



ML Strategies Update

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Africa Update

Leading the News

West Africa Ebola Outbreak

On December 31st, the United Nations (U.N.) World Health Organization (WHO) reported a spike in Ebola infection rates in Liberia's Eastern border region. The spike is attributed to close-knit, porous border communities and the difficulty of convincing response workers to travel to remote areas. Meanwhile, the number of Ebola cases is fluctuating in Guinea and decreasing in Liberia. The WHO's updated Ebola statistics can be found [here](#).

On December 31st, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) issued an updated fact sheet on the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. The latest fact sheet highlights efforts to control the transmission of Ebola in Sierra Leone, including by the Government of Sierra Leone implementing a temporary lockdown in the country's Northern Province on December 25th. Additionally, the fact sheet emphasizes USAID's efforts to open a new treatment center in Liberia's Sinje town, as well as the opening of a U.S. Government-supported laboratory in Liberia. The fact sheet can be downloaded [here](#).

On January 2nd, the outgoing head of the U.N. Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER), Anthony Banbury, gave a press conference in which he praised the international community's response to the Ebola outbreak and stressed that complete eradication was the only acceptable outcome in the battle against the disease. Special Representative Banbury cited several challenges to combating Ebola, including the geographical dispersion of the disease and the difficulty of changing community behaviors. Further excerpts from Special Representative Banbury's statement on the U.N.'s fight against Ebola can be read [here](#).

On January 2nd, Carol Han, a Press Officer for the USAID Ebola Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) authored a post for USAID's *Impact Blog* on the construction of Ebola treatment units (ETUs) in Liberia. Because temperatures in Liberia routinely climb into the 90s, the outsides of the ETUs have been lined with bamboo to help absorb the heat. Additionally, all of the construction materials used to build ETUs were purchased locally as part of an effort to keep costs down while also helping the community. The blog can be accessed [here](#).

On January 3rd, the new Head of UNMEER, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, arrived in Accra, Ghana. Special Representative Ould Cheikh Ahmed praised UNMEER's response to the Ebola epidemic and called for the eradication of the Ebola virus. Special Representative Ould Cheikh will replace outgoing head Anthony Banbury, who also spoke at the event in Accra. Excerpts from his statement are available [here](#).

On January 4th, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) responded to an article published in *The Lancet* journal on the IMF's response to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. According to the IMF, the article included a number of factual inaccuracies. For example, the IMF noted that health care expenditures increased faster in low-income countries affected by Ebola with IMF-supported programs than those without. In addition, the IMF stated it is not correct to say the IMF requires caps on the public sector wage bill. The article can be read [here](#). The IMF's response to the article can be accessed [here](#).

On January 4th, the Royal Free Hospital in London reported deterioration in the condition of Pauline Cafferkey, a British nurse who was diagnosed with Ebola after returning from volunteering with Save the Children in Sierra Leone. Despite having received experimental antiviral drug, ZMapp, and blood transfusions from British Ebola survivor William Pooley, Cafferkey's health status was updated to critical. Cafferkey's is the second case of Ebola in the United Kingdom (U.K.). The full story is available [here](#).

On January 4th, a U.S. health care worker exposed to Ebola in Sierra Leone arrived at the Nebraska Medical Center's Biocontainment Unit for observation and potential treatment. While the unidentified patient had not yet tested positive for Ebola, health workers on site took the same precautions that were taken with Dr. Richard Sacra, Ashoka Mukpo, and Dr. Martin Salia, three patients previously treated at the facility for the virus. Details were shared [here](#).

On January 5th, Liberia announced plans to reopen schools in February; six months after the government mandated their closure due to the Ebola outbreak. The rate of new Ebola cases has slowed in recent weeks, allowing authorities to assess roughly 500 schools across the country for reopening. More on the progress in the fight against Ebola in Liberia can be read [here](#).

On January 5th, the *Washington Post* reported that hundreds of U.S. service members have returned to the U.S. in recent days after serving as part of Operation United Assistance, where they helped to construct Ebola treatment units and ship supplies in West Africa. Upon returning to the U.S., all military personnel deployed as part of operation United Assistance have undergone a 21-day controlled monitoring regimen. The U.S. military recently completed the construction of the last of 17 planned ETUs. While military personnel had been training health care workers to staff the ETUs, this mission has now shifted back to the WHO. An update on Operation United Assistance can be seen [here](#).

On January 6th, the new head of UNMEER Special Representative Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed departed on his first tour of the Ebola stricken region of West Africa. During his visit to Liberia, Special Representative Ould Cheikh Ahmed met with President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, representatives from the Ministry of Health, and representatives of NGOs. During his meeting with President Sirleaf, Special Representative Ould Cheikh Ahmed called for renewed efforts to re-establish basic social services, strengthen health services, and support economic activity. Joined by U.N. Special Envoy on Ebola David Nabarro, Special Representative Ould Cheikh Ahmed also visited a treatment center, as well as the Grand Cape Mount region, which has recently seen a surge in new Ebola cases. Observations from Special Representative Ould Cheikh Ahmed's visit to Liberia were recorded [here](#).

On January 6th, the WHO released an update on the number of reported Ebola cases in West Africa. In total, there have been 20,712 reported cases and at least 8,219 deaths in the three most-affected West African nations. Guinea has seen 2,775 cases and 1,781 deaths, while Liberia has reported 8,157 cases and 3,496 deaths. Sierra Leone has recorded 9,780 cases and 2,943 deaths. Additional statistics can be viewed [here](#).

On January 6th, USAID promoted an International Medical Corps blog post on the NGO's efforts to treat patient infected with Ebola at an ETU in Bong County, Liberia. This particular ETU has discharged 74 survivors. International Medical Corps is operating an additional ETU in Margibi County, Liberia, and has trained over 150 health care and other workers in Liberia, including senior management and experts from the Liberian Ministry of Public Works, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, and the Ministry of

Defense. The blog post can be viewed [here](#).

On January 6th, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) ended Ebola-related airport screening procedures for travelers arriving from Mali. Travelers from Mali will no longer be subject to monitoring for possible symptoms of Ebola upon arrival and will no longer be required to enter the U.S. through one of five designated airports. The requirements have been lifted because two 21-day incubation cycles have passed since the last Ebola patient in Mali had contact with someone not wearing personal protective equipment (PPE). More information can be found [here](#).

On January 6th, Johnson & Johnson (J&J) began clinical trials of its experimental Ebola vaccine. The vaccine uses a booster from Denmark's Bavarian Nordic, making it the third such shot to enter human testing. The drug joins two other experimental vaccines already in clinical development: one from GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) and one from NewLink Genetics Corp. and Merck. More on the drug's Phase I testing and anticipated distribution capacity can be read [here](#).

On January 7th, *The Daily Beast* profiled all three major pharmaceutical companies that have taken the lead in developing an Ebola vaccine. Human trials of J&J's two-shot, experimental Ebola vaccine launched this week in the U.K. Meanwhile, human clinical trials for the vaccine developed by GSK and the U.S. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), which targets two different strains of Ebola, began in August. Human trials for the VSV-Zebov vaccine, developed by NewLink Genetics Corp. and licensed by Merck with support from the Public Health Agency of Canada, are scheduled to resume this week using a lower dosage after initial trial participants complained of joint pain. The full article was published [here](#).

On January 8th, the WHO reported the transmission of Ebola may be slowing in Sierra Leone. While officials are still reporting close to 250 new confirmed cases each week, there are signs that case incidence in Sierra Leone may be levelling off. Meanwhile, since the start of the New Year, Liberia has reported eight new confirmed cases of Ebola and 40 probable cases, down from a peak of 300 new cases reported each week in August and September. These announcements came as the WHO hosted a meeting of representatives from major drug makers, health authorities, and national regulatory agencies to access clinical trials of experimental Ebola vaccines. An update from the WHO was provided [here](#).

On January 8th, U.S. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel announced an extension of the review of the Ebola quarantine policy for U.S. military personnel returning from West Africa, allowing the Joint Chiefs of Staff until the end of the month to make a recommendation on the continuation of the policy. In October, the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommended that all troops deployed as part of Operation United Assistance be isolated for monitoring for 21 days upon their return to the U.S. About 450 troops are currently in isolation, while 2,367 troops remain in West Africa. More information can be viewed [here](#).

The Gambia

On January 2nd, Mohammed Ibn Chambas, the top U.N. official in West Africa, condemned the recent coup attempt in The Gambia on December 30th. The attempt took place while President Yahya Jammeh was out of the country and involved gunfire near the presidential palace in the capital of Banjul. More on the coup attempt and excerpts from Ibn Chambas statement are available [here](#).

On January 5th, the U.S. Department of Justice announced a criminal complaint charging Cherno Njie and Papa Faal for their involvement in the attempted coup in The Gambia. According to the State Department, U.S. law enforcement action in this matter highlights the importance of preventing U.S. citizens from taking part in violence overseas. In addition, the State Department reiterated its strong condemnation of any attempt to seize power through extra-constitutional means and called on the Government of The Gambia to respect human rights and rule of law in its investigation of the attempted coup. A press release was issued [here](#).

On January 5th, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that after the coup attempt in The Gambia was put down by government soldiers, one of the alleged conspirators, dual American and Gambian citizen Papa Faal, fled to Senegal and turned himself in at the U.S. Embassy. He then explained the plot to the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). The full story can be seen [here](#).

On January 5th, U.S. Army veteran Papa Faal and Gambian-American businessman Cherno Njie appeared separately in U.S. courts charged with plotting to overthrow the Government of The Gambia by attempting to shoot their way into the home of Gambian President Yahya Jammeh. According to Faal, a group that included more Americans, and other U.S. veterans, had been working together since August to try to insert Njie as the new leader of The Gambia. In his court appearance, Faal claimed that the group was trying to restore democracy to The Gambia and improve the lives of its people. An article including emerging details on the attempted coup can be read [here](#).

On January 6th, following the failed coup attempt in The Gambia, President Yahya Jammeh named new Foreign Affairs, Information, and Transport Ministers. More on the changes to the cabinet following the coup attempt can be read [here](#).

On January 6th, Senegal initiated preparations to deport Sheikh Sidia Bayo, an exiled Gambian opposition figure who called for his countrymen to overthrow President Yahya Jammeh during the recent failed coup attempt. Bayo, head of the Dakar-based National Transitional Council of The Gambia, posted a video and interview on Senegalese television in which he called on Gambians to support the coup. Further details are available [here](#).

On January 8th, Gambian Foreign Affairs Minister Neneh Macdouall-Gaye delivered a statement on state-owned television naming nine men believed to have mounted the assault on the presidential palace on December 30th in a failed coup attempt. The group was reportedly led by Lieutenant-Colonel Lamin Sanneh, who once headed the elite State Guard before being dismissed and fleeing abroad. According to the Gambian government, the group also included retired U.S. Army Captain Njaga Jagne and former U.S. Army Sergeant Papa Faal. Both Sanneh and Jagne were killed when palace guards repelled the attack. More information was shared [here](#).

Nigeria

On January 3rd, suspected Boko Haram militants seized a military base in Baga used by the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) that was formed in 1998 to combat cross-border crime and whose mandate was recently expanded to include fighting the Boko Haram insurgency. The attacks included a series of raids near Lake Chad, gunmen killing an unspecified number of civilians, and hundreds of homes and businesses being burnt and looted. Witnesses reported that the siege spanned several hours. Residents of Baga who were able to escape are thought to have fled to neighboring towns in Nigeria or across the border to Chad. The attack was described [here](#).

On January 4th, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that Boko Haram is gaining ground in Nigeria as cooperation between Nigeria and the U.S. in combating the terrorist group disintegrates. The assessment followed an attack on Baga over the weekend in which Boko Haram militants overtook MNJTF forces, seizing the last town under government control. In addition, the Nigerian schoolgirls captured from Chibok last year have never been rescued and are now presumed to have been married off to jihadists. The article can be read [here](#).

On January 6th, in response to the ongoing Boko Haram insurgency in northeastern Nigeria, the Governors of Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states requested that President Goodluck Jonathan deploy extra troops to the region in advance of next month's presidential election. According to Nigeria's electoral commission, more than a million Nigerians have been displaced by Boko Haram violence in the northeast and may not be able to vote on February 14th unless parliament passes legislation allowing them to vote outside of their home districts. The request for more troops was outlined [here](#).

On January 7th, Boko Haram fighters carried out a second attack this week on the northeastern Nigerian town of Baga. Between the most recent raid, as well as the attack over the weekend, as many as 2,000 people are thought to have been killed and much of the town has been burnt down. Following this most recent incident, government officials suggested that Boko Haram may now control as much as 70 percent of Borno state, which has been most targeted in the insurgency. The latest Boko Haram attack on Baga was reported [here](#).

On January 7th, a man claiming to be the leader of Boko Haram released a video threatening to intensify

violence in Cameroon unless the country voids its constitution and embraces Islam. Boko Haram has targeted Cameroon throughout the past year, most recently killing 15 people on a bus in northern Cameroon on New Year's Day. More on the video, which was addressed to Cameroonian President Paul Biya, is detailed [here](#).

On January 7th, Director of the Atlantic Council's Africa Center Peter Pham authored an op-ed for *The Hill* labeling Boko Haram as Africa's version of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). In addition to the capture of nearly 300 schoolgirls in April 2014, Boko Haram has now seized large parts of three states in northeastern Nigeria. Pham reported that more than 10,000 people died in Boko Haram attacks in 2014 and more than 1.5 million others have been displaced. The op-ed can be seen [here](#).

Burundi

On January 3rd, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon welcomed the launch of the U.N. Electoral Observation Mission in Burundi (MENUB), which officially started its work on January 1st. MENUB, headed by Cassam Uteem, is mandated to follow and report on the presidential, parliamentary, and local elections scheduled in Burundi between May and September 2015. Excerpts from Secretary-General Ban's statement are available [here](#).

On January 5th, Burundi's army killed 95 members of an unidentified group planning to execute ambush attacks to disrupt Burundi's upcoming elections. The group, based in the Congo, was believed to be Burundian. Burundi's elections have historically struggled to achieve peaceful handovers of power. More information is available [here](#).

On January 7th, the U.S. welcomed the start of MENUB and expressed interest in continuing to work with the U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) as it once again becomes a standalone entity within the U.N. system. While noting that much has been accomplished in Burundi since the end of its civil war, the U.S. Department of State recognized much work remains. The State Department also advocated for inclusive and peaceful elections beginning in May, presidential term limits, and the complete participation of all political actors, civil society, and the media in the political process. A statement on the January 1st launch of MENUB can be read [here](#).

Democratic Republic of Congo

On January 2nd, the six-month grace period for the full surrender of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) expired. Following this expiration, a team of international envoys expressed concern that the FDLR did not meet the deadline and called upon the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the U.N. peacekeeping mission in the country (MONUSCO) to take all necessary measure to disarm the FDLR. More information, including the parties comprising the team of international envoys, can found [here](#).

On January 5th, following the FDLR's failure to surrender, MONUSCO began working with regional and international stakeholders to address the situation. Military operations against the FDLR will be composed of troops from the Congolese Army, as well as MONUSCO, and are authorized to use all necessary measures to disarm the rebels. Excerpts from the official news release are available [here](#).

On January 6th, a joint operation by U.N. troops and the Congolese Army (FARDC) seized bases used by the rebel group National Liberation Front (FNL). With this operation, the U.N.'s Force Intervention Brigade and the FARDC took an important step towards securing the South Kivu Province of the DRC that is expected to clear the way for a larger-scale offensive against the FDLR. More on U.N. military offensives against rebel groups in the DRC is available [here](#).

On January 7th, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called DRC President Joseph Kabila to appeal for decisive actions against FDLR for its failure to meet a surrender deadline. According to a readout of the call, Secretary-General Ban observed the FDLR has failed to deliver on its promise to disarm and the January 2nd deadline has passed without significant results. President Kabila assured Secretary-General Ban that the DRC Government is prepared to take action and that the Congolese military plans to work collaboratively with MONUSCO. The readout of the call was shared [here](#).

Libya

On January 4th, two crew members on the ARAEVO, a Liberian-flagged oil tanker, were killed during a bombing executed by an unidentified military aircraft. The vessel was carrying 12,600 tons of crude oil and was anchored at the Libyan port of Derna. Further details on the bombing are available [here](#).

On January 5th, a new round of U.N.-brokered talks aimed at ending Libya's escalating political crisis were again delayed, due to difficulty associated with convincing the parties to the conflict to agree to meet. Since Libya Dawn seized the capital in August and installed its own cabinet, forcing out recognized Prime Minister Abdullah al-Thinni, Libya has had two governments and parliaments competing for legitimacy. U.N. efforts to arrange a dialogue between the two parties are detailed [here](#).

On January 6th, the U.S. Department of State condemned the January 4th bombing of a Greek-operated oil tanker near Derna, Libya, that killed two crewmen. The State Department said the ongoing escalation of violence in Libya against civilian commercial interests further widens a conflict that is fundamentally political and threatens the integrity, unity, neutrality, and independence of Libya's critical institutions, including the National Oil Company. In addition, the State Department reiterated its commitment to working with the international community to help Libya establish an inclusive system of government. A press statement was published [here](#).

Central African Republic

On January 6th, a man who identified himself as Dominic Ongwen, considered to be a deputy to Commander of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) Joseph Kony, surrendered himself to U.S. military personnel in the Central African Republic (CAR) assisting African forces in the hunt for Kony. Ongwen, who claimed he was an LRA defector, is wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for war crimes and crimes against humanity. According to U.S. officials, if the man's identity was confirmed, the defection would be a historic blow to Kony's nearly 30-year rebellion. A full report can be viewed [here](#).

On January 7th, the Ugandan Army confirmed that U.S. and African forces in the CAR were holding Dominic Ongwen, a senior commander from the LRA. The capture of Ongwen, who was indicted by the ICC on seven counts in 2005, was hailed as a historic blow to the LRA's command structure. Further details on the LRA's attacks in Uganda can be read [here](#).

South Sudan

On December 31st, the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) warned of a silent emergency in South Sudan, as ongoing fighting has caused the displacement of millions of herd animals. This displacement has contributed to fresh outbreaks of disease and rising tensions between pastoral groups and farmers, as well as within different pastoralist communities. Details on FAO's efforts to maintain the animal healthcare system and improve South Sudan's food security are detailed [here](#).

On January 8th, a group of 29 South Sudanese and international human rights organizations called on the U.S. Mission to the U.N. (USUN) to draft a resolution imposing an arms embargo on warring parties in South Sudan. In December, it appeared that a push to impose sanctions on South Sudan had reached an impasse due to a dispute over the inclusion of an arms embargo, with USUN expressing concern that a weapons ban would disproportionately hurt the South Sudanese Government. The latest developments were noted [here](#).

United States – Africa Relations

White House

On January 5th, President Barack Obama called President Beji Caid Essebsi of Tunisia to congratulate him on his victory in Tunisia's first presidential election under its new constitution. The President commended Tunisians for the spirit of peaceful compromise that has prevailed throughout the country's democratic transition over the past four years. Both leaders affirmed their desire for continued close cooperation and President Obama invited President Caid Essebsi to visit Washington to continue their discussion. The call was summarized [here](#).

U.S. Agency for International Development

On December 29th, USAID announced the award of Partnership for Education: Learning, USAID's flagship education project in Ghana, to FHI 360, an international human development NGO. The \$71 million investment in the project will support Ghana's education institutions over five years to improve, expand, and sustain learning outcomes for at least 2.8 million primary school students across Ghana, with an emphasis on children in kindergarten through grade three. The project will be launched by a consortium including Ghana Education Service, the Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy, and Bible Translation (GILLBT), the Ghana Institute for Management and Public Administration (GIMPA), the Olinga Foundation for Human Development, and The British Council. A press release was issued [here](#).

Department of Defense

On December 27th, Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) Commander Major General Wayne Grigsby, Jr. briefed the cadets of the Joint Military Academy of Arta, Djibouti, on the six principles used to empower agile and adaptive leaders in the conduct of unified land operations. Commander Grigsby listed the six primary principles of Mission Command as building cohesive teams through mutual trust, creating shared understanding, providing a clear commander's intent, exercising disciplined initiative, using mission orders, and accepting prudent risk. Excerpts from the briefing were posted [here](#).

On December 30th, CJTF-HOA reported on the recent completion of a maternity clinic in Kalaf, Djibouti. The clinic construction was the result of cooperation between CJTF-HOA and the Djibouti Ministry of Health, and was funded by the Department of Defense (DOD) humanitarian civic assistance fund. The clinic will focus on reducing the morbidity and of pregnant women and children under five. The project was detailed [here](#).

On December 31st, DOD confirmed that a drone strike carried out in Saakow, Somalia, on December 29th killed Al Shabaab head of intelligence and security Tahlil Abdishakur. Somali officials had previously reported they believed Tahlil had been killed. Tahlil is the third top Al Shabaab leader killed or captured by the U.S. in the past year. Tahlil's death was confirmed [here](#).

On January 2nd, more than 1,000 U.S. Marines and sailors departed for Moron, Spain, where they will become the latest to staff Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force – Crisis Response – Africa for a six month deployment. The service members deployed with a dozen MV-22B Ospreys tiltrotor aircraft, four KC-130J Super Hercules aerial refueling tankers, and one UC-12 Huron turbo-prop plane. While in Spain, the team will engage in international military exchanges and training exercises with partner nations, while standing ready to respond to unforeseen crises in Africa, including increases in Embassy security or the evacuation of State Department personnel. Details were reported [here](#).

On January 8th, U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) detailed a recent medical readiness training exercise (MEDRETE) conducted by U.S. Special Operations Forces (USSOF) in Mini, Chad, for members of the Chadian Army. The exercise was intended to enhance the skills of the Chadian medics to obtain vital signs, perform initial consultations, present appropriate diagnoses, and prescribe proper medications and treatments for people in Mini. In particular, the exercise focused on common diseases, including malaria, diarrhea, and typhoid. The training program was summarized [here](#).

Department of Justice

On January 3rd, U.S. attorney Preet Baharar announced the death of Libyan terror suspect Abu Anas Al-Libi. Authorities reported that Al-Libi passed away after being taken from New York's Metropolitan Correctional Center to a local hospital due to complications from recent liver surgery. Al-Libi was scheduled to stand trial on January 12th for charges related to his involvement in the 1998 bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. More information can be found [here](#).

Overseas Private Investment Corporation

On January 6th, the *Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) Blog* featured a post highlighting

an op-ed recently authored by OPIC President and CEO Elizabeth Littlefield on the promise of economic growth in Africa. In the article, President Littlefield argued that Ebola should not obscure Africa's larger promise. In addition, she observed that increased U.S. engagement with Africa comes at a pivotal moment when investors are helping to build Africa's energy infrastructure. The op-ed can be read [here](#).

U.S. Trade and Development Agency

On January 6th, the U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) released its Fiscal Year 14 Annual Report highlighting the Agency's success in linking U.S. businesses with global infrastructure opportunities. The report includes an overview of USTDA's role in helping the U.S. Government make significant progress on its Power Africa initiative, which aims to increase electricity access in sub-Saharan Africa. The full report can be downloaded [here](#).

Congress

On January 6th, the House of Representatives passed a rules package by a vote of 234-172 that reauthorized the House Select Committee on Benghazi. Democrats on the Committee, including Ranking Member Elijah Cummings (D-MD) and Representatives Adam Smith (D-WA), Adam Schiff (D-CA), Linda Sanchez (D-CA), and Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), lamented the reauthorization, which set no limit on the Committee's budget or time frame, which means it could last well into 2016. For details, click [here](#).

North Africa

On December 31st, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon reiterated his strong opposition to Sudan's decision to expel two senior U.N. officials from the country. According to Secretary-General Ban, the departure of the officials would constitute a serious loss for the humanitarian and development community in Sudan. Excerpts from Secretary-General Ban's statement can be read [here](#).

On January 5th, four Egyptian policemen were wounded by a bomb planted in the provincial capital of Al-Arish, located on the Sinai Peninsula. The attack was part of a larger jihadist insurgency that has killed hundreds of Egyptian soldiers and policemen since the army toppled President Mohamed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood. More on instability in the Sinai Peninsula is available [here](#).

On January 5th, archaeologists working near Abusir, Egypt, discovered the tomb of a previously unknown Egyptian queen. The tomb is believed to be that of the wife or mother of Pharaoh Neferefre who ruled 4,500 years ago. It was found in an area that is thought to have been used as a cemetery for the ancient Egyptian capital of Memphis. The discovery was reported [here](#).

On January 6th, in a speech celebrating the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad, Egyptian President Abdul Fattah Al-Sisi called for a religious revolution in Egypt. In his address, President Sisi called upon Muslim leaders to help fight religious extremism. Excerpts from President Sisi's speech were highlighted [here](#).

On January 6th, two Egyptian policemen were shot dead as they stood guard at a Coptic Christian church in a city south of Cairo. The attack is the latest in a jihadist insurgency that has targeted Coptic Christians and killed hundreds of soldiers and police since the ousting of President Mohamed Morsi. More on the insurgency and its past targets is available [here](#).

On January 6th, peacekeeping troops in the joint U.N.-African Union (AU) Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) came under two separate attacks while on patrol. The attacks, which occurred in southern and western Darfur, did not result in any injuries to the peacekeepers, although two of the assailants were killed. Further details can be read [here](#).

On January 7th, King Mohammed VI of Morocco dismissed Youth and Sports Minister Mohamed Ouzzine after heavy rain flooded the Prince Moulay Abdellah stadium in Rabat and disrupted a Club World Cup quarter final in December. The findings of a recently completed investigation suggested the Ministry and the company that built the stadium were at fault for failing to prepare the venue with the appropriate drainage systems. Minister Ouzzine's dismissal was announced [here](#).

On January 7th, The Middle East Institute hosted a briefing titled, “Libya in 2015: The Scramble for Oil and Scenarios for Transition.” Speakers included Ambassador David Mack of The Middle East Institute, Karim Mezran of The Atlantic Council, and Jason Pack of Libya-Analysis Cambridge University. The panel was moderated by Paul Salem of The Middle East Institute. Event logistics were posted [here](#).

East Africa

On January 2nd, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke, the new Prime Minister of Somalia, to congratulate him on his appointment. He urged the new Somali leadership to continue work on the political process, including forming federal states and instituting a participatory constitutional review process. Secretary-General Ban also commended the Somali National Army’s work fighting militant group Al Shabaab. Excerpts from the phone call can be found [here](#).

On January 5th, Al Shabaab claimed responsibility for a car bomb that killed four civilians in Somalia’s capital, Mogadishu. The attack is part of Al Shabaab’s campaign to topple the Western-backed Mogadishu government and impose its own version of Islamic law. A statement from Al Shabaab leadership on the attack is available [here](#).

On January 5th, the trial of six Ethiopian bloggers known as Zone 9 was adjourned for the 15th time after prosecutors failed to amend terrorism charges as offered by the court. The bloggers were initially charged under Ethiopia’s antiterrorism law in July. While the court has already accepted other charges, including that the defendants formed a clandestine organization, incited, attempted, and organized damage to the community, and planned terrorist acts, the outstanding terrorism charges may be excluded if the charges are not amended in the next hearing, scheduled for January 14th. An update was provided [here](#).

On January 7th, the AU mission in Somalia (AMISOM) announced the continued success of a joint military offensive undertaken with Somali forces. The two groups successfully pushed Al Shabaab Islamists into two shrinking pockets of territory in the country’s north and south. This success is moderated, however, by Al Shabaab’s continued guerrilla-style attacks throughout Somalia. Further information on the offensive is available [here](#).

On January 7th, Kenya’s Director of Public Prosecutions ordered an investigation into the killing of a defense witness for the ICC case against Deputy President William Ruto. The killing follows the dropping of similar charges against President Uhuru Kenyatta last month due to insufficient evidence. Further details of the prosecution’s efforts can be read [here](#).

On January 7th, the Executive Board of the IMF completed the first review of Tanzania’s economic performance under the program supported by the Policy Support Instrument (PSI) and granted a waiver for the non-observance of the continuous assessment criterion on the non-accumulation of external arrears. The PSI was designed to support Tanzania’s maintenance of macroeconomic stability, the preservation of debt sustainability, more equitable growth, and job creation. The review found that Tanzania’s economic growth remains strong, with growth rates expected to remain around seven percent. Additional analysis was posted [here](#).

West Africa

On January 5th, the U.N. Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) condemned an attack that seriously injured three peacekeepers and left five wounded in the Gao region. The attack occurred when a vehicle transporting troops from the Niger contingent struck an explosive device. Statements from the press briefing can be found [here](#).

On January 5th, Islamist gunmen killed at least seven Malian soldiers in Nampala, about 320 miles northeast of Bamako. The attack illustrates continuing volatility in Mali two years after France helped take back Malian territory seized by Al Qaeda-linked militants. Details of the attack can be read [here](#).

On January 5th, Cameroon announced its plan to raise roughly \$582 million to finance infrastructure projects. The funds, to be raised through treasury bills and medium-term bonds, represent a 14 percent

issuance increase over 2014. Further economic projections for Cameroon are detailed [here](#).

On January 5th, the Tony Elumelu Entrepreneurship Programme began accepting applications for an entrepreneurial program intended to create over 10,000 new entrepreneurs in Nigeria over the next decade. The program includes a 12-week training course, mentorship, access to crucial networks and resources, as well as possible funding for startup ideas. The opening of the application process was noted [here](#).

On January 6th, the World Bank reported on initiatives in Equatorial Guinea intended to achieve sustainable economic growth by developing commercially viable new activities beyond hydrocarbons and public investment and by pursuing human capital development to help drive economic diversification. To achieve these goals, Equatorial Guinea is setting ambitious targets for human development, focusing on quality and measuring results, ensuring that new skills are relevant to the labor market, and using new social protection tools. More information was provided [here](#).

On January 6th, Herve Ladsous, U.N. Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, classified progress in the Malian political process over the past three months as fairly modest. Under-Secretary-General Ladsous called on armed groups and the Malian government to continue talks with a spirit of compromise, given the volatile security situation in northern Mali and recent serious fighting. Further remarks from Under-Secretary-General Ladsous and details on the conflict in Mali can be read [here](#).

On January 6th, Royal Dutch Shell agreed to pay out \$83.4 million in compensation for two oil spills in Nigeria in 2008 as part of the largest ever out-of-court settlement with the affected community. The Bodo community in the Niger Delta will receive funding to compensate 15,600 individuals affected by the spills, as well as additional funding that will be put into a trust fund to support the construction of health clinics and schools. The settlement was described [here](#).

On January 8th, *Ventures* profiled the efforts of the Nigerian Ministry of Communications to highlight the installation of metropolitan dark fiber optic network infrastructure in Calabar as a significant step towards Nigeria becoming a full-fledged digital economy. The project was completed through a partnership with mobile operator MTN, making Calabar the most comprehensively wired city for voice, data, and video telecommunications and various technology driven services. For more information, click [here](#).

Sub-Saharan Africa

On January 2nd, Irina Bokova, Director-General of the U.N. Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) deplored the killing of journalist Robert Chamwami Shalubuto in the eastern DRC. Shalubuto, a journalist for public broadcaster *Congolese National Radio and Television (CNRT)*, was shot by two unidentified gunmen while at a bar in Goma. More on Director-General Bokova's support for freedom of the press is available [here](#).

On January 4th, *Reuters* reported that South Africa is increasingly looking to hydrogen as a solution for its rolling blackouts, energy shortages, high tariffs, and years of underinvestment in power infrastructure. The potential of hydrogen power has been demonstrated by the success of the Cape Flats nature Reserve building at the University of the Western Cape, which began using a hydrogen fuel cell (HFC) power generator in November. For more information, click [here](#).

On January 5th, two suspected rhino poachers in South Africa's Kruger National Park were shot dead after they opened fire on rangers. In 2014, poachers killed a record number of rhinos (1,020 between January and mid-November) for their horns, which are coveted for their use in Vietnamese and Chinese traditional medicine. The market for Rhino horn is explained in further depth [here](#).

On January 5th, the South Africa-based non-profit foundation Africa2Moon launched a crowdfunding initiative seeking to raise money to fund the first African mission to the moon. Organizers of the initiative said excitement about the project is intended to inspire and educate a new generation of engineers and scientists in Africa. The project was detailed [here](#).

On January 5th, *Times Live* provided an update on the Nelson Mandela Children's Hospital project. Following former South African President Mandela's death in December 2013, wealthy donors launched

a trust fund to collect donations to support construction of the hospital. The new facility, scheduled to open in Johannesburg next year, will have 200 beds, but will have the capability to treat more than 200 patients through the use of telemedicine. The state-of-the-art hospital is expected focus on specialist areas, such as nephrology, pulmonology, hematology, oncology, and general pediatric surgery. More information was provided [here](#).

On January 6th, the spokesman for Mozambique's main opposition party, Renamo, was arrested after leading a demonstration protesting the outcome of the October 2014 presidential election. The election, certified last week by the country's constitutional court, was won by the ruling Frelimo party, but hotly contested by Renamo, which alleged irregularities, including ballot stuffing. The arrest and further tensions surrounding the elections are explained in greater depth [here](#).

On January 7th, police in Mozambique released Renamo party spokesman Antonio Muchanga. Muchanga was arrested following his role in protests against the results of the October 2014 presidential election, in which he allegedly led an illegal demonstration and incited violence. More information is available [here](#).

On January 8th, the African National Congress (ANC) party of South Africa celebrated 103 years since its founding. Party leaders indicated they would use the occasion to reclaim the tenants of the Freedom Charter, adopted in 1955, which they said have been hijacked by political adversaries. While recognizing that the ANC continues to see shrinking margins at the polls and shaky finances, party loyalist have increasingly called upon ANC leaders in government to show leadership and assert the mandate voters have given them. Details can be found [here](#).

General Africa News

On January 7th, Open Doors' annual survey found that radical Islam posed the greatest threat to Christians in the Middle East and many countries in Africa. The countries with the greatest number of Christians killed for faith-related reasons were Nigeria (at 2,484) and the CAR (at 1,088). The report's findings on Christian persecution worldwide are explained [here](#).

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