



ML Strategies Update

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Africa Update

Leading the News

West Africa Ebola Outbreak

On December 3rd, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) issued its tenth fact sheet on the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. The latest fact sheet highlights progress against key Ebola indicators, but cautions that as some geographic areas have experienced significant improvements, others have seen the rapid acceleration of Ebola transmission. In addition, the fact sheet alludes to the recent World Bank report analyzing the impacts of the Ebola outbreak on the economies of Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea. The fact sheet was posted [here](#).

On December 4th, a donation from Germany to the United Nations (U.N.) provided 400 motorbikes to help speed up Ebola testing in West Africa. The motorbikes, equipped with cooler boxes, will transport blood samples to laboratories across Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone and help reduce waiting time for Ebola test results. The donation was noted [here](#).

On December 4th, officials indicated the U.S. is weighing an increase in aid to help fight the Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone, where the virus is currently spreading the fastest. The news came as top officials from the Pentagon, the State Department, USAID, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) were due to gather at the White House to discuss assistance options. The Obama Administration may consider shifting foreign medical teams from Liberia to Sierra Leone, as well as other military assets. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On December 5th, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon asked members of the U.N. Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to help Ebola-afflicted countries recover. At the meeting, ECOSOC President Martin Sajdik said members were ready to mobilize partners to ensure economic and social recovery efforts for the hardest hit countries in West Africa. The ECOSOC meeting was summarized [here](#).

On December 5th, White House Ebola Response Coordinator Ron Klain and National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) Director Dr. Anthony Fauci presented on the domestic and global response to the Ebola outbreak at Georgetown University. Dr. Fauci noted that having a functional global health security agenda in place at the start of the outbreak would have been helpful in more effectively stopping the spread of the virus. Coordinator Klain called on Congress to approve the Administration's emergency funding request for Ebola response efforts. A recording of the discussion can be watched

[here](#).

On December 5th, U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) reported that construction of a new Ebola treatment unit in Tappita, Liberia, was due to be completed on December 7th, with the facility scheduled to open within the next month. Currently, locals who are sick and infected with Ebola must travel for more than a day to Monrovia for treatment. In Nimba county, there have been more than 250 cases of Ebola that will be served by the strategic placement of a new treatment center in Tappita. More information can be found [here](#).

On December 5th, the *Military Times* reported that 100 Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force – Crisis Response Africa personnel were due to depart Liberia for Germany after wrapping up their participation in Operation United Assistance. The Marines will undergo the 21-day monitoring period in Germany before returning to their home base in Spain. Four MV-22B Ospreys deployed to support the mission had already departed for Spain. The full story can be accessed [here](#).

On December 6th, Dr. Aiah Solomon Konoyeima, who was infected with Ebola while working at a children's hospital in Freetown, Sierra Leone, succumbed to the virus. Diagnosed two weeks ago, Dr. Konoyeima was treated at the Hastings Ebola Treatment Center, which is staffed exclusively by Sierra Leone medical personnel. Dr. Konoyeima is the third doctor in Sierra Leone to die from Ebola. His death was noted [here](#).

On December 6th, Obama Administration officials confirmed that White House Ebola Response Coordinator Ron Klain will be returning to his private sector job by March 1st, where he will serve as President of Case Holdings and General Counsel for Case's venture firm Revolution LLC. According to government officials, Klain's appointment as the Ebola czar was always intended to be temporary. Despite rumors, Coordinator Klain has said he is not seeking to stay at the White House in any other role. More information was shared [here](#).

On December 6th, Dr. Joseph Howard Meier, the emergency room doctor who first saw Thomas Eric Duncan at Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital, discussed his role in the initial misdiagnosis of Ebola. Dr. Meier reported that Duncan was initially diagnosed with sinusitis, prescribed antibiotics, and sent home. He also noted that he was not aware of Duncan's recent travel from Liberia when he was initially seen in the emergency room. Dr. Meier's comments were recorded [here](#).

On December 6th, the *New York Times* reported that poor planning and a lack of coordination among aid groups has resulted in inefficiencies in the Ebola response effort in Sierra Leone, costing countless lives. For example, while new Ebola treatment centers have been built, adequate staffing has not been in place to ensure all the beds are used. In addition, reports suggest that ambulances are being used to transport blood samples for testing, as opposed to sick patients in desperate need of transportation to treatment centers. Details were reported [here](#).

On December 7th, the *New York Times* profiled Dr. Ian Crozier, who contracted the Ebola virus while treating patients at a government hospital in Kenema, Sierra Leone, and was flown to the U.S. for treatment at Emory University Hospital. Dr. Crozier expressed appreciation for the care he received and highlighted that aggressive treatments, including life-support measures like ventilators and dialysis, can save some patients infected with Ebola. Dr. Crozier had been volunteering for the WHO when he was infected and said he hopes to return to West Africa early next year. The full interview was published [here](#).

On December 8th, the first of 700,000 sets of protective gear committed by the Government of Japan to the U.N. Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) arrived in West Africa. An official handover ceremony was held in Accra, Ghana, to mark the transfer of 20,000 of sets of personal protective equipment (PPE) from the Japan Disaster Relief Team to UNMEER. The transfer of equipment occurred as a peacekeeper from the U.N. mission in Liberia (UNMIL) infected with Ebola was evacuated to the Netherlands for treatment and as the WHO release new Ebola statistics, reporting 17,800 Ebola cases and 6,331 deaths in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. An update was provided [here](#).

On December 9th, U.N. Special Envoy for Ebola Dr. David Nabarro said Ebola is still spreading quickly in western Sierra Leone and deep in Guinea's forested region. He said the U.N. and its partners are focusing efforts on lowering transmission levels in Western Sierra Leone and ensuring that cases do not cross the border from Guinea into Mali. Dr. Nabarro also called for more foreign health care workers to help combat the epidemic, especially in Sierra Leone where treatment centers are opening and are in

need of expert staff. He also said that he believes the necessary capacity for Ebola response in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone would be completed by the end of January 2015. Excerpts from a news briefing were highlighted [here](#).

On December 9th, U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) Executive Director Anthony Lake said the West African Ebola epidemic may have a silver lining in that public health in one of the world's poorest regions will emerge stronger. Executive Director Lake noted UNICEF has been building community care centers in the countries hardest hit by Ebola that will remain after the disease is beaten. His comments came as the WHO prepared for meetings with West African health and finance ministers to discuss how to lay the foundation for post-Ebola health care systems. Executive Director Lake's insights were recorded [here](#).

On December 9th, U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) Sylvia Burwell announced a declaration under the Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness (PREP) Act to facilitate the development and availability of experimental Ebola vaccines. The declaration provides immunity under U.S. law against legal claims related to the manufacturing, testing, development, distribution, and administration of three vaccines for Ebola. However, the declaration does not provide immunity for a claim brought in a court outside the U.S. The declaration was issued [here](#).

On December 9th, the CDC announced nearly 2,000 travelers were screened for Ebola symptoms in the month following the implementation of enhanced screening procedures. As part of the advanced screening measures, 86 individuals, all of them health care workers returning from the Ebola zone, were pulled aside for additional screening. Only seven of all 1,993 travelers screened were ultimately referred to the CDC for medical exams and none of them had Ebola. More information was released [here](#).

On December 9th, U.S. appropriators unveiled a compromise \$1.1 trillion government funding bill. The bill includes \$5.4 billion in emergency funding to address the Ebola crisis in West Africa. The Obama Administration had initially requested \$6.2 billion in emergency appropriations to respond to the Ebola crisis. Of the \$5.4 billion, nearly \$2.5 billion would go to HHS to bolster the readiness of U.S. hospitals, accelerate vaccine development, and assist in traveler screenings. Another \$2 billion would go to USAID to scale up the global Ebola response. Meanwhile, the State and Defense Departments would each receive just over \$100 million. Congress is expected to vote on the bill in the coming days. The emergency funding for Ebola was noted [here](#).

On December 10th, *TIME* Magazine named the health care workers, including doctors, nurses, and others, treating the Ebola epidemic in West Africa its Person of the Year 2014. The announcement was widely praised by Obama Administration officials. The full Person of the Year piece can be seen [here](#).

On December 10th, the U.N. congratulated Ebola frontline workers on their Person of the Year recognition by *TIME* Magazine. Simultaneously, countries affected by the outbreak and their partners met to discuss the foundation of resilient health systems and avoiding the spread of Ebola cases across borders. Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Mali, as well as Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, and Nigeria, assembled in Monrovia to meet with representatives of UNMEER. For more details, click [here](#).

On December 10th, the WHO issued new estimates for the number of Ebola cases in West Africa. The WHO reported there have been 17,942 reported cases of Ebola, with 6,388 reported deaths. Additionally, the WHO highlighted that case incidence is slightly increasing in Guinea, decreasing in Liberia, and stable in Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone now has the highest total number of reported cases, with 7,897 cases reported to date. An update from the WHO was provided [here](#).

On December 10th, the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations African Affairs Subcommittee hosted a hearing on "The Ebola Epidemic; The Keys to Success for the International Response." Testimony was provided by Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf by video conference, as well as Dr. Paul Farmer of Partners in Health, Dr. Anne Peterson of Ponce Health Services University, World Vision, and Pape Gay of IntraHealth International. A webcast of the hearing can be watched [here](#).

On December 10th, *NBC News* reported that health care workers are more than 100 times more likely to be infected with Ebola in Sierra Leone than the general public. In addition to failed protective measures in hospitals, researchers have also found that health care workers infected with Ebola in Sierra Leone are also likely to infect other medics. Additional analysis of Ebola infection rates among health care workers in Sierra Leone can be found [here](#).

On December 11th, health officials in Sierra Leone reported the discovery of 87 bodies believed to be

infected with Ebola in a remote diamond mining area near Kono. The WHO has sent a response team to investigate the sharp rise in Ebola cases, which officials are now concerned may be underreported. The WHO team also reported finding 25 people who had died from Ebola in the past five days piled up in a cordoned section of the local hospital. The full story can be seen [here](#).

On December 11th, scientists debated whether one or two injections of Ebola vaccines will provide the greatest immunity to the virus. While administering two vaccines is likely to give far greater protection than a single shot, injecting patients with two vaccines one after the other would likely make for more challenging logistics in vaccinating the most vulnerable populations in West Africa. The full story is available [here](#).

On December 11th, the global vaccines alliance, GAVI, pledged up to \$300 million for the purchase of Ebola vaccines. GAVI is ready to begin procurement as soon as the WHO provides a recommendation on the most effective vaccine. The announcement was made [here](#).

Kenya

On December 5th, prosecutors dropped charges of crimes against humanity against Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta before the International Criminal Court (ICC). The charges were related to President Kenyatta's role in the ethnic violence that followed the 2007 elections. While prosecutors have said that President Kenyatta used his powers to obstruct the investigation, ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda said evidence has not improved to such an extent that President Kenyatta's alleged criminal responsibility could be proven. More information can be found [here](#).

On December 5th, in response to reports of extrajudicial killings in Kenya, U.S. State Department Deputy Spokesperson Marie Harf urged the Kenyan Government to thoroughly investigate reported claims. She also noted that U.S. training for law enforcement entities in Kenya aims to increase the professionalism and capacity of partner forces and includes support for police oversight bodies to improve accountability and transparency in the police services. In addition, related to the ICC's decision to deny a request for an indefinite adjournment of proceedings against Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta, Deputy Spokesperson Harf said the U.S. will continue to encourage Kenya to live up to its commitments to accountability, justice, and the rule of law, regardless of the court's decision. Deputy Spokesperson Harf's comments were transcribed [here](#).

On December 7th, in response to the decision by ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda to withdraw charges against Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta, the Kenyan delegation to the ICC indicated it plans to propose amendments to the Rome Statute to provide for compensation mechanisms for persons wrongly treated as suspects at the ICC. The Kenyan delegation has requested a special agenda item to discuss the conduct of the ICC and the Office of the Prosecutor during the annual session of the Assembly of State Parties. More information can be viewed [here](#).

Libya

On December 4th, a statement made by the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) condemned the continuing escalation of violence in Libya. The statement comes after a recent air raid in the West and says the events undermines and endangers the political process in the country. UNSMIL called on all influential Libyan actors to do their utmost to ensure the escalation in violence ceases immediately in order to give the dialogue between major stakeholders the chance to succeed. The statement was issued [here](#).

On December 8th, ahead of peace talks due to commence on Tuesday, U.N. Special Representative for Libya Bernardino Leon met with various parties in Libya. According to UNSMIL, Special Representative Leon met with Nouri Abu Sahmein on the need to create an environment conducive to the proposed Libya-owned dialogue and agree on mechanisms for the monitoring and implementation of a ceasefire. The primary objective of the dialogue will be to reach an agreement on the management of the remainder of the transitional period until a new permanent constitution is adopted. UNMIL's preparations for the talks were highlighted [here](#).

On December 8th, U.S. officials expressed concern with the effectiveness of the peace talks between the main factions in Libya held by U.N. Special Representative for Libya Bernardino Leon. The U.S. Government observed that despite diplomatic efforts in the region, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Qatar continue to encourage local militias to fight instead of compromise. The situation was

described [here](#).

On December 11th, the ICC indicated that Libya did not fulfill its obligation to turn over murder suspect Saif al-Islam Gadhafi and, as a result, referred the matter to the U.N. Security Council. Gadhafi was arrested in 2011 and charged with crimes of murder and persecution in attempts to put down the 2011 uprising that killed his father, Muammar Gadhafi. Libya's non-compliance has been the result of rebels in the Zintan region, who have held Gadhafi captive since 2011. Details were shared [here](#).

On December 11th, medical personnel reported that 48 people have been killed and 80 others wounded in the last ten days as a result of the escalation of violence in Benghazi. The report brings the death toll to approximately 450 since army forces supporting former General Khalifa Hiftar launched an offensive against the Islamists in the city. For additional information, click [here](#).

South Sudan

On December 4th, the U.N. reported that a year of conflict in South Sudan has devastated the country. Kyung-wha Kang, U.N. Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, said 1.9 million people have been displaced and the humanitarian challenges are immense. Deputy Coordinator Kang noted that efforts in November 2013 helped 3.5 million people, avoided famine, and suppressed a cholera outbreak. She noted, however, that 2.5 million face food insecurity next year and aid organizations require \$600 million to start 2015 operations. Details on the humanitarian efforts in South Sudan can be read [here](#).

On December 5th, U.N. officials reported an increase in fighting between government troops and rebels as a result of the end of the rainy season. Joe Contreras, U.N. Spokesman in South Sudan, said fighting in Fangak county in Jonglei state has been reported. Details on the ongoing conflict in South Sudan can be found [here](#).

On December 9th, weapons confiscated from internally displaced persons (IDPs) were destroyed by the U.N. Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). The weapons had been taken from IDP camps in Juba. In a press release, UNMISS stated that 25 firearms and hundreds of knives and machetes were put into a weapons shearing machine. The process was done in public and in the presence of foreign diplomats and media. For more information, click [here](#).

Central African Republic

On December 5th, Catherine Samba-Panza, Head of State of the Transition of the Central African Republic (CAR) and U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon met and agreed the security situation in the CAR is precarious. Secretary-General Ban urged President Samba-Panza to continue her leadership with the hope of ensuring a successful, inclusive political transition. Secretary-General Ban urged the completion of the election process by August 2015. Their meeting was summarized [here](#).

On December 9th, Under-Secretary-General for U.N. Peacekeeping Operations Herve Ladsous told the U.N. Security Council the CAR is entering an essential phase in its democratic transition. In his briefing, he urged the international community to maintain its efforts in moving the CAR towards democracy and stability. Under-Secretary-General Ladsous said the convening of the Bangui Forum early next year is an indication that political progress is moving forward. Excerpts from the briefing were highlighted [here](#).

On December 10th, the U.N. Security Council expressed concern for the dire security situation in Central Africa, particularly in the CAR, as well as the regional impact of Boko Haram and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The statement condemned the attacks and crimes against humanity carried out by LRA and demanded an end to the violence. The Security Council also urged the LRA to release all those abducted and to disarm and demobilize. The Security Council statement can be read [here](#).

On December 11th, Abdel Kader Baba-Ladde, a Chadian warlord, was arrested by U.N. peacekeepers in the CAR. The arrest was made in the northern region of Kabo near the Chadian border. Baba-Ladde was wanted by CAR authorities for crimes committed between 2008 and 2012. Details on the arrest can be found [here](#).

Somalia

On December 7th, U.N. Special Representative for Somalia Nicholas Kay condemned Friday's terrorist attacks in Baidoa that killed at least 15 people and wounded many more. In response to the attack, the

U.N. Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) is supporting local authorities to evacuate the wounded requiring further medical treatment in Mogadishu. Additionally, Special Representative Kay noted Saturday's parliamentary vote of no confidence in Somali Prime Minister Abdiweli Sheikh Ahmed. He called for the swift establishment of a new inclusive government to promote peacebuilding and stability. Special Representative Kay's comments were transcribed [here](#).

On December 10th, the U.N. Security Council acknowledged Somalia's parliamentary vote of no confidence and ousting of Prime Minister Abdiweli Sheikh Ahmed. In a press release, the Security Council also expressed the importance of united political leadership and concern for the impact the no confidence vote could have on peace and stability in Somalia. A press release was issued [here](#).

Mauritius

On December 11th, Mauritius held parliamentary elections. According to early reports, the opposition coalition of the Militant Socialist Movement (MSM) and the Parti Mauricien Social Democrate (PMSD) won 44 of 62 contested seats. The ruling party won just 13 seats. Seventy-four percent of eligible voters turned out to express their disapproval of the ruling party coalition's attempt to change the constitution to grant more power to the president. The election results were posted [here](#).

Zimbabwe

On December 4th, Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe denounced Vice President Joice Mujuru in a speech to 12,000 members of his Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party. Vice President Mujuru, previously thought to be Mugabe's likely successor, has lost all support since becoming the target of media attacks three months ago. President Mugabe accused Vice President Mujuru of corruption and threatened prosecution. An article on the situation can be read [here](#).

On December 6th, Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe said Vice President Joice Mujuru was plotting with the U.S. Embassy in Harare to remove him from office. Speaking to ZANU-PF supporters, President Mugabe claimed he had spies following Vice President Mujuru to the Embassy, where she allegedly participated in meetings related to planning his assassination. The U.S. Department of State responded the allegations were baseless and did not merit a response. The full story is available [here](#).

On December 9th, Chief Secretary of Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe's cabinet Misheck Sibanda announced President Mugabe's decision to fire Vice President Joice Mujuru and seven government ministers. President Mugabe's office noted the dismissals came about as the result of conflicts of interest and conduct inconsistent with the expected standard. Many of the cabinet ministers who were dismissed were viewed as politically aligned with Vice President Mujuru. Replacements were not immediately identified. More information was reported [here](#).

United States – Africa Relations

White House

On December 4th, National Security Council (NSC) Spokesperson Bernadette Meehan issued a statement expressing concern for continued reports of human rights abuses in The Gambia. Since October, the Government of The Gambia has denied access to U.N. Special Rapporteurs investigating reports of torture and extrajudicial execution, targeted individuals for arrest and detention because of their perceived sexual orientation or political position, and enacted legislation that imposes a possible sentence of life imprisonment on the so-called crime of aggravated homosexuality. In addition, the NSC expressed disappointment in the Gambian Government's failure to investigate the disappearance of two U.S. citizens missing since June 2013. The White House called on the Government of Gambia to respect all human rights, repeal discriminatory legislation, and cease these harmful practices. The NSC statement was issued [here](#).

On December 5th, President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama released a statement on the first anniversary of the passing of South African President Nelson Mandela. The President and the First Lady recognized President Mandela as a leader whose struggle and sacrifices inspired the world to stand up for the principles of compassion, understand, and reconciliation. While the White House noted that President Mandela left behind a world that is more just and free, it also noted there is more work to be done. The full statement can be accessed [here](#).

Department of State

On December 4th, Secretary of State John Kerry issued a press statement on the one year anniversary of the passing of South African President Nelson Mandela. Secretary Kerry said President Mandela has left South Africa and the world with an incredible legacy of reconciliation, freedom, and equality. He said President Mandela will be remembered as a great man and a real person who made difficult decisions. Secretary Kerry's statement can be read [here](#).

On December 4th, the U.S. Embassy in Cairo issued a security message for U.S. citizens, recommending that its staff carefully scrutinize their personal movements and consider staying close to their residences and neighborhoods over the coming period. The warning was issued in response to the heightened tensions in the area, as well as recent attacks on Westerners in the region. The security message was posted [here](#).

On December 5th, Ambassador-At-Large for War Crimes Issues Stephen Rapp was on travel to Rabat, Morocco, to participate in the 8th Consultative Assembly of Parliamentarians for ICC and the Rule of Law and deliver panel remarks on fighting the threat posed by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Ambassador Rapp's travel was noted [here](#).

On December 9th, Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights Sarah Sewall delivered remarks at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace on International Anti-Corruption Day. In particular, Under Secretary Sewall highlighted that the African Union (AU) estimates that one quarter of Africa's gross domestic product (GDP) is lost every year due to corruption, dramatically increasing levels of poverty in an already poor region. She also highlighted how corruption has led to laws in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) intended to prevent human trafficking, hate crimes, and gender-based violence going unenforced. Under Secretary Sewall's remarks were transcribed [here](#).

On December 9th, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield held a conference call with representatives of the African diaspora in the U.S. The call was included on the State Department's daily appointment schedule, which can be found [here](#).

On December 11th, Secretary of State John Kerry issued a press statement on Burkina Faso's national day. Secretary Kerry said the U.S. is dedicated to supporting Burkina Faso's efforts to strengthen democratic institutions, expand economic opportunities, and maintain regional security. He also welcomed the establishment of the civilian-led transitional government and said it is important that preparations begin now to ensure successful elections in November 2015. Secretary Kerry's statement was posted [here](#).

On December 11th, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield met with Ambassador of Benin to the U.S. Omar Arouna at the Department of State. The meeting was noticed [here](#).

On December 11th, Assistant Secretary of State Puneet Talwar met with Ambassador of Egypt to the U.S. Mohamed Tawfik at the State Department. The meeting was listed [here](#).

U.S. Agency for International Development

On December 10th, USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah delivered remarks at the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition (USGLC) 2014 Tribute Dinner. Administrator Shah discussed how USAID is pioneering a new model of development, grounded in innovation, local leadership, and public-private partnership. He also commented on how USAID's signature initiatives, including the U.S. Global Development Lab, Feed the Future, and Power Africa, serve as investments in America's economic and national security. Administrator Shah's participation was announced [here](#).

Department of Defense

On December 5th, AFRICOM concluded its sponsored engagement on fighting malaria at the U.S. Army Medical Research Unit Entomology Department in Kisumu, Kenya. The event brought together participants from Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Niger, Senegal, Togo, Rwanda, and Uganda. The engagement was intended to enhance the participants' experience on fighting the insects responsible for transmitting malaria by providing in depth hands-on insects surveillance, identification, and control, as

well as education on insects-borne disease personal protective measures. An article on the event can be read [here](#).

On December 5th, a small team of U.S. Coast Guardsmen initiated a training exercise for the Nigerian Navy focused on combating illicit and uncontrolled activities, such as trafficking, piracy, and illegal and unregulated fishing. The exercise covered basic maintenance, electrical and mechanical skills, and general troubleshooting for small boat engines and was intended to enhance maritime security off the coast of West Africa and to improve the interoperability of the militaries. Details were provided [here](#).

Department of Justice

On December 5th, Egyptian citizen Mostafa Ahmed Awwad was arrested on charges of stealing U.S. military secrets and providing them to the Egyptian Government. Awwad purposefully took a job as a civilian engineer at Norfolk Naval Shipyard, where he received a security clearance and had access to classified information. Specifically, Awwad is believed to have leaked schematics to the aircraft carrier Gerald R. Ford to the Egyptian Government. The full story is available [here](#).

U.S. Trade and Development Agency

On December 6th-13th, the U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) conducted the second phase of the Procurement Assistance Program for Botswana by hosting 14 procurement officials in the U.S. for an eight-day orientation on value-based procurement. While in the U.S., the delegation from Botswana met with federal and local government procurement professionals in Washington, DC, and Texas. The program was intended to build on the first phase of Botswana's Procurement Assistance Program, during which 40 officials from Botswana's Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Board (PPADB) and nine government ministries received training on value-based procurement. More information was posted [here](#).

Millennium Challenge Corporation

On December 9th, the Millennium Challenge Corporation's (MCC) *Poverty Reduction Blog* featured a post on the construction of a bridge across the Doue River as part of the MCC \$540 million MCC compact with Senegal. The \$20 million project is helping to improve livelihoods in local communities by connecting fertile agriculture areas to markets and allowing greater access to post-primary education. The blog can be accessed [here](#).

Congress

On December 5th, *Al-Monitor* reported the restoration of aid to Egypt continued to be an unresolved difference in negotiations on a spending bill. According to reports, Senate appropriators were advocating for reduced assistance for Egypt in light of President Abdul Fattah Al-Sisi's administration's human rights records. However, House negotiators were more open to sending more aid to Egypt. Egypt has traditionally been the second largest recipient of U.S. military assistance. Details can be seen [here](#).

On December 9th, Chairman of the House Foreign Relations African Affairs Subcommittee Chris Coons (D-DE) and Finance Committee member Senator Johnny Isakson (R-GA), co-founders of the bipartisan Senate Chicken Caucus, sent a letter to South African President Jacob Zuma cautioning him that continued refusal to eliminate unfair duties on U.S. poultry could jeopardize South Africa's continued eligibility for trade benefits under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). Congress is due to reauthorize AGOA in 2015. The letter can be downloaded [here](#).

On December 10th, the House Select Committee on Benghazi held a hearing titled, "Reviewing Efforts to Secure U.S. Diplomatic Facilities and Personnel." Witnesses included Assistant Secretary of State for Diplomatic Security Greg Starr and State Department Inspector General Steve Linick. The hearing was noticed [here](#).

On December 10th, House Foreign Affairs Africa Subcommittee Ranking Member Karen Bass (D-CA) issued her routine Africa Update. The latest update highlights major events in U.S.-Africa relations in 2014, including the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit, the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, U.S. assistance to Nigeria to support the fight against Boko Haram, and the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI). The full update can be read [here](#).

North Africa

On December 4th, Herve Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for U.N. Peacekeeping Operations, said the situation in Darfur remains dangerous with continued violence and humanitarian challenges. Under-Secretary-General Ladsous said insecurity, as well as the restrictions imposed by government forces, armed movements, and militia groups, continue to challenge the ability of the AU-U.N. Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) to implement its mandate, particularly in regards to the protection of civilians. Under-Secretary-General Ladsous' comments were captured [here](#).

On December 5th, the U.N. announced that its inquiry into rape allegations in Darfur was inconclusive. Under-Secretary-General for U.N. Peacekeeping Operations Herve Ladsous said the joint U.N. and AU peacekeeping force needs to return for further investigation and access without military or police intervention. So far, Sudan has refused to allow the team to return. More on the investigation can be read [here](#).

On December 8th, electoral authorities in Tunisia announced plans to hold the runoff presidential election between incumbent President Moncef Marzouki and Nidaa Tounes leader Beji Caid Essebsi on December 21st. Campaigning was due to start on December 9th and run through December 19th. Essebsi narrowly edged President Marzouki in the first round of elections. The runoff elections will mark the final step in Tunisia's transition to democracy following the 2011 revolution. The runoff elections were announced [here](#).

On December 8th, the Canadian Embassy in Cairo, Egypt, announced it was closing until further notice because of security concerns. The closure of the Canadian Embassy follows a similar action taken by the British Embassy in Cairo on Sunday, also due to security concerns. One intelligence source indicated that Egyptian authorities recently detailed a suspected militant who had confessed to planning attacks targeting foreign embassies. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On December 9th, the World Bank highlighted recent research related to how bureaucracy, regulations, and a lack of accountability have inspired corruption in the Egyptian Government. Analyses show the corruption, the large size and poor performance of the Egyptian civil service, and the complexity and unpredictability of rules and regulations remain key governance problems in Egypt. To address these issues, the Government of Egypt unveiled its first strategy to fight corruption on International Anti-Corruption Day, celebrated on December 9th. More information can be found [here](#).

On December 9th, an Egyptian court sentenced pro-democracy activist Ahmed Douma to three years in jail after he accused the judge of bias and denounced his trial on charges of violence against the state as political. Judge Mohamed Nagi Shehata also fined Douma \$1,399 for insulting the court. Douma was accused of attacking the cabinet office building and security forces when clashes ensued during a sit in as part of the 2011 Arab Spring. The sentencing was described [here](#).

On December 10th, the World Bank spotlighted instances of bribery in government hospitals in Morocco. According to Transparency Morocco, the country's public health sector is among the most affected by corruption. Statistics from Morocco's Central Authority for the Prevention of Corruption highlight that 30 percent of patients admitted to paying bribes to obtain health care services. Further, health staff has reported issuing fraudulent invoices, health certificates, and prescriptions. The situation was detailed [here](#).

East Africa

On December 4th, the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) announced violence is spreading throughout the northern Rift Valley and northeastern regions of Kenya. OCHA reported that 310 people were killed, 214 were injured and over 220,000 had fled their homes by the end of October. Violence is spreading as a result of revenge attacks, land and water competition, cattle rustling, and issues related to political representation. The deteriorating situation in Kenya was described [here](#).

On December 5th, a Kenyan pilot was reported missing in action after ejecting from his combat jet that Al Shabaab militants in Somalia said they shot down. Meanwhile, the Kenya Defense Force said the plane crashed in Kismayo due to a technical problem as it was supporting the Somali unit working with an AU force to fight Islamist rebels. Both accounts of the incident were reported [here](#).

On December 5th, a Kenyan court issued a birth certificate to a five-year-old child that was born with ambiguous genitalia. Without a birth certificate, the child could not enjoy legal rights of going to school or obtain the national identification necessary to vote. John Chigiti, the child's lawyer, said the court decision is a huge step in recognizing intersex individuals in Kenya. Details on the court ruling were shared [here](#).

On December 7th, at least 70 Ethiopian migrants drowned when a boat used to transport illegal migrants to Yemen sank in the Red Sea. Investigators believe the boat sank due to high winds and rough seas. The full story is available [here](#).

On December 10th, the Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) completed the third review of Uganda's economic performance under the program supported by the Policy Support Instrument (PSI). The IMF observed less than expected GDP growth indicative of slow execution of externally financed public investment and slow growth in main trading partners. However, the IMF noted that performance under the PSI was satisfactory, citing Uganda meeting its targets for inflation and international reserve. Further analysis can be seen [here](#).

On December 11th, a Somali policeman killed five women linked to Al Shabaab after discovering the bodies of his policewoman wife and colleague. The two policewomen were abducted and beheaded by the militant group. Tayeglow District Commissioner Mohamed Abdallah stated the five women were wives of Al Shabaab rebels being held with the hopes of negotiating a swap for the two policewomen that had been abducted from their homes the night before. Details on the incident can be read [here](#).

West Africa

On December 4th, the World Bank approved a \$70 million International Development Association (IDA) credit for Cote d'Ivoire's Second Poverty Reduction Support Project. The objectives of the project are to strengthen governance, improve public administration, and facilitate private sector-led growth. The financing was announced [here](#).

On December 5th, Togo security forces fired tear gas at opposition supporters throwing stones amid thousands of people marching against the possible reelection bid by President Faure Gnassingbe. Protestors called on the government to set a term limit so that President Gnassingbe would be forced to step down next year. Eric Dupuy, a member of the opposition National Alliance for Change party, said that two opposition supporters were injured in the violence. After tear gas was fired, marchers dispersed from the Lome city center. An article on the protest can be read [here](#).

On December 5th, the Executive Board of the IMF completed the sixth review of Cote d'Ivoire's performance under an economic program supported by an Extended Credit Facility (ECF) arrangement. The decision enables the disbursement of an additional \$94.7 million. In addition, the Executive Board approved a 12-month extension and augmentation of access under the arrangement to meet additional balance of payment needs generated by Cote d'Ivoire's Ebola prevention plan. Additional analysis of Cote d'Ivoire's economy was provided [here](#).

On December 6th, Nigerian authorities detained a Russian cargo plane that made an emergency landing in Kano. The aircraft had been traveling from Bangui, CAR, to N'Djamena, Chad, but was unable to continue to Chad because of congestion at the airport in the capital. The plane, operated by a French crew, had no weapons and was transporting two French army helicopters out of Bangui. The incident was noted [here](#).

On December 8th, the World Bank Group's Board of Executive Directors approved a \$35 million IDA credit to support Senegal's Skills for Jobs and Competitiveness project. The goal of the project is to strengthen Senegal's technical and vocational education and training (TVET) system to provide better quality and relevant training. In particular, the newly announced financing will target efforts to improve the skills of young people for jobs in the key areas of tourism, horticulture, and poultry farming. More information was posted [here](#).

On December 9th, Serge Lazarevic, a French citizen held for more than three years by Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), was released. Negotiations among the Governments of Niger, Mali, and France led to his release and transfer to Niamey. The release occurred days after two of the men implicated in Lazarevic's abduction were reportedly released from a prison in Mali. The situation was described [here](#).

On December 9th, the World Bank reported on efforts underway in Senegal to fight corruption. With the support of World Bank financing, Senegal is building capacity for a more streamlined and transparent public financial management that will ensure the preparation and approval of the yearly budget and expenditures and allow for routine audits. Senegal has also launched a National Anti-Corruption and Fraud Office (OFNAC) and a mobile app that will allow whistleblowers to more easily report concerns about corruption. Additional initiatives underway in Senegal were highlighted [here](#).

On December 11th, Niger's Prime Minister Brigi Rafini requested additional international aid in order to deal with an approaching food crisis that has been exacerbated by the flood of Nigerian refugees fleeing Boko Haram. Niger regularly experiences poor harvests and is now trying cope with 87,000 Nigerian refugees that have arrived since May. Prime Minister Rafini said the combination of these two shocks has made both refugees and the local population extremely vulnerable to a food crisis. Prime Minister Rafini's remarks were captured [here](#).

On December 11th, a senior commander of the Al Mourabitoun Islamist group, wanted by the U.S, was killed by French forces in Mali. Ahmed al Tilemsi was wanted for participating in the 2011 kidnapping of two French nationals in Niger and of three aid workers in Algeria the same year. An article on the French operation in Mali can be read [here](#).

Sub-Saharan Africa

On December 3rd, the Executive Board of the IMF concluded the Article IV consultation with South Africa. In doing so, the IMF observed that South Africa has made substantial progress in its first 20 years of democracy, achieving a much higher standard of living for its citizens. However, the IMF indicated South Africa's economic growth has slowed and encouraged authorities to address constraints on economic activity, including protracted strikes and electricity outages. The consultation was detailed [here](#).

On December 3rd, *The Atlantic* highlighted the success of early testing of the RV144 HIV vaccine in South Africa. A safety trial the tested the effectiveness of the vaccine with a booster shot has demonstrated the vaccine to be safe and yield robust immune responses. Clinical trials of a modified vaccine tailored to Southern Africa will begin in early 2015. More information can be found [here](#).

On December 4th, the World Bank Group reported on a recent mapping exercise held in the Nasanje and Chikwawa villages of Malawi to help collect information on roads, dwellings, and village facilities to help various district departments prepare for floods and minimize the negative impact they have on communities. As part of the activity, government officials, civil society organizations, universities, and members of the local community used the Malawi Spatial Data Platform to upload data for sharing across government departments. Information on the initiative was shared [here](#).

On December 5th, the U.N. refugee agency (UNHCR) expressed concern over the closing of a camp for IDPs in the DRC. With the closing, 2,300 residents were forced to leave their shelters and return to their homes. William Spindler, UNHCR Spokesperson, said the decision by local authorities to close the Kiwanja camp has left its former inhabitants without shelter or a sense of safety. More details can be read [here](#).

On December 5th, the World Bank issued a report providing an overview of efforts over the past decade to reinforce social cohesion and give more power to local authorities in Burundi under the 2005 Communal Law that formalized the autonomy of communes. The report suggests that despite recent progress, citizens and communities still have few opportunities to effectively engage in local decision-making processes. The study also highlights the need for more transparent mechanisms for tax collection, as well as execution of commune development plans. The report can be downloaded [here](#).

On December 5th, the World Bank Board of Executive Directors approved \$110 million to support the Government of Mozambique's State Budget and its poverty reduction plan (PARP). The IDA financing will be used to continue to assist the Government of Mozambique in improving its business climate and increasing transparency in the management of extractive industries, strengthening social protection, and enhancing public financial management. A press release was issued [here](#).

On December 5th, South Africa recognized the first anniversary of the death of South African President Nelson Mandela. Veterans of South Africa's anti-apartheid movement laid wreaths at the foot of a statue of President Mandela in Pretoria, where crowds also gathered to honor the former leader in song. Bells

and sirens were also sounded in a tribute to President Mandela's 67 years in public service. The events held in South Africa to celebrate President Mandela were outlined [here](#).

On December 7th, the *New York Times* reported that a group of South African civilians had negotiated the release of South African Al Qaeda hostage Pierre Korkie, who was killed over the weekend in a failed U.S. military operation to release Korkie's cellmate, American photojournalist Luke Somers. Korkie was due to be released at a remote outpost in Yemen in exchange for a \$200,000 ransom on the same day as the failed rescue. U.S. Government officials indicated they were not aware of the arrangement for Korkie's release. The incident was described [here](#).

On December 7th, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) President Joseph Kabila announced the formation of a new government on Sunday. Notably, the new government includes members of two opposition parties, including Thomas Luhaka of the Movement for the Liberation of Congo (MLC) and Evariste Boshab of the People's Party for Reconstruction and Democracy, who will both serve as vice prime ministers. Additionally, current Prime Minister Augustin Matata Ponyo will maintain his current position. The appointment of a new government is viewed as an effort by President Kabila to broaden his political base. Details can be seen [here](#).

On December 8th, U.N. Special Representative for the DRC and head of the U.N. Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) Martin Kobler condemned Monday's massacre of civilians in the localities of Ahili and Manzananza. Special Representative Kobler said this and other attacks that have killed more than 200 civilians since mid-October are aimed at fueling terror in the region. In addition, he called for Congolese Armed Forces (FARDA) and MONUSCO to join efforts to end the violence and bring the perpetrators of the attacks to justice. Special Representative Kobler's feedback was shared [here](#).

On December 9th, the MLC, the DRC's second largest opposition party, expelled its leader, Secretary-General Thomas Luhaka for accepting a vice prime minister position in President Joseph Kabila's Government. In addition, the party also removed parliamentarians Germain Kambinga and Omer Egwake who were awarded ministerial posts. President Kabila's opponents argue the President is seeking to hold power beyond the end of his two-term mandate in 2016. The MLC's reaction to the appointments was posted [here](#).

On December 9th, South African prosecutors appealed against the culpable homicide verdict and five-year prison term imposed on Olympic and Paralympic track star Oscar Pistorius for the killing of his girlfriend, Reeva Steenkamp, which prosecutors have deemed as shockingly inappropriate. Pistorius and his legal team are opposing the appeal. In accordance with South African law, Pretoria High Court Judge Thokoziile Masipa, who delivered the initial verdict, will decide whether or not the judgment can be appealed. An article detailing developments can be read [here](#).

On December 10th, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon acknowledged the announcement of national elections to be held in Lesotho on February 28th, 2015. In a statement, Secretary-General Ban welcomed the progress toward political stability and security and encouraged leaders in Lesotho to comply with the Maseru Facilitation Declaration. The elections were announced [here](#).

On December 10th, the Executive Board of the IMF completed the second review of Rwanda's economic performance under the program supported by the PSI and concluded the Article IV consultation. The IMF commended Rwanda for its strong implementation of the economic program, despite a challenging economic environment. In particular, the IMF applauded Rwanda for its efforts to alleviate poverty, pursue economic recovery, and control inflation. More information can be seen [here](#).

On December 11th, President Goodluck Jonathan was officially nominated as Nigeria's ruling party's candidate for the February 2015 presidential elections. While the vote was merely a formality, 3,000 delegates of the People's Democratic Party gathered in support of the President. Meanwhile, two candidates for the opposition are still fighting for the nomination, former military ruler Muhammadu Buhari and former Vice President Atiku Abubakar. An article on the nominations can be read [here](#).

General Africa News

On December 4th, the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) announced a \$10 million Urgent Response Fund to reduce the killings of thousands of endangered elephants and rhinos every year. According to AWF, in the 1970s Africa was home to more than 1.3 million elephants. There are only 419,000

elephants on the continent today. Rhinos in Africa have seen a similar fate, with more than 2,000 animals killed by poachers in the last year alone. The new fund was announced [here](#).

On December 4th, *BBC News* discussed the findings of the African Genome Variation Project, which analyzed the DNA of 1,800 people living across the continent. The goal of the research was to examine how susceptibility to disease varies in different regions of Africa. Researchers found key regional differences. For example, people from South Africa are less likely to carry a genetic mutation that offers protection against malaria than those from other parts of Africa. In addition, Africans are more likely to have a greater risk of high blood pressure than Europeans. The report's findings were summarized [here](#).

On December 8th, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) hosted a conference on “A Strategic Approach to Malaria.” The conference included panel discussions on the future vision for global action on malaria, financing of a global elimination strategy, evolving technologies in the push for elimination, and the threat of artemisinin and pyrethroid resistance. A full agenda was outlined [here](#).

On December 10th, U.N. General Assembly President Sam Kutesa acknowledged the racism that people of African descent continue to face around the world. Mr. Kutesa announced the launch of the U.N. International Decade of People of African Descent. The resolution, passed in December of last year, is intended to provide ten years of opportunity for the U.N., governments, civil society, and people to focus combating racism. The decade will commence January 1st, 2015 and conclude December 31st, 2024. More information is available [here](#).

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