



ML Strategies Update

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Africa Update

Leading the News

Nigeria

On December 1st, the United Nations (U.N.) reported nearly 450 schools have reopened in Borno state, Nigeria since October after being closed for more than 18 months following the Boko Haram attack on a boarding school in Yobe state that left 59 students dead. Despite continuing fears of attacks, the U.N. said some schools in Adamawa and Borno states have actually doubled the number of classes to provide education for people uprooted by the conflict, as well as local children. Details were shared [here](#).

On December 1st, the U.S. Department of the Treasury announced the designation of two senior Boko Haram leaders, Mohammed Nur and Mustapha Chad, as Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SDGTs). As a result of the designations, all of Nur's and Chad's assets will be frozen and all U.S. persons will be prohibited from engaging in transactions with them. In announcing the designations, Acting Under Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence Adam Szubin said Boko Haram represents a threat not just to innocents in Nigeria, but to all civilized society. A press release was published [here](#).

On December 1st, Boko Haram militants killed four people and injured two others in an attack on a village in the Diffa region of Niger. According to witnesses, members of Boko Haram armed with Kalashnikovs ambushed the village, setting roughly 50 homes on fire. Last week, members of Boko Haram killed at least five people in a village in northern Cameroon and 18 in another village in Niger's Diffa region. The attacks were reported [here](#).

On December 2nd, Cameroonian Minister of Defense Joseph Beti Assomo announced Cameroonian forces had freed 900 hostages held by Nigerian militant group Boko Haram during operations at the end of November. While it was not made public exactly when and where the operations took place, defense forces also reported the seizure of sticks of arms and munitions, as well as black and white Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) flags. It was not immediately clear if any of those freed were the schoolgirls captured in Chibok last year. More information was provided [here](#).

On December 2nd, two female suicide bombers detonated explosives in Waza, Cameroon, killing at least six people. According to local Governor Midjiyawa Bakary, soldiers killed a third suicide bomber before she was able to detonate her explosive. The attackers were thought to be acting on behalf of Boko Haram. The suicide bombings also followed an incident in which two Cameroonian soldiers were killed on Monday by a landmine thought to be planted by Boko Haram fighters in the village of Gangse. Both attacks were described [here](#).

On December 2nd, in response to the latest Boko Haram attacks in Cameroon, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called on the international community to provide urgent support and humanitarian aid to communities attacked by the Nigerian militant group. Additionally, Secretary-General Ban called on the governments affected by Boko Haram to address the root causes of the insurgency in a holistic and integrated manner. Secretary-General Ban's response was articulated [here](#).

On December 3rd, the U.N. Office for the Coordinator of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said more than 100,000 people uprooted by Boko Haram violence in northeastern Nigeria are set to return to their homes, although concerns continue regarding their safety and ability to rebuild their lives. The Nigerian Government is planning to close camps housing up to 150,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Borno and Adamawa states as security is expected to improve in the region. The situation was detailed [here](#).

Libya

On November 27th, the Governments of Algeria, France, Germany, Italy, Morocco, Spain, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the United Kingdom (U.K.), and the U.S. welcomed the statement of support for a Government of National Accord in Libya signed by the majority of House of Representatives (HOR) members on November 24th. The leaders also observed that a majority of General National Congress (GNC) members also stand in support of a Government of National Accord. The leaders encouraged stakeholders in Libya to swiftly form a unity government to begin the work of establishing effective, legitimate governance, restoring stability, and preserving the unity of the country. Additional feedback was shared [here](#).

On November 28th, *The New York Times* reported on ISIL's control over the Libyan city of Sirte, the hometown of former Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi. When ISIL militants first entered the city last year, they were perceived to be local militants trying to look tough. Today, Sirte is widely considered a managed colony of ISIL that attracts foreign fighters from throughout the region. The full article can be accessed [here](#).

On November 29th, *The Wall Street Journal* also highlighted ISIL's strengthening hold on Sirte, Libya. Since formally announcing its control over the city in February, ISIL has grown its ranks from just 200 fighters to a contingent of roughly 5,000 militants, administrators, and financiers. Sirte has also served as a new ISIL base that is close to Europe and can be used to generate oil revenue and plot attacks. More information can be found [here](#).

South Sudan

On November 25th, the members of the Troika issued a joint statement expressing concern that South Sudan's leaders have not formed a new transitional government within the agreed 90-day timeline of the August peace agreement. As a result, the Governments of the U.K., Norway, and the U.S. observed fighting and abuses continue and an already grave humanitarian situation is worsening. Meanwhile, the Troika commended Chairman of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC) Festus Mogae for beginning to implement the agreement by announcing the first JMEC meeting in Juba. For more information, click [here](#).

On November 27th, the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) warned the situation for children in war-torn South Sudan has worsened since the beginning of the year, with sustained recruitment, primarily of boys but also girls, by armed groups amid severe malnutrition and flight. It is estimated 16,000 children have been forcibly recruited since the conflict between President Salva Kiir and his former Vice-President Riek Machar erupted two years ago, and the killings, abductions and sexual abuse of youngsters continue throughout the country. Additional insights were provided [here](#).

On December 2nd, U.N. Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Herve Ladsous said with both sides repeatedly violating the ceasefire agreement, South Sudan is in need of increased international support for its political transition. Under-Secretary-General Ladsous told the U.N. Security Council the members of the International Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Plus, including the East African Intergovernmental Authority on Development, African Union (AU), U.N., China, Norway, U.K. and U.S. must invest politically in supporting the transition or progress could be lost. He also called for 1,100 additional U.N. peacekeepers to help monitor implementation of the peace agreement in South Sudan. Under-Secretary-General Ladsous' input was summarized [here](#).

Burundi

On November 25th, U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein deplored the Burundian authorities' suspension of 10 NGOs, including several working on peace and human rights issues, warning against a relapse into full-fledged civil war. He warned about the worsening human rights and security situation in Burundi, where the U.N. played a key role in restoring stability after decades of strife between Hutus and Tutsis, and the risk of regional repercussions. Commissioner Zeid's comments were captured [here](#).

On December 1st, U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Ranking Member Ben Cardin (D-MD) delivered a statement on the Senate floor regarding the political crisis in Burundi. In his speech, Senator Cardin called on the Burundian Government and the opposition to respect the spirit of the 2000 Arusha Agreement and immediately stop all violence, disarm all militias, including youth militia aligned with the government, and urge all legitimate stakeholders to agree to participate in an inclusive dialogue to determine a path forward. A recording of the speech can be watched [here](#).

On December 2nd, at least seven people were killed overnight in separate incidents in Bujumbura, Burundi. One police officer was killed and four others were wounded in overnight clashes with unidentified gunmen in the capital's Nyakabiga district. Meanwhile, in the Jabe neighborhood, the body of a man who was believed to be killed in another part of the city was discovered and four other decapitated bodies were collected in the Mutakura and Cibitoke neighborhoods. The continuing violence in Burundi was profiled [here](#).

On December 9th, the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health policy will hold a hearing on "The Political and Security Crisis in Burundi." The Committee is scheduled to receive testimony from Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield, Josh Siegle of National Defense University, and Thierry Vircoulon of International Crisis Group. The hearing was noticed [here](#).

Central African Republic

On November 29th, following stops in Kenya and Uganda, Pope Francis arrived in the Central African Republic (CAR). With heavy security detail, Pope Francis visited parts of Bangui that have recently experienced an uptick in violence between Christian and Muslim militias. Additionally, the Pope delivered a homily during mass at the capital's cathedral, calling for peace and reconciliation. He also visited a mosque. Pope Francis' visit to the CAR was detailed [here](#).

On November 30th, the U.N. brought 250 additional peacekeepers from Cote d'Ivoire to the CAR to help the authorities provide security for Pope Francis's two-day visit to Bangui, the war-ravaged country's capital. Beyond providing this special unit, which will remain for another eight weeks, the U.N. Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in CAR (MINUSCA) helped build the pope-mobile that Francis used during his visit. More information can be found [here](#).

On November 30th, UNICEF reported that nearly three years after the conflict began in the CAR, an estimated 1.2 million children are now in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. According to UNICEF estimates, more than two million children have been affected by the violence, which first broke out in December 2012 and reached crisis levels in December 2013. Additional data was shared [here](#).

On December 1st, just a day after Pope Francis visited Bangui and called for peace and tolerance, a Muslim man was killed on the edge of a Christian-besieged enclave in the CAR's capital. The man was reportedly killed and his body delivered to a mosque. The incident was highlighted [here](#).

On December 2nd, CAR interim Prime Minister Mahamat Kamoun said U.N. peacekeepers in the CAR need more authority to take on armed groups that threaten to disrupt the country's presidential and parliamentary elections scheduled for December 27th. Since September, the CAR has reported an uptick in violent clashes between Muslim Seleka rebels and Christian anti-balaka elements. While there are roughly 12,000 U.N. and French peacekeepers in the country, Prime Minister Kamoun indicated the U.N. Security Council will meet in the coming days to consider providing MINUSCA with a more robust mandate. His comments were transcribed [here](#).

Burkina Faso

On November 29th, voters in Burkina Faso went to the polls to vote in the country's first democratic presidential election in decades, a year after former President Blaise Compaore was ousted in a popular uprising. Observers reported long lines at polling stations. While 14 candidates were running for election, experts predicted the race would be between President Compaore's Prime Minister Roch Marc Christian Kabore of the Movement of People for Progress (MPP) and former Finance Minister and opposition leader Zephirin Diabre of the Union for Progress and Change (UPC). The election was analyzed [here](#).

On November 30th, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon welcomed the peaceful conduct of the presidential and legislative elections in Burkina Faso over the weekend and congratulated the people of Burkina Faso for their enthusiastic participation. His statement on the elections can be read [here](#).

On November 30th, Burkina Faso's Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) declared former Prime Minister Roch Marc Christian Kabore the winner of Sunday's presidential election. President-Elect Kabore won the vote in nearly 75 percent of precincts throughout the country. Authorities reported more than three million people cast ballots in the election. The results were reported [here](#).

On December 1st, U.S. National Security Council (NSC) Spokesperson Ned Price congratulated the people of Burkina Faso for participating in peaceful and orderly elections, marking a major milestone in the country's democratic process. He commended the Burkinabe people for their commitment to defending the principles of democracy and congratulated President-Elect Roch Marc Christian Kabore on his victory in the presidential election. A full statement was issued [here](#).

On December 1st, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry congratulated the people of Burkina Faso on holding peaceful and orderly presidential and legislative elections, applauding Burkina Faso's CENI and international elections observers. He also congratulated President-Elect Roch Marc Christian Kabore, who will be the first new leader of Burkina Faso in nearly 30 years. Secretary Kerry said the U.S. looks forward to working with the government and the people of Burkina Faso to advance a strong bilateral partnership and to continue to strengthen Burkina Faso's governance security and economic institutions. Secretary Kerry's comments were captured [here](#).

On December 1st, Burkina Faso's President-Elect Roch Marc Christian Kabore pledged to tackle fundamental needs and to revive the nation's economy. In particular, President-Elect Kabore highlighted the need for the government to provide education, health care, and access to clean water. He also acknowledged the need to turn the economy around in the face of lower global commodity prices and reduced investment during the democratic transition that began after the fall of former President Blaise Compaore. President-Elect Kabore's agenda was outlined [here](#).

Seychelles

On December 3rd, three days of voting began in Seychelles' presidential election. Incumbent President James Michel is running for a third term, primarily touting his efforts to grow the national economy. While six candidates are running, President Michel's main challenger is Wavel Ramkalawan of the Seychelles National Party, an Anglican priest who claims the wealth gap in the country is growing, the education system is failing, and drugs and other social ills are on the rise. President Michel is widely viewed as the frontrunner, but must win more than 50 percent of the vote to avoid a runoff. The elections in Seychelles were discussed [here](#).

West Africa Ebola Outbreak

On November 27th, U.N. Regional Inter-Agency Coordinator on Ebola Peter Graff said the three West African countries most affected by the deadly disease cannot recover from its ravages on their own, following the flare-up of Ebola in Liberia 77 days after the outbreak was declared over. The response comes days after the World Health Organization (WHO) reported a cluster of three confirmed cases of Ebola in Liberia, which had been declared free from disease transmission on September 3rd. Developments were noted [here](#).

On November 27th, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Ebola Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) Leader Al Dwyer authored a blog post on the need for strong border management to combat Ebola. While significant strides have been made to reduce the transmission of Ebola in West Africa, Dwyer noted

merchants, farmers, and migrant workers continue to use formal and informal border crossings to travel between countries, leaving a real risk that Ebola can still spread between countries. The blog post was published [here](#).

On November 28th, Guinea's last Ebola patient, a one-month-old baby girl, was discharged from the Nongo treatment center in Conakry after testing negative for the virus. The patient is thought to be the first baby to survive the Ebola virus after being born to an infected mother. Guinea will be declared Ebola free after 42 days if no new cases are recorded. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On December 2nd, the WHO updated its statistics on the number of Ebola cases in West Africa. For the week ending November 29th, no new cases of Ebola were reported. However, the WHO indicated investigations were ongoing into the origin of infection of the cluster of three confirmed cases of Ebola reported from Liberia last week. Additional data was analyzed [here](#).

On December 2nd, the Harvard Global Health Institute (HGHI) and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) hosted an event at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) to rollout the final report of the HGHI-LSHTM Independent Panel on the Global Response to Ebola and to discuss the report's recommendations. The report can be downloaded [here](#).

On December 2nd, *The New York Times* highlighted the continued fallout in the U.S. over how health care workers returning from Ebola-affected countries in West Africa were treated upon their return to the U.S. At the peak of the Ebola crisis, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommended monitoring those returning to the U.S., but not confining them because research showed that people with Ebola are not contagious before they show symptoms. However, some states exceeded CDC guidelines by imposing strict quarantine measures. An article on the issue can be read [here](#).

21st United Nations Conference on Climate Change

On November 30th, on the margins of the 2015 U.N. Climate Change Conference (COP21), World Bank President Jim Yong Kim participated in an event to launch the Africa Climate Business Plan. President Kim recognized that African leaders rightly say they have had very little role in putting carbon in the air, but their countries suffer greatly from the impact of climate change, especially in terms of extreme weather events and the loss of arable land. He said the outcome of COP21 will be critical for Africa because climate action will be needed to preserve Africa's development achievements and its aspirations for further growth and poverty reduction. President Kim's remarks were transcribed [here](#).

On November 30th, the African Development Bank (AfDB) highlighted the Africa events being held as part of COP21, including the official opening of the Africa Pavilion by AfDB President Akinqumi Adesina, AU Chairperson Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, and Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) Executive Secretary Carlos Lopez, as well as the launch of the African Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI). Additionally, December 1st was designated Africa Day. More information can be accessed [here](#).

On December 1st, at a gathering of African leaders at COP21, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stressed that the African continent has an enormous stake in the success of the global negotiations that aim to reach a new universal climate agreement to limit the rise of global temperatures. He also reminded leaders that sustainable energy offers huge economic opportunities. Secretary-General Ban's remarks were recorded [here](#).

On December 1st, a new initiative to restore 100 million hectares of degraded land in Africa by 2030 was launched at COP21 in Paris, France. The TerrAfrica Partnership brings together key actors in African countries, including the World Bank, to address land degradation and build resilient landscapes. More information on the initiative can be found [here](#).

On December 1st, at COP21, French President Francois Hollande called for Africa's ecological debt to be settled. President Hollande pledged 2 billion Euros for investment in renewable energy projects in Africa by 2020. In total, France has committed 6 billion Euros between 2016 and 2020 to supporting electrification in Africa, where nearly 600 million people are still without access to electricity. France's commitments to support renewable energy development in Africa were outlined [here](#).

On December 1st, during his visit to Paris, France to participate in COP21, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry met with Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry. Their meeting was noticed [here](#).

On December 1st, USAID issued its monthly Power Africa newsletter. The most recent newsletter highlights two events Power Africa organized on the sidelines of COP21, including a discussion on inclusive renewable energy in Africa and a reception to celebrate the release of “Understanding Power Purchase Agreements” in French. The newsletter can be downloaded [here](#).

On December 2nd, Africa launched the AREI as the continent’s major contribution to the COP21 negotiations taking place in Paris, France. The initiative aims to produce 300 gigawatts (GW) of electricity for the continent by 2030. The initiative was also designed to help achieve sustainable development, and enhance well-being and sound economic development by ensuring universal access to sufficient amounts of clean, appropriate, and affordable energy. Full details on the initiative are posted [here](#).

On December 9th, on the sidelines of COP21, USAID will host an event titled, “The Case for Inclusive Renewable Energy in Africa: A Conversation with Power Africa Partners,” in Paris, France. The event will be live streamed [here](#).

United States – Africa Relations

White House

On November 30th, the White House issued a statement applauding Senators of both parties for coming together to confirm Gayle Smith as Administrator of USAID. Additionally, the White House reiterated Smith’s credentials for the position and highlighted her longstanding commitment to shaping global development policy, her leadership in promoting food security and improving global health, and her work on the Administration’s Power Africa initiative and the global response to Ebola. A full statement was issued [here](#).

On December 1st, the White House Office of National AIDS Policy released the Federal Action Plan for 2016-2020, outlining specific agency actions to implement that updated National HIV/AIDS Strategy through 2020. The fact sheet notes that the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) has supported more than 8.9 million voluntary male medical circumcision procedures in Eastern and Southern Africa to reduce the risk of HIV transmission. Additionally, by the end of 2016, President Barack Obama proposes achieving a 25 decrease in HIV incidence among adolescent girls and young women within the highest burden geographic areas of ten sub-Saharan African countries, and by the end of 2017 achieving a 40 percent decrease. For more information, click [here](#).

State Department

On November 29th - December 1st, the State Department, in partnership with Oberlin College and the Tunisian Institut National du Patrimoine, sponsored a workshop for Libyan museum professionals in support of Libya’s national inventory of museum objects. The workshop was the first of five sessions being organized to address critical preservation and protection needs in Libya. Future sessions will cover the looting and illicit trafficking of cultural objects, advanced archaeological site documentation methods, and community engagement in the protection of Libyan cultural heritage. Details can be seen [here](#).

On November 30th, Secretary of State John Kerry said he was delighted by the Senate vote to confirm Gayle Smith as USAID Administrator. Secretary Kerry expressed his belief that Smith is the right person in the right job at a crucial time, and called attention to her experience working as a journalist in Africa, as well as the instrumental role she has played in driving key initiatives, including Power Africa, Feed the Future, and the U.N. 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Secretary Kerry’s full remarks can be read [here](#).

On December 1st, Secretary of State John Kerry congratulated the people of the CAR on their country’s national day celebration. He said the U.S. values its friendship with the CAR and wishes its people well as they strive to strengthen their democratic institutions, end violence, heal internal divisions, and create a firm foundation for economic development and social progress. He also pledged the U.S. will work with Central African leaders to bring the country together and move it forward. Feedback from Secretary Kerry can be viewed [here](#).

On December 1st, Secretary of State John Kerry issued a statement on World AIDS Day to recognize the millions of people affected by HIV/AIDS and to acknowledge the work of governments, the private sector, civil society, and faith-based organizations around the world to fight the disease. Secretary Kerry highlighted the achievements made under PEPFAR, although he noted there are still over 20 million people worldwide living with HIV/AIDS. His full statement was released [here](#).

On December 2nd, Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Rose Gottemoeller met with Kenyan Ambassador to the U.S. Robinson Njeru Githae, at the Department of State. The meeting was included on the Department's daily appointment schedule, which can be accessed [here](#).

On December 3rd, State Department Chief of Protocol Pete Selfridge accepted the credentials of Djiboutian Ambassador to the U.S. Mohamed Siad Doule, at the Department of State. For more information, click [here](#).

On December 3rd, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield met with Tanzanian Ambassador to the U.S. Wilson Masilingi, at the Department of State. The meeting was listed [here](#).

U.S. Agency for International Development

On November 30th, Acting USAID Administrator Alfonso Lenhardt applauded Gayle Smith's confirmation as USAID Administrator. He said her confirmation comes at a unique time when the tools, technologies, and approaches exist to end extreme poverty, widespread hunger, and preventable child and maternal deaths. Administrator Lenhardt also noted Smith's previous work in managing the U.S. Government response to humanitarian crises, as well as her support for initiatives that advance USAID's mission, such as Feed the Future and Power Africa. His full statement was posted [here](#).

On December 1st, in conjunction with World AIDS Day, Emily Reitenauer, a program assistant on the Gender Team for the Technical Leadership and Research Division in the Office of HIV/AIDS in USAID's Global Health Bureau, authored a blog post on her work in Botswana. Reitenauer highlighted how USAID, through PEPFAR, has been able to provide antiretroviral therapy to more infected people in the country. The blog post can be accessed [here](#).

Department of Defense

On November 24th, more than 30 service members from Japan, Djibouti, and the U.S. gathered on the Japan Self-Defense Force base for anti-piracy operations in Djibouti to attend a Joint Forces Senior Enlisted Professional Development Course (JFSEPDC). The JFSEPDC is a multinational course aimed at mentoring and educating senior enlisted leaders serving with the Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA), Camp Lemonnier, and allied forces. The course was highlighted [here](#).

On November 25th-26th, Deputy Secretary of Defense Bob Work traveled to Djibouti to visit U.S. servicemen and women during the Thanksgiving holiday and thank them for their service. In Djibouti, Deputy Secretary Work met with military leaders, including Commanding General of the CJTF-HOA Major General Mark Stammer. During discussions at Camp Lemonnier, Deputy Secretary Work highlighted the U.S. commitment to fighting terrorism throughout the Horn of Africa and emphasized the importance of continued bilateral and regional cooperation with partners to defeat Al Shabaab. His visit to Djibouti was outlined [here](#).

On November 27th, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Europe and Africa highlighted a partner nation training recently completed as part of Africa Partnership Station, a U.S. Naval Forces Africa initiative that aims to increase the maritime safety and security capacity of African partners through collaboration and regional cooperation. The exercise brought together Marines and sailors with Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force - Crisis Response – Africa (SPMAGTF-CR-AF) with their counterparts from the U.K., Angola, Ghana, Nigeria, and Togo for exercises intended to build maritime capacity to counter piracy and illicit trafficking. The training was highlighted [here](#).

On November 28th, more than 150 soldiers assigned to CJTF-HOA gathered for a ceremony to receive their newly earned combat patches at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti. The combat patch is a tradition that dates back to World War

I. The U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) patch is awarded to those who have displayed commitment to the unity and coordination of Africa's allies to promote AFRICOM's mission. Details were shared [here](#).

Overseas Private Investment Corporation

On November 30th, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) announced the signing of financing agreements for the 53 megawatt (MW) Cap des Biches power plant with project developer ContourGlobal, the Government of Senegal, and Senegal's national electricity utility to help address growing demand for electricity. The power plant is a modern, heavy fuel, oil fired thermal power plant that will guarantee high efficiency levels and lower cost of power thanks to its combined cycle technology. The financing agreements were announced [here](#).

Millennium Challenge Corporation

On December 1st, in recognition of World AIDS Day, the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) highlighted its programs in several countries to fight HIV/AIDS. For example, MCC's first compact with Lesotho included a \$122.4 million Health Sector Project aimed at strengthening the delivery of essential health services to address HIV/AIDS, and MCC's \$110 million compact with the Government of Cabo Verde included an initiative to develop an HIV/AIDS awareness campaign. Additionally, MCC and PEPFAR have partnered to invest \$21.8 million in Country Data Collaboratives for Local Impact in sub-Saharan Africa that will use data to improve programs and policies. MCC's efforts were highlighted [here](#).

Congress

On November 30th, the Senate voted to confirm Gayle Smith as USAID Administrator by a vote of 79 to 7. Smith is an Africa specialist who previously served in the Clinton Administration as Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for African Affairs at the NSC. Despite bipartisan support for Smith's nomination, Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX) blocked a vote on her confirmation because of his opposition to the nuclear deal with Iran. The vote was reported [here](#).

On November 30th, Senator Chris Coons (D-DE) issued a statement following the Senate vote to confirm Gayle Smith as Administrator of USAID. He noted that he looks forward to working with Smith and USAID as she coordinates the U.S. response to the refugee crisis and other hotspots around the world. He also urged the Senate to act on a number of other foreign policy and national security nominees waiting for Senate confirmation. Senator Coons' statement was published [here](#).

On December 1st, Congressman Lynn Westmoreland (R-GA), a member of the Select Committee on Benghazi and Chairman of the House Intelligence Subcommittee on the National Security Agency (NSA) and Cybersecurity, offered insights on his recent visit to U.S. military facilities in Germany and Italy that would potentially be involved in responding to terrorist attacks on U.S. diplomatic facilities. Congressman Westmoreland noted AFRICOM now has dedicated aircraft for its crisis response units. His trip was summarized [here](#).

North Africa

On November 25th, Tunisia announced it was closing its land border with Libya for 15 days after a bombing killed at least 13 people on a presidential guard bus in Tunis. The National Security Council, headed by President Beji Caid Essebsi, decided to close the frontier on Wednesday, with reinforced surveillance of maritime borders and in airports. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On November 27th, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon condemned the attacks by unknown assailants on the residence of the Ngok Dinka Paramount Chief in the Abyei area of Sudan, during which one Ethiopian peacekeeper from the U.N. Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) and a young girl were killed. Secretary-General Ban called on the Governments of Sudan and South Sudan to assist UNISFA in swiftly bringing the perpetrators of the attack to justice. Secretary-General Ban's response was articulated [here](#).

On December 1st, U.N. Special Rapporteur on human rights and international sanctions Idriss Jazairy encouraged U.N. Member States to review their unilateral coercive measures imposed on Sudan over the past two decades.

Following an official visit to Sudan, Special Rapporteur Jazairy observed that despite developments in the country since sanctions were first implemented, few sanctions regimes have been adapted. His comments were recorded [here](#).

On December 2nd, an Egyptian court ordered another retrial of former Prime Minister Ahmed Nazif, who served under deposed autocrat Hosni Mubarak, after he was convicted of illegally amassing wealth while in office and sentenced to five years in prison in July. He was accused of illegally amassing \$8.2 million while in office. The case was outlined [here](#).

On December 3rd, Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika departed for France for a routine medical checkup. In 2013, President Bouteflika suffered a stroke and has since traveled to France for occasional doctors' appointments. Despite questions surrounding his health, President Bouteflika was reelected to a fourth term in 2014. More information can be found [here](#).

On December 3rd, Moroccan disability associations, supported by Human Rights Watch, criticized a law on disability rights under consideration by the Moroccan parliament. According to the civil society organizations, the draft law focuses too heavily on preventing and diagnosing disabilities rather than providing disabled people with rights and legal protection. The criticism of the legislation was detailed [here](#).

East Africa

On November 25th, the Bank of Eritrea announced that all Nakfa notes in circulation must be exchanged for new government-issued notes. While the nationwide currency replacement program is not meant to change the value of the money, as the exchange will be on a one-to-one basis, observers nonetheless expect the effects to be wide-ranging. Analysis on the currency transition was posted [here](#).

On November 26th, *Quartz News* reported on the extreme austerity measures of Tanzania's new president John Magufuli, and how Twitter users have begun to poke fun at his penny-pinching policies. A few days after taking office, President Magufuli issued an edict banning all foreign trips by government officials. Any external work requiring Tanzania's presence is to be done by the country's diplomats abroad under the new policy. Details on the reactions on Twitter can be seen [here](#).

On November 30th, one person was killed and at least 31 others were injured after a security drill at Strathmore University in Nairobi, Kenya turned tragic. Panic spread after security officials fired gun shots as part of the drill, leading some students and faculty members who were not given advance warning of the security exercise to jump out of windows. The full story is available [here](#).

On December 2nd, Jermaine Grant, a British citizen, was sentenced to nine years in prison on charges alleging he tried to illegally obtain Kenyan citizenship. Grant, who is also accused of plotting terrorist attacks along the Kenyan coast, faces separate charges of conspiring to improvise an explosive device. He has denied the allegations. More information was provided [here](#).

On December 2nd, Amnesty International reported that despite the Eritrean Government announcing last year that military conscription in the country would be limited to 18 months, compulsory service continues to last for several years. The policy has been cited as one of the main reasons Eritreans have fled the country. Details were shared [here](#).

On December 3rd, the World Bank highlighted its participation in the first Pan-African Albino Conference recently held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania to focus on empowering people with albinism. The Conference featured a mini photo exhibit providing a glimpse into the lives of people with albinism living in shelters for protection. The photo exhibit will be on display at the National Museum through January 2016 to continue to draw attention to the challenges faced by people with albinism. The Conference was noted [here](#).

West Africa

On November 26th, the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) said half a billion liters of oil were taken from the pipeline that runs northeast from Lagos. The pipeline stretches 250 kilometers (km) from Lagos to Ilorin.

Government officials also blamed pipeline vandalism and theft in the oil sector for fuel shortages and damaging the economy. The situation was described [here](#).

On November 26th-27th, the AfDB hosted its first Transport Forum at AfDB headquartered in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire. The forum brought together a broad cross section of transportation stakeholders, including government officials, private sector executives, development partners, and NGOs to promote best practices, share experiences and research projects to solve emerging challenges faced by Africa, and to stimulate business and professional networking. Details were posted [here](#).

On November 27th, AfDB Resident Representative in Liberia Margaret Kilo launched a national radio broadcasting program dedicated to women's empowerment as an early celebration of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls and the 16 Days of Activism. The radio program, "Let Women Talk," will be dedicated to women's empowerment in the country. More information can be viewed [here](#).

On November 27th, Benin's Prime Minister Lionel Zinsou was named as the ruling party's candidate for February's presidential elections, following a meeting with President Thomas Boni Yayi and lawmakers in his party. A French-born former financier in his sixties, Zinsou is a nephew of former president Emile Derlin Zinsou and a key figure in relations between France and Africa. Zinsou had also worked for investment bank Rothschild and was special advisor to Benin's president from 2006 to 2011. The candidate was profiled [here](#).

On November 27th, a police commissioner was killed in clashes in northern Togo between police and demonstrators protesting against plans to relocate them from a nature reserve they had settled in. Reports indicated that police responded with tear gas when hundreds of protestors began throwing rocks at authorities. According to the Security Ministry, 35 people were arrested in connection to the violence. More information can be found [here](#).

On November 28th, two Guinean U.N. peacekeepers and one civilian contractor were killed in a rocket attack on a U.N. base in Kidal, Mali. The attack on the U.N. Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) site, thought to be carried out by Islamist militants, also left 14 people seriously injured. The attack was reported [here](#).

On November 28th, the U.N. strongly condemned a mortar attack on a MINUSMA camp in restive northern Mali, which left two peacekeepers and a civilian contractor dead, and 20 others injured. Additionally, the U.N. Security Council called on the Malian Government to swiftly investigate the incident and bring the perpetrators to justice. Details can be found [here](#).

On November 30th, the Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) completed the sixth and seventh reviews of Niger's economic performance under the program supported by an Extended Credit Facility (ECF) arrangement. The completion of these reviews enables an immediate disbursement of about \$53.7 million, bringing total disbursements under the ECF arrangement to \$131.35 million. A press release was posted [here](#).

On November 30th, the World Bank highlighted its support for the Institute for Biodiversity and Protected Areas (IBAP) in Guinea-Bissau, which was launched to protect biodiversity in the country by coordinating the management of protected areas, mapping out species and ecosystems for monitoring, developing action plans for endangered species, and working to create new protected areas. The IBAP is critical to Guinea-Bissau's development, especially as so many of the country's economic activities rely on natural resources. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On November 30th, a British law firm filed a lawsuit on behalf of 142 claimants against African Minerals Limited (AML), a British company accused of evictions and alleged violent treatment of workers and villagers living near one of its iron ore mines in Sierra Leone. According to the filing, AML is accused of complicity in false imprisonment, assault and battery, trespassing, and theft of property, and is also implicated in a fatal shooting that occurring during a protest over pay and working conditions. The full story is available [here](#).

On December 1st, the African Legal Support Facility (ALSF) and its partners concluded a five-day training for government officials on the legal aspects of preparing Public Private Partnerships (PPP). Participants included regulators, private and public lawyers, professional services practitioners, and financiers representing Benin,

Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Congo, Gabon, Guinea, Mauritania, Niger, and the West African Development Bank. The training was conducted within the framework of the ALSF's capacity building pillar and was aimed at strengthening the capacity of government officials to structure PPP projects so as to bridge Africa's infrastructure financing needs. An article on the training can be read [here](#).

On December 1st, Nigerian former Minister of State for Finance Bashir Yuguda was arrested by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in connection with the investigation into the \$2 billion arms deal that former National Security Adviser (NSA) Sambo Dasuki used to embezzle funds while hampering the fight against Boko Haram. NSA Dasuki was arrested on November 18th. The investigation was outlined [here](#).

On December 1st, *Bloomberg* reported Burger King will open its first restaurant in West Africa this month at a shopping mall in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire. Currently, Burger King is only operating in South Africa, but has developed an international development strategy that includes the opening of more Burger King restaurants in West Africa in the next five years. More information can be found [here](#).

On December 3rd, a spokesperson for Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari announced President Buhari will hold a bilateral meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping during the China-Africa Cooperation Summit to be held in South Africa later this week. During the meeting, President Buhari is anticipated to ask President Xi to fund rail and power projects in the country to help the economy recover from a dip in oil prices. An article on the meeting was published [here](#).

On December 3rd, the Nigerian Communications Commission agreed to reduce the record \$5.1 billion fine on mobile carrier MTN to just \$3.4 billion following negotiations between both parties. The fine is connected to MTN's failure to adhere to the Commission's demands that it disconnect over five million unregistered SIM cards from its network. Details were posted [here](#).

On December 3rd, 11 people, including seven soldiers were killed when 15 unidentified gunmen attacked two military camps in Cote d'Ivoire along the border with Liberia. Three similar attacks have been recorded over the past two years. Ten additional Ivorian soldiers were injured and the military detained eight assailants, killing four others in the clashes. The attacks were reported [here](#).

Sub-Saharan Africa

On November 26th, Bank of America announced it will stop supplying U.S. dollars to Angola at the end of the November in a move that could pile pressure on the oil exporter's ailing kwanza currency. Angola's kwanza has weakened by 30 percent this year and far more on the parallel market as subdued oil prices hit Africa's second largest crude exporter. The situation was described [here](#).

On November 26th, the Democratic Republic of Congo's (DRC) powerful Catholic Church called on citizens to defy any attempt by President Joseph Kabila to hold on to power beyond the end of his term next year. More than 40 percent of the DRC identifies as Catholic. The Church has been outspoken on the subject of Kabila's future, notably condemning the government's crackdown on anti-government protests in January that left about 40 people dead. The Church's position was articulated [here](#).

On November 26th, eight men from western Zimbabwe were arrested on suspicion of the cyanide poisoning of more than 60 elephants in the Hwange National Park in the last three months. They were arrested by members of the border control unit of the Zimbabwe Republic Police and Parks and Wildlife Management Authority and were accused of being part of a poaching syndicate. The arrests were announced [here](#).

On November 27th, UNICEF warned that nearly half of the world's child brides in 2050 will be African if current trends persist due to the continent's rapid population growth and lagging social reforms. A UNICEF report released at the AU Girls Summit in Lusaka, Zambia, shows the total numbers of child brides in Africa will more than double, rising from 125 million to 310 million over the next 35 years, largely because of slow rates of reduction combined with rapid population growth. The report's findings were highlighted [here](#).

On November 30th, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called for swift action to bring to justice the perpetrators of a rebel attack against the U.N. Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO), pledging continued

support in the battle against rebel forces. One peacekeeper from Malawi was killed and another wounded during a heavy exchange of fire when the Ugandan rebel Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) attacked a MONUSCO base of in North Kivu province. The attack was reported [here](#).

On December 1st, Amos Chanda, a spokesperson for Zambian President Edgar Lungu indicated the government was expecting to finalize \$1 billion in Chinese investment and loans during the China-Africa summit in Johannesburg, South Africa planned for later this week. Spokesperson Chanda said Zambia was expected to conclude deals with China on infrastructure projects, including roads, railways, and power generation, as well as in agriculture. For more information, click [here](#).

On December 1st, Bank of Mozambique Governor Ernesto Gove said the government is developing a policy that will limit the use of credit and debit cards by its citizens abroad in order to stem foreign exchange outflows and protect the country's economy. Credit and debit card transactions by Mozambicans abroad jumped to \$800 million last year from \$300 million in 2012. Governor Gove's remarks were recorded [here](#).

On December 1st, Petra Diamonds and Ekapa Minerals agreed to pay De Beers \$7.2 million for Kimberly Mines in South Africa. Kimberly Mines produced 722,000 carats of diamonds last year, making it De Beers' biggest source of the stones in South Africa after the Venetia site in Limpopo province. The mine is expected to continue to produce roughly 700,000 carats a year with annual revenue of about \$65 million for the next three years. The sale was discussed [here](#).

On December 2nd, U.N. helicopters launched strikes against Ugandan ADF rebels in the northeastern part of the DRC in response to attacks on military bases near the town of Eringeti earlier this week that killed 30 people. Missiles were fired at ADF positions several miles southeast of Eringeti and are thought to have caused significant rebel losses. The airstrikes were noted [here](#).

On December 2nd, senior South African government officials traveled to the DRC to deliver gifts to South African peacekeepers supporting MONUSCO. Due to budgetary pressures, troop rotations were recently extended from six months to a year for the contingent. South African military Chief of Operations Major General Barney Hlatshwayo met with troops at the Goma airport and encouraged them to keep up the good work. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On December 2nd, Britain's Prince Harry visited South Africa's Kruger National Park, where he saw the carcasses of a slaughtered rhino and her calf. Noting that poachers have killed 1,500 rhinos in South Africa since the start of the year, Prince Harry warned that legalization of the rhino horn trade will accelerate the path to extinction for the threatened species. His visit to South Africa was outlined [here](#).

On December 3rd, following a bilateral meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping, South African President Jacob Zuma announced the leaders signed deals worth \$6.5 billion, marking a new high in South Africa-China relations. In their meeting, Presidents Zuma and Xi discussed strategies for boosting investment and trade between the two countries. Their meeting was summarized [here](#).

On December 3rd, a South African appeals court found Paralympian Oscar Pistorius guilty of murder, overturning the earlier manslaughter verdict in the case relating to Pistorius' killing of his girlfriend, Reeva Steenkamp. Pistorius, who is currently under house arrest after spending one year of his original, five-year sentence in prison, will have to return to court to be resentenced. The minimum sentence for murder in South Africa is 15 years. The full story is available [here](#).

On December 3rd, the 2015 MasterCard African Cities Growth Index was released, unveiling Maputo, Mozambique as the large African city with the highest potential for inclusive growth. Other high ranking cities included Casablanca, Morocco, Lagos, Nigeria, and Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire. Additional analysis can be seen [here](#).

General Africa News

On November 26th, the Chair of the AU Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma announced that marriage can oppress women. She said the AU is in the process of executing a campaign that was designed to discourage the practice of child marriage. Her comments were transcribed [here](#).

On December 1st, Transparency International released the results of a new poll finding that despite democracy spreading throughout Africa and improvements in health care, education, and the economy, some Africans believe corruption may be getting worse. In South Africa, 83 percent of those surveyed thought corruption is growing, as did 75 percent of respondents in Nigeria. Meanwhile, most people surveyed in Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, and Burkina Faso thought corruption is on the decline. The survey findings were analyzed [here](#).

On December 1st, the Woodrow Wilson Center's (WWC) Africa Program held a discussion on "Doing Business in Africa: Addressing the Corruption Factor." Speakers included Ambassador of Mauritius to the U.S. Soorojdev Phokeer, Jan Dunin-Wasowicz of Hughes, Hubbard, & Reed, Christiaan Poortman of Transparency International, and Africa Program Director Monde Muyangwa. A recording of the event can be watched [here](#).

On December 1st, independent analyst and consulting firm Ovum projected the number of mobile broadband connections in Africa will reach one billion in 2020, up from 147 million at the end of 2014. According to the firm's research, the rapid growth of mobile broadband on the continent will be driven by factors such as the ongoing rollout of 3G W-CDMA and 4G LTE networks and the increasing affordability of smartphones and other data devices. Additional information was shared [here](#).

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