelligence on the whereabouts of the more than 200 schoolgirls kidnapped from Chibok by Boko Haram almost two years ago, Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari announced his willingness to negotiate with any credible Boko Haram leadership for their release. President Buhari stipulated negotiations would only begin after Boko Haram had been able to prove the schoolgirls who remain missing are alive and safe. President Buhari's remarks were captured [here](#).

On January 7th, the U.S. Consulate in Lagos, Nigeria announced the U.S. Government is donating 24 mine-resistant, ambush-protected vehicles (MRAPs) to the Nigerian military to assist in the fight against Boko Haram. The MRAPs are estimated to be worth roughly \$11 million and will be integrated with additional U.S. support for the Nigerian military, including the provision of advisers, intelligence, training, and logistical support, in addition to humanitarian aid for those displaced by the Boko Haram insurgency. Details can be accessed [here](#).

West Africa Ebola Outbreak

On January 6th, the World Health Organization (WHO) updated its statistics on the number of Ebola cases in West Africa. For the week ending January 3rd, no new cases of Ebola were reported. On December 29th, the WHO declared that human-to-human transmission of Ebola had ended in Guinea after the completion of 42 days with zero cases since the last person to have Ebola tested negative twice. Liberia is on track to once again be declared Ebola-free on January 14th. Ebola transmission in Sierra Leone was declared over on November 7th. Additional analysis was provided [here](#).

On January 6th, the *New England Journal of Medicine* published a new study finding the transfusion of blood plasma collected from Ebola survivors is not effective in treating the virus. During the peak of the Ebola outbreak, the WHO suggested the plasma treatment as a top experimental therapy on the assumption that antibodies in survivors' blood could help neutralize the virus in infected patients. The latest research on the procedure was detailed [here](#).

African Migrant Crisis

On January 4th, Addul Rahman Haroun, the Sudanese man who walked through the Channel Tunnel in August to reach Britain from France, was granted asylum, permitting him to stay in the country. Haroun is one of thousands of

migrants that have reached Calais, France and are seeking to reach a better life in Britain. The full story is available [here](#).

United States – Africa Relations

White House

On December 30th, National Security Council (NSC) Spokesperson Ned Price published a statement on the arrest of journalists in Ethiopia. Spokesperson Price urged the Ethiopian Government to build on earlier developments by strengthening free speech protections and broadening democratic progress, and noted the continued stifling of independence voices will inhibit such progress, as well as development and economic growth. More specifically, the White House urged the release of journalists and all others imprisoned for exercising their right to free expression and discouraged Ethiopian authorities from using the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation as a mechanism to silence dissent. The full statement was posted [here](#).

State Department

On December 31st, Secretary of State John Kerry congratulated the people of Sudan on their celebration of 60 years of independence. Secretary Kerry noted the American people have a longstanding relationship with the Sudanese people and value their diversity, culture, and accomplishments over the past year. He said the U.S. will continue to work with the Sudanese people to address humanitarian crises, bring an end to conflicts, and encourage local development that benefits all its peoples. Secretary Kerry' remarks were recorded [here](#).

On January 2nd, the State Department issued a statement expressing disappointment following Rwandan President Paul Kagame's announcement of his intention to run for a third term in office. The State Department said President Kagame's decision ignores a historic opportunity to reinforce and solidify the democratic institutions that have been established in Rwanda over the past 20 years. Additionally, Spokesperson John Kirby noted the U.S. believes constitutional transitions of power are essential for strong democracies and that efforts by incumbents to change rules to stay in power weaken democratic institutions. Further, the State Department called for the Government of Rwanda to ensure and respect the rights of its citizens to freedom of expression, conscience, and peaceful assembly leading up to next year's presidential election and the parliamentary election in 2018. The full statement can be read [here](#).

On January 5th, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield met with Botswanan Ambassador to the U.S. David Newman at the Department of State. The meeting was noticed [here](#).

On January 5th-7th, U.S. Coordinator for Threat Reduction Programs Ambassador Bonnie Jenkins led a U.S. interagency delegation to Nairobi, Kenya to advance the ongoing Threat Reduction in Africa (TRIA) study. TRIA was organized by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) to promote coordination, increase collaboration, and encourage efficient, effective, and sustainable implementation of U.S. government threat reduction resources in Africa. While in Nairobi, the delegation consulted with U.S. Embassy personnel and Kenyan colleagues about programs in the areas of chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear security, as well as export controls and global health security. The trip was announced [here](#).

On January 7th, Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs Charles Rivkin met with Algerian Ambassador to the U.S. Madjid Bouguerra at the Department of State. The meeting was listed [here](#).

Department of Defense

On December 29th, senior enlisted leaders of the Djiboutian Armed Forces (FAD) visited Camp Lemonnier to meet with Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) leaders to enhance professional development. The program consisted of several briefings focused on the current situation in Somalia and efforts to neutralize Al Shabaab. The visit was summarized [here](#).

On December 31st, CJTF-HOA highlighted a recently concluded Security Assistance Training provided for members of the FAD. The three-week course aimed to assist the FAD in providing security services in support of the AU

Mission in Somalia. Training sessions focused on security functions, critical thinking, counterinsurgency operations, and briefings. Details can be seen [here](#).

On January 3rd, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Marine Corps General Joseph Dunford arrived in Stuttgart, Germany, where he visited U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) headquarters. Chairman Dunford met with AFRICOM Commander Army General David Rodriguez to discuss terrorism challenges on the continent, including the threats posed by Boko Haram and Al Shabaab. Their meeting was highlighted [here](#).

On January 3rd, David Kennedy, a spokesman for the U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia announced the U.S. Government has shut down its drone operations in the country. The drone base in Arba Minch was allegedly launched in 2011 and used to attack Al Shabaab positions in Somalia. According to Spokesperson Kennedy, bilateral discussions on defense cooperation resulted in consensus that the base was no longer needed. For details, click [here](#).

On January 6th, the Department of Defense (DOD) announced the transfer of two prisoners from the U.S. military prison at Guantanamo Bay (GTMO), Cuba to Ghana. Both inmates, Mahmud Umar Muhammad Bin Atef and Khalid Muhammad Salih Al-Dhuby are both from Yemen and have been held at the facility for 14 years. The Pentagon thanked the Government of Ghana for its humanitarian gesture and willingness to support the Obama Administration's ongoing efforts to close GTMO. A press statement was issued [here](#).

Office of the U.S. Trade Representative

On December 31st, Trevor Kincaid, a spokesman for the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) observed South Africa had not yet resolved outstanding issues related to chicken and beef imports from the U.S. to meet President Barack Obama's deadline to maintain all of its benefits under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). While South Africa opened a 65,000 ton quota for U.S. chicken on December 18th, U.S. producers still cannot ship to the country because of requirements surrounding the presence of salmonella. The situation was described [here](#).

On January 4th, in response to USTR delaying its final decision on suspending duty-free benefits for South African agricultural products under AGOA, South African Trade Minister Rob Davies noted that talks between U.S. and South African authorities were continuing. Minister Davies expressed optimism that with some flexibility from both sides and some extra time, the final touches to the agreement could be completed. Minister Davies' comments were captured [here](#).

On January 7th, South African Trade Minister Rob Davies reported he believed South Africa had met its obligations in resolving a dispute with the U.S. over farm exports, although he indicated South African authorities were awaiting official confirmation from USTR. This week, USTR granted South Africa additional time to resolve outstanding trade issues before restricting AGOA benefits. If South Africa's benefits under AGOA were to be restricted, as much as \$7 million could be at stake. The latest developments were reported [here](#).

U.S. Trade and Development Agency

On January 4th, the U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) released its FY15 Annual Report. This year's report included examples of projects that have advanced economic growth in the U.S. and abroad by bringing U.S. private sector solutions to development challenges. In particular, USTDA called attention to its efforts to electrify villages in Rwanda with new hydropower generation and to train officials in Botswana on value-based procurement methods that can improve the outcomes of local infrastructure projects. The full report can be downloaded [here](#).

On January 5th, USTDA announced plans to expand its investments in sustainable energy projects in sub-Saharan Africa and issued a solicitation for Power Africa project proposals from African project sponsors and U.S. companies working with African partners. Under President Barack Obama's Power Africa initiative, USTDA is looking to invest in critical, early-stage planning to advance new power generation, transmission and distribution. Project proposals are due no later than February 19th to be considered for funding. More information can be accessed [here](#).

Department of Justice

On December 5th, the Sudanese Government argued the Second Circuit court must rehear the appeal in the USS Cole case or risk putting the U.S. in violation of the Vienna Convention. While victims of the bombing claim the court should not grant rehearing after issuing a \$315 million judgement, U.S. and Sudanese officials have since raised questions regarding how the lawsuit was served to Sudan's Embassy in the U.S. The Vienna Convention establishes immunity and other special rights for diplomatic missions and agents. The full story is available [here](#).

Federal Aviation Administration

On January 7th, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) published a final rule expanding a prohibition against certain flights in Somalia's airspace. In issuing the rule, the FAA noted the security situation in Somalia remains unstable and allowing commercial aircraft to operate in Somalia's airspace at low altitudes would come with unacceptable risk. The rule can be downloaded [here](#).

Congress

On January 4th, Senate Armed Services Committee Ranking Member Jack Reed (D-RI) departed on overseas travel including a visit to the Horn of Africa. Senator Reed visited Somalia and Djibouti, where he met with foreign leaders, diplomats, and U.S. military personnel. U.S. military personnel are currently deployed to Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti and have been flying drones and conducting counterterrorism operations in Somalia. Senator Reed's travel was outlined [here](#).

On January 4th, House Select Committee on Benghazi Press Secretary Matt Wolking released a statement announcing the upcoming private testimony of additional witnesses. This month, the Committee is scheduled to receive testimony from former Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) David Petraeus, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for International Programs for Diplomatic Security Charlene Lamb, former Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, and former Chief of Staff at DOD Jeremy Bash. The schedule was posted [here](#).

On January 6th, Democrats on the House Select Committee on Benghazi issued a press release marking the 609th day since the authorization of the Committee, noting the Committee has now existed longer than the 9/11 Commission, which was created to investigate the September 2001 terrorist attacks in the U.S. Additionally, Democrats noted the Committee has now spent more than \$5.5 million. The full press release can be read [here](#).

2016 Presidential Contest

On January 3rd, Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump appeared on CBS's "Face the Nation," where he responded to his involuntary appearance in a new recruitment video released by Al Shabaab. Trump said the video, which shows him advocating for a temporary shutdown of U.S. borders, demonstrates that terrorism is a problem. Trump's response to the video was detailed [here](#).

On January 4th, Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump released his first television ad. The ad purports to show illegal immigration along the southern U.S. border with Mexico, but instead shows video footage of Moroccans crossing the border into Melilla, a small Spanish enclave on the mainland of Morocco. Migrants entering in to Melilla are considered to be entering into Spain while they remain on the African continent. The discrepancy in the ad was highlighted [here](#).

North Africa

On December 30th, Facebook reported its "Free Basics" program has been shut down in Egypt. "Free Basics," formerly known as Facebook's Internet.org project, was designed to provide free yet limited access to Facebook and some other online content. Company officials were not immediately able to determine why the internet service stopped working, but noted the program has received some criticism in Egypt from net neutrality activists. The situation was described [here](#).

On January 2nd, Mauritanian authorities announced they were hunting for an Islamist militant who escaped from prison where he was awaiting execution for his part in a 2011 plot to assassinate President Mohamed Ould Abdel

Aziz. Government officials who appeared on public television urged residents to provide information on the escapee, without providing details on when or how he escaped. More information was posted [here](#).

On January 4th, Sudan followed the lead of Saudi Arabia and Bahrain in severing diplomatic relations with Iran by expelling the Iranian Ambassador to Khartoum. Tensions arose between Saudi Arabia and Iran following the execution of a leading Shia cleric by Saudi authorities. Sudan's decision to end its relationship with Iran is seen as the latest move in a gradual trend of distancing itself from Tehran. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On January 4th, Doctors Without Borders (MSF) warned the malaria outbreak in South Sudan could reach unprecedented levels of severity in 2016. Malaria is endemic in South Sudan and is already considered the leading cause of death and illness. For the most recent reporting period, the number of malaria cases in most areas has doubled, and in some quadrupled, compared with the same reporting period last year. The outbreak has also been made worse by a shortage of supplies, affecting health workers' ability to provide appropriate care. The malaria outbreak was discussed [here](#).

On January 5th, Algerian Cabinet Director Ahmed Ouyahia introduced a series of draft constitutional reforms, expected to be taken up in parliament later this month. The effort to update Algeria's constitution is intended to deepen the separation of powers in the country's government and help stabilize a potential political transition should President Abdelaziz Bouteflika choose to step down. President Bouteflika suffered a stroke in 2013 and has seldom made public appearance since. The proposed reforms include a two-year presidency limit, an obligatory consultation with parliament on the nomination of prime ministers, and making Amazigh an official language. More information can be found [here](#).

On January 5th, *Daily Nation* reported Kenya is in the final stage of issuing a license adopting genetically modified cotton. In October, the Kenyan subsidiary of U.S. multinational agrochemical and agricultural biotechnology company Monsanto submitted an application to the National Biosafety Authority seeking to release its genetically modified seeds to the market. If the approval is granted, Kenya will join South Africa, Burkina Faso, and Sudan in allowing for genetically modified crops. The full story is available [here](#).

On January 6th, Mexican Foreign Minister Claudia Ruiz Massieu indicated Egypt's investigation into a September airstrike on a group of Mexican tourists in Egypt is nearly concluded. During the incident, eight Mexicans and four Egyptians were killed when Egyptian security forces bombed their vehicles from the air during a lunch stop in Egypt's Western desert. The Egyptian Tourism Ministry has previously said administrative agencies and the travel agency would ultimately be found responsible for the deaths. An update on the investigation was provided [here](#).

On January 6th, Mohsen Marzouk a left-leaning and prominent member of Tunisia's ruling Nidaa Tounes party said he plans to break away from the party and form a new political movement. Interparty tensions have been high since the onset of a dispute last year caused by an alleged effort by President Beji Caid Essebsi to change regulations to give himself greater control over the party. Marzouk is expected to formally announce his exit from the party at a Nidaa Tounes conference scheduled for January 10th. An article on the dispute can be read [here](#).

On January 7th, unidentified gunmen on motorcycles opened fire on tourists as they boarded a bus in Cairo. The attack took place at a hotel on a road close to the pyramids, a popular tourist destination. According to security officials, no casualties were reported. The shooting was detailed [here](#).

On January 7th, Tunisian Prime Minister Habib Essid announced a cabinet reshuffling, appointing 12 new ministers in a move aimed at boosting the effectiveness of the government at fighting extremists in the country. Among the new designations was the appointment of Hedi Majdoub to serve as the new Interior Minister and former presidential advisor Kemais Jinaou to serve as Foreign Minister. For more information, click [here](#).

[East Africa](#)

On January 2nd, a hand grenade attack killed two students and injured six on the campus of Dilla University, located just south of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The attack took place three weeks after a bomb was thrown at a mosque in Addis Ababa, injuring more than 20 people. While police officials declined to disclose details of the attack, they noted an unspecified number of suspects were in police custody. The incident was reported [here](#).

On January 2nd, a suicide bomber attacked the popular Village Restaurant in Mogadishu, Somalia, killing himself and at least three others. According to witnesses, the attacker wore a business suit over his suicide vest and detonated the explosives open entering the restaurant, which is located across the street from Somalia's National Theater. The restaurant has previously been targeted by extremists. Somali Information Minister Mohamed Abdi Hayir blamed the suicide bombing on Al Shabaab. More information can be accessed [here](#).

On January 3rd, Tanzanian President John Magufuli presided over a signing ceremony in which newly appointed cabinet officials were asked to sign an integrity document and read the signed statement aloud, marking the first time Tanzanian officials have been asked to sign such a pledge in public. The move is viewed as part of President Magufuli's anti-corruption agenda. Details were shared [here](#).

On January 4th, Kenya's Garissa University College officially reopened, with staff reporting to work for the first time since Al Shabaab attacked the campus early last year, killing nearly 150 students and wounding more than 100 others. Students are expected to return to school next week. Following the university's closure, roughly 650 students were offered places at a sister campus in Eldoret to continue their studies. The school's reopening was noted [here](#).

On January 5th, Kenyan authorities announced the arrest of a suspected Al Shabaab fighter in Mombasa, as well as the recovery of weapons they believe were intended for use in aborted New Year's Eve attacks. While one extremist was detained, officials reported that four other suspects had escaped the raid, including two Al Shabaab militants who were wanted for their role in recent terrorist attacks in Garissa and Lamu. The raid was announced [here](#).

On January 5th, *Ventures* praised Uganda for topping the list of African countries included on the Economist Intelligence Unit's 2015 Quality of Death Index, which gathers data on palliative care globally. Uganda, which ranked 35th overall, was specifically recognized for funding the purchase of morphine and providing it for free to those who need the drug, as well as training nurses and other medical and clinical assistants to prescribe the drug. End-of-life care in Uganda was analyzed [here](#).

On January 6th, the Government of Djibouti cut diplomatic ties with Iran, following in the steps of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Sudan. Saudi Arabia dissolved its diplomatic relations with Iran earlier this week after Iranian protestors stormed its diplomatic facility in Tehran. More information can be found [here](#).

On January 6th, Kenyan Transport Cabinet Secretary James Macharia said direct flights between Kenya and the U.S. could begin as soon as May. Currently, passengers traveling between the countries must connect through airports in countries where civil aviation authorities have been approved by the FAA. Direct flights between Kenya and the U.S. were stopped in the 1980s as a result of the Kenya Civil Aviation Authority (KCAA) failing to pass security and safety audits conducted by U.S. officials. The issue was highlighted [here](#).

On January 5th, Director General of the Communications Authority of Kenya (CA) Francis Wangusi accused the government of restricting the regulator's ability to manage competition through recent legislation. The newly adopted policies require CA to involve the country's competition authority and the Ministry of Information and Communication in its activities to clamp down on unfair competition in the communications sector. An article on the accusations can be read [here](#).

On January 7th, Kenyan authorities sentenced Muslim school teacher Salim Mohamed Wabwire to 20 years in prison for teaching her students that all Christians should be killed. Wabwire previously faced charges of serving as a recruiter for Al Shabaab, although those charges were ultimately dropped. An article on his arrest was published [here](#).

[West Africa](#)

On December 31st, the U.N. Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) dispatched a preliminary fact-finding team to look into allegations that UNMIL military personnel were involved in the beating of a teenage boy that took place in Bong Country in early December. UNMIL reported the victim remains in serious condition and U.N. personnel were working to facilitate the transfer of the patient on humanitarian grounds from Phebe Hospital to JFK Hospital in Monrovia. More information can be seen [here](#).

On January 1st, Ghanaian Power Minister Kwabena Donkor tendered his resignation after failing to resolve the electricity crisis in the country, which is now entering into its third year. Last February, Minister Donkor pledged to address the power crisis by December 31st, a deadline which he missed. His resignation was quickly accepted by President John Mahama, who plans to seek re-election this year and was dissatisfied with Minister Donkor's performance. An article on the resignation as published [here](#).

On January 1st, more than 1,000 people attended the unveiling of a 28-foot tall statute of Jesus in Abajah, Nigeria, the largest on the continent. While Obinna Onuoha, the Nigerian businessman who commissioned the statute said the objective was to show that different religions can peacefully co-exist, the statute has been met with mixed reactions. Nigeria is largely split between a relatively prosperous Christian south and a poorer Muslim north. The full story is available [here](#).

On January 3rd, Sebastien Ajavon, a prominent businessman in Benin, announced he will run for president as an independent candidate in the February elections. Incumbent President Thomas Boni Yayi is barred from running for another term under the country's constitution and has opted not to seek amendments that would allow him to extend his rule. Prime Minister Lionel Zinsou has previously said he will seek the presidency on behalf of Benin's ruling party. The presidential contest in Benin was analyzed [here](#).

On January 4th-9th, International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Christine Lagarde visited Nigeria and Cameroon to engage with policymakers and other stakeholders in both countries and from the region and to underline the IMF's strong relationship with its African member countries. In Abuja, Director Lagarde was scheduled to meet with Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari and other senior leaders, along with business leaders, prominent women, legislators, and civil society representatives. In Yaounde, Director Lagarde planned to meet with Cameroonian President Paul Biya and his economic team, as well as private sector executives, women leaders, and other members of Cameroonian society. She was also scheduled to meet with Finance Ministers from the six member countries of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC). Director Lagarde's visit to West Africa was outlined [here](#).

On January 5th, the World Bank called attention to the Second Sustainable and Participatory Energy Management Project (PROGEDE III) in Senegal, which is allowing women in Kaffrine to break down gender stereotypes, reform the charcoal value chain, and boost village incomes. While charcoal production has traditionally been a male activity, PROGEDE III has sought to involve women in the decision making process while also protecting the environment and restoring Senegal's forest resources. Details were shared [here](#).

On January 5th, the World Bank profiled the Rural Access and Mobility Project (RAMP) in Kaduna state, Nigeria. The road development project has helped improve access roads in rural communities, reducing transportation costs, sparking business development, and increasing school enrollment and attendance, especially among girls. The \$60 million project has also alleviated transportation challenges during the rainy season. More information can be found [here](#).

On January 5th, the International Organization of the Francophone (OIF) issued a report certifying Niger's electoral register for the presidential elections scheduled for February 21st. The voting roll was recently updated to eliminate an estimated 300 ghost polling stations and to correct the double counting of some 25,000 voters. Incumbent President Mahamadou Issoufou will stand for reelection and is favored to win. Preparations for the vote were highlighted [here](#).

On January 5th, Guinean Prime Minister Mamady Youla appointed his new cabinet consisting of 16 ministers. Notably, the new cabinet includes key roles for women, such as Malado Kaba, who was appointed Minister of Economy and Finance. Other cabinet members include former Minister of Agriculture Makale Camara, who will serve as Foreign Minister, and Abdoulaye Magassouba, who will serve as Minister of Mines and Geology. The new cabinet was profiled [here](#).

On January 5th, *Quartz Africa* reported that a memo leaked by the Gambian Government included an executive directive ordering all female staff at government ministries to cover their hair during working hours. The memo has come under heavy criticism, especially as Gambia passed fairly progressive women's rights legislation banning female genital mutilation (FGM) at the end of the year. An article on women's issues in Gambia can be read [here](#).

On January 5th, Medical Director for the Federal Medical Center in Jalingo, Nigeria Wiza Inusa provided an update on the Lassa Fever outbreak that began in Taraba state on December 25th. Inusa noted the hospital had recorded a total of five cases and three mortalities. He urged the public not to panic, but encouraged basic hygienic procedures to contain the virus. The situation was described [here](#).

On January 6th, Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf expressed support for reducing the presidential term of office from two, six-year terms to two, four-year terms. The proposal was first put forward by a constitutional review commission established by President Sirleaf last year. The commission also recommended reducing the term of office for senators and representatives. The full story is available [here](#).

On January 6th, the German cabinet approved plans to send up to 650 soldiers to Mali as part of a plan to ramp up the U.N. peacekeeping force in the country. The new German troops deployed to Mali will be stationed primarily in the northern part of the country, which has been subject to violence perpetrated by Islamist extremists. Details were shared [here](#).

On January 6th, Ivorian President Alassane Ouattara accepted the resignation of his government and prepared to select a new administration. President Ouattara was reelected for a second, five-year term in October, winning nearly 84 percent of the vote. In Cote d'Ivoire, it is traditional for reelected presidents to appoint a new government at the start of a new term. In his recent campaign, President Ouattara pledged to reduce poverty and foster ethnic and political reconciliation throughout the country. The reshuffling of the government was discussed [here](#).

On January 6th, dissidents from Benin's ruling party and opposition leaders claimed Prime Minister Lionel Zinsou, who current President Thomas Boni Yayi has endorsed to succeed him after two terms in office, would be a disastrous leader. The opposition claimed President Boni Yayi is only supporting Prime Minister Zinsou as a means to cover up financing crimes he committed while in office. The objection to Prime Minister Zinsou's candidacy can be seen [here](#).

On January 7th, IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde concluded her visit to Nigeria. Following meetings with Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari, Finance Minister Kemi Adeosun, and Central Bank Governor Godwin Emefiele, Managing Director Lagarde reflected on her discussions regarding how to maintain economic progress in Nigeria, while making the transition to more inclusive and sustainable growth. She noted that she used her visit to encourage Nigerian authorities to focus on improving the competitiveness of the Nigerian economy, including in the infrastructure, power, transportation, and housing sectors. Managing Director Lagarde's visit to Nigeria was summarized [here](#).

Sub-Saharan Africa

On December 30th, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon welcomed the inauguration of Roch Marc Christian Kabore as President of Burkina Faso, officially ending the 27-year rule of former President Blaise Compaore. Secretary-General Ban observed the political transition in Burkina Faso sets an example of movement away from tension and disputed elections in the sub-Saharan Sahel region. Additionally, Secretary-General Ban praised the Burkinabe opposition for their acceptance of the results of the November 29th polls. His comments were recorded [here](#).

On December 30th, Reverend Canon Mpho Tutu, the daughter of Nobel Peace Prize winner Archbishop Desmond Tutu married her partner Marceline Van Furth, who holds the Desmond Tutu Chair in Medicine at Vrije University in the Netherlands. Their union is one of the first same-sex marriages involving a high-profile public figure in South Africa. South Africa became the fifth country in the world to legalize same-sex marriage in 2006. The full story is available [here](#).

On December 31st, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) officially closed its doors after delivering 45 judgments to those guilty for crimes against humanity committed during the Rwandan genocide. During two decades of work, the ICTR sentenced 61 people to terms of up to life imprisonment for their roles in the massacre of Tutsis by Hutu extremists. Fourteen accused were acquitted and ten others referred to national courts. The work of the ICTR was summarized [here](#).

On January 1st, Zimbabwean Finance Minister Patrick Chinamasa hiked fines for traffic violations as part of a new strategy to raise government revenue. The fines for speeding, running red lights, and other infractions were increased by 100 percent or more, jumping from roughly \$20 to \$100. The policy change was met with extreme criticism from motorists who claimed they could not afford the new fines. Details were shared [here](#).

On January 4th, Zambian authorities modified the country's constitution, setting August 11th as the date for this year's presidential and parliamentary elections. The amendment sets a fixed date for elections, which were previously set by the president. To coincide with the announcement of the elections, Zambian President Edgar Lungu, who is expected to run in the presidential contest, announced the reversal of an increase in electricity tariffs. President Lungu narrowly defeated opposition candidate Hakainde Hichilema at the polls last January. For more information, click [here](#).

On January 5th, Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe promoted Air Force of Zimbabwe (AFZ) group captain Ellen Chiweshe to the rank of Air Commodore, making her the first woman to hold such a high rank in the AFZ. In conferring the rank, Air Force Commander Air Marshal Perrance Shiri said the AFZ is working towards ensuring gender parity and urged female officers to work hard to attain high ranks. More information can be accessed [here](#).

On January 5th, Zimbabwean Agriculture Minister Joseph Made said the government has set aside \$260 million to important as much as 700,000 tons of maize this year. Last year, Zimbabwe imported only 100,000 tons of maize, but Minister Made noted this year the country has received less than three quarters of the rainfall needed to sustain crops and prevent hunger in November and December. The dry spell in Zimbabwe was discussed [here](#).

On January 5th, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) Justice Minister Alex Thambwe announced plans to release 2,000 prisoners later this month as part of an effort to reduce overcrowding in the country's jails. The move is also expected to alleviate some political tensions, as human rights groups have repeatedly called for the release of individuals they argued were detained for opposing any effort by President Joseph Kabila to stay in power beyond the end of his term in December. For details, click [here](#).

On January 5th, new research found that sub-Saharan Africa may be most vulnerable to bat-to-human disease transmission, which could lead to deadly outbreaks. The region was identified as being especially susceptible to zoonotic virus transmission due to the large number of bat viruses found locally, increasing population pressures, and the common practice of consuming bat meat. The research was analyzed [here](#).

On January 6th, Grain South Africa reported the country may need to import as much as five million tons of maize this year due to drought conditions in the country. This is the equivalent of roughly half of the Country's maize requirements. Abnormally dry conditions in South Africa have been exacerbated by the El Nino phenomena. The situation was described [here](#).

On January 7th, Burkinabe President Roch Marc Christian Kabore appointed economist Paul Kaba Thieba to serve as his prime minister. While Prime Minister Thieba has little experience in government, he has worked for many years as an economist for the West African Central Bank (BCEAO). He will now be charged with forming President Kabore's administration. Prime Minister Thieba's appointment was announced [here](#).

On January 7th, Rwandan Hutu rebels with the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) killed 14 ethnic Nande civilians and injured nine others in an ambush on the town of Lubero in the eastern DRC. Local authorities suspected the attack was orchestrated in revenge for a series of attacks Nande militias recently carried out on FDLR positions. The fighting was reported [here](#).

On January 7th, Johannesburg, South Africa recorded a record high temperature of 99 degrees, according to the South African Weather Service. The recent heat wave is tied to a persistent drought that has restricted maize production in the country. More information on the weather patterns in South Africa can be accessed [here](#).

General Africa News

On January 5th, in the wake of rumors that U.S. singer Beyonce was planning to make a film about Saartjie Baartman, a representative for Beyonce clarified the singer is not connected to the project, but believes Baartman's

is an important story to be told. Baartman was an African woman who was exhibited across Britain by Hendrik Cezar between 1810 and 1814. Details were posted [here](#).

On January 7th, television streaming company Netflix announced the extension of its services to 130 new countries, including all 54 nations in Africa. The news, which broke at the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas, follows weeks of speculation that South Africa was in the pipeline to gain access to Netflix services in early 2016. The availability of new streaming services on the continent was overwhelmingly welcomed by consumers on Twitter. Details can be seen [here](#).

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