



## ML Strategies Update

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FEBRUARY 11, 2016

## Africa Update

### Leading the News

#### ***Burundi***

On February 5<sup>th</sup>, newly elected African Union (AU) Assembly Chairman and President of Chad Idriss Deby appointed a high-level delegation of five African heads of state to negotiate with factions in Burundi over the possible deployment of a peacekeeping mission to the country. The delegation includes Mauritanian President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, South African President Jacob Zuma, Senegalese President Mack Sall, Gabonese President Ali Bongo Ondimba, and Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn. Details can be seen [here](#).

On February 6<sup>th</sup>, three grenade explosions rocked a bar in Bujumbura, Burundi, killing four people and injuring 12 others. The bombing followed a separate attack on Friday executed by the Republic Forces of Burundi (FOREBU) armed group, which killed at least five people, including security personnel. FOREBU has been a leading force in opposing President Pierre Nkurunziza's controversial reelection for a third term in office. The situation was described [here](#).

On February 9<sup>th</sup>, the Burundi Revenue Office (OBR) reported the country's tax revenue fell 17 percent in the last quarter of 2015, following months of political violence sparked by President Pierre Nkurunziza's announcement of his decision to run for a controversial third term. OBR Commissioner General Domitien Ndiwokubwayo said collections were short in forecasts and results, due primarily to the impacts of the security situation on the Burundian economy. Details can be viewed [here](#).

#### ***Libya***

On February 4<sup>th</sup>, U.S. Department of State Spokesperson John Kirby said the State Department believes the best way forward in Libya is the movement towards the unity government and to political solutions to problems in the country. Spokesperson Kirby said the best antidote to a group like the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), and to terrorism in general, is good governance. He noted the U.S. Government will continue monitoring ISIL's presence in Libya and do what is necessary to protect the American people and U.S. interests overseas. Spokesperson Kirby's comments were transcribed [here](#).

On February 8<sup>th</sup>, Brigadier General Saqr al-Jaroushi, Chief of Staff of the Libyan Air Force, reported a Libyan MIG32 fighter jet was shot down while carrying out airstrikes against ISIL and other militias' positions in Derna. The pilot ejected and landed safely. The incident comes a day after four civilians were killed by an airstrike on Derna, which the Libyan Air Force suggested was carried out by Egyptian forces. Details were posted [here](#).

On February 8<sup>th</sup>, during a visit to Washington, DC for meetings with members of the Obama Administration, Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry said the international community should not intervene against ISIL in Libya until a Libyan government has formed and officially requested such assistance. Minister Shoukry said the Libyan people should undertake the decisions related to the fight against terrorism and how it should be conducted, as well as what form of assistance should be provided. His comments were captured [here](#).

On February 9<sup>th</sup>, U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Bob Corker (R-TN) said the Obama Administration is on the verge of taking actions against ISIL in Libya. While he declined to comment on what kind of action the White House may be considering and on what timeline, Senator Corker expressed his belief the Administration believes the estimated 5,000 ISIL fighters in Libya are a problem that must be dealt with. Senator Corker's remarks were recorded [here](#).

On February 10<sup>th</sup>, the U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee held a hearing titled "From Iraq and Syria to Libya and Beyond: The Evolving ISIL Threat." The Committee received testimony from Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL Brett McGurk. The hearing was noticed [here](#).

On February 11<sup>th</sup>, groups of ISIL fighters were reported to be quitting their bases in Libya fearing Western air strikes and heading south. The movement of ISIL fighters is thought to pose a new threat to countries in Africa's Sahel region, such as Niger and Chad. Developments reported by military and intelligence officials were noted [here](#).

### ***Central African Republic***

On February 5<sup>th</sup>, Human Rights Watch released a new report documenting evidence that United Nations (U.N.) peacekeepers in the Central African Republic (CAR) from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Republic of Congo (ROC) raped or sexually abused at least eight women and girls between October and December 2015. According to Human Rights Watch, the U.N. must not only send the peacekeepers home, but also insist their home countries' bring the troops to justice. The report's findings were highlighted [here](#).

On February 9<sup>th</sup>, the U.N. Security Council acknowledged the situation in the CAR continues to threaten international peace and security and unanimously adopted a resolution maintaining the personnel ceiling for the U.N. Multidimensional Mission in the CAR (MINUSCA). The resolution states MINUSCA will comprise up to 10,750 military personnel and 2,080 police personnel. The Security Council also increased the number of corrections officers participating in the mission. Details can be seen [here](#).

On February 10<sup>th</sup>, as the CAR continued preparations for the second round of voting in the country's presidential election to be held this weekend, U.N. Special Representative for the CAR and head of MINUSCA Parfait Onanga-Anyanga called for both authorities and armed groups in the CAR, as well as the international community, to support the electoral process, reject all forms of violence, and respect the results of the polls. Special Representative Onanga-Anyanga's plea came as the U.N. prepared a report, to be released later this month, detailing human rights abuses documented in Bangui late last year. Details are available [here](#).

### ***Nigeria***

On February 8<sup>th</sup>, U.S. Congresswoman Karen Bass (D-CA), Ranking Member of the House Foreign Affairs Africa Subcommittee, hosted an event in Washington, DC on Boko Haram and its regional impact in 2016. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield delivered keynote remarks. Event details were posted [here](#). Assistant Secretary Thomas-Greenfield's remarks can be read [here](#).

On February 9<sup>th</sup>, two female suicide bombers killed more than 60 people at a camp for people displaced by the Boko Haram insurgency in Dikwa, Nigeria. The two women reportedly snuck into the camp and detonated themselves in the middle of it. An additional 78 people were injured. While there no immediate claim of responsibility of the attack, it bore the hallmarks of other attacks perpetrated in northeastern Nigeria by Boko Haram. The explosions were reported [here](#).

On February 10<sup>th</sup>, two Boko Haram suicide bombers blew themselves up at a Muslim funeral service in Nguetchewe, Cameroon. This is the latest in a string of attacks in which Boko Haram fighters have crossed the border from Nigeria into Cameroon. It is also the first known Boko Haram strike on a funeral gathering, although the group has previously attacked a baptism. The suicide bombing was detailed [here](#).

### ***West Africa Ebola Outbreak***

On February 5<sup>th</sup>, Memunta Kalokoh, Sierra Leone's last known Ebola patient, was released from the Sierra Leone Army Medical Unit in Freetown where she was receiving treatment for the virus. Kalokoh is the aunt of Mariatu Jalloh, the Ebola patient who died last month in the same week the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the country Ebola-free. The country has now again started the 42-day countdown after which the outbreak will be declared over if there are no new cases. Kalokoh's discharge was reported [here](#).

## **United States – Africa Relations**

### ***White House***

On February 5<sup>th</sup>, the White House issued a statement on the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C). The White House noted it is funding programming to combat FGM/C in places like Guinea, while also launching a range of actions at home to stop the practice. Further, the White House called on girls and their families, teachers, health workers, community and religious leaders, and government officials to act together to make a difference by putting the practice of FGM/C to an end and enabling women and girls to meet their full potential. The statement can be read [here](#).

### ***State Department***

On February 5<sup>th</sup>, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield delivered remarks at the Mandela Washington Fellowship Host University Retreat in Washington, DC. Assistant Secretary Thomas-Greenfield's participation was noted [here](#).

On February 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>, Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken traveled to Djibouti to lead the U.S. delegation to the second annual U.S.-Djibouti Binational Forum. In addition to his meetings with Djiboutian officials, Deputy Secretary Blinken met with U.S. troops stationed at Camp Lemonnier and Djiboutian youth to discuss efforts in the region to counter violent extremism. He also visited the Migrant Response Center and Markazi Refugee Camp in Obock to discuss regional migration, humanitarian assistance, and protection with refugees, local leadership, and international non-governmental organizations. Deputy Secretary Blinken's trip to Djibouti was outlined [here](#).

On February 7<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>, Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights Sarah Sewall was on travel to Egypt for meetings with government officials and civil society representatives to discuss countering violent extremism, transparency, governance, and human rights issues, including gender-based violence. While in Egypt, Under Secretary Sewall also delivered a public lecture on "The Role of Women in Overcoming Egypt's Economic and Security Challenges in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century." Her visit was summarized [here](#). Under Secretary Sewall's lecture was posted [here](#).

On February 8<sup>th</sup>, the State Department announced participating cities for the third annual Fishackathon, scheduled to take place April 22<sup>nd</sup>-24. Fishackathon is a public-private partnership that aims to capitalize on the expansion of mobile phone and internet use across the developing world to address sustainable fishery challenges. The city of Cape Town, South Africa, will participate in this year's event. For details, click [here](#).

On February 9<sup>th</sup>, Secretary of State John Kerry met with Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry at the Department of State. Secretary Kerry and Minister Shoukry discussed Egypt's economic challenges and political transition, as well as immediate security challenges in the region, such as the fight against ISIL and the need to stand up a government in Libya. Secretary Kerry's remarks with Minister Shoukry were transcribed [here](#).

On February 9<sup>th</sup>, the State Department issued a fact sheet on the President's FY17 budget request for the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). The fact sheet highlights funding requests to strengthen the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI), support the President's Power Africa Initiative,

and invest in global health priorities, including the President's Malaria Initiative and the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). The fact sheet can be downloaded [here](#).

On February 9<sup>th</sup>, the State Department and its implementing partner, IREX, selected 36 colleges and universities across the U.S. to host the 2016 Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders this summer. As part of the Mandela Washington Fellowship, 1,000 young leaders from sub-Saharan Africa will complete a six-week academic and leadership institute at one of the selected U.S. colleges and universities. Participating institutions were listed [here](#).

On February 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup>, Senior Advisor to the Secretary of State Ambassador David Thorne traveled to Egypt to discuss issues related to the Egyptian economy. In Cairo, Ambassador Thorne met with senior Egyptian officials and business executives, as well as representatives of U.S. businesses operating in Egypt. Ambassador Thorne then traveled to Luxor, where he met with local officials and visited projects sponsored by USAID. Ambassador Thorne's time in Egypt was outlined [here](#).

On February 10<sup>th</sup>, Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, Tom Malinowski met with Moroccan Minister Delegate of Foreign Affairs Mbarka Boualda at the Department of State. Their meeting was listed [here](#).

On February 10<sup>th</sup>, U.S. Special Envoy to Africa's Great Lakes Region Tom Perriello warned a political crisis is growing in DRC over the possibility that President Joseph Kabila might seek a third term in office. Special Envoy Perriello said if President Kabila sought a third term in the November elections, even though the constitution bars such a move, it could undermine the DRC's political and economic gains of the past decade. His remarks were recorded [here](#).

On February 11<sup>th</sup>, Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with Moroccan Minister Delegate for Foreign Affairs Mbarka Boualda at the Department of State. The meeting was included on the Department's daily appointment schedule, which can be accessed [here](#).

On February 11<sup>th</sup>, U.S. Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region of Africa Thomas Perriello departed for an extended trip to Africa including stops in Angola, South Africa, Burundi, the DRC, and Tanzania, focused on supporting regional efforts to resolve the crisis in Burundi and support upcoming elections in the DRC. During his trip, Special Envoy Perriello will engage with regional and Burundian stakeholders and East African Community (EAC) leadership about next steps for advancing dialogue and creating conditions for the deployment of human rights monitors to Burundi. Special Envoy Perriello is also scheduled to meet with Congolese stakeholders to discuss how to move the country's electoral process forward. Finally, Special Envoy Perriello will attend the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) Summit in Luanda, the Private Sector Investment Conference in Kinshasa, and the EAC Heads of State Summit in Arusha. His travels were outlined [here](#).

### ***U.S. Agency for International Development***

On February 9<sup>th</sup>, Archip Lobo, project manager for the Sharing Land initiative in the DRC, authored a blog post for USAID's Impact Blog highlighting the ways technology is being used to help local communities improve the way they manage land ownership and address disputes. Land conflict has long been an issue in the eastern part of the DRC, hindering economic development and urban planning. The blog post can be read [here](#).

On February 10<sup>th</sup>, Lindsey Spanner of USAID's Nutrition Team at the Global Health Bureau in Washington, DC called attention to a USAID project launched in Ghana to teach women how to cultivate sweet potato crops as part of a broader initiative to counter Vitamin A deficiency. The project is being carried out under USAID's Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy, which Ghana is one of the first countries to adopt. More information was posted [here](#).

On February 11<sup>th</sup>, USAID issued its regular Power Africa Newsletter. This most recent edition of the newsletter highlights the new Power Africa Roadmap and Power Africa Tracking Tool (PATT) launched at the Powering Africa Summit held in Washington, DC, as well as President Barack Obama's signing of the Electrify Africa Act into law. The Newsletter can be downloaded [here](#).

### ***Department of Defense***

On February 4<sup>th</sup>, members of the Ghanaian Navy, U.S. Navy, and U.S. Coast Guard conducted a combined maritime law enforcement operation as part of the African Maritime Law Enforcement Partnership (AMLEP). AMLEP, which is being conducted within the framework of Ghana's maritime laws in its territorial waters and economic exclusion zone (EEZ), is a companion to the international collaborative capacity-building initiative, African Partnership Station (APS). It is designed to enable African maritime forces to effectively patrol their waters and combat illicit maritime activity. Details can be seen [here](#).

On February 8<sup>th</sup>, the annual Flintock exercise kicked off in Thies, Senegal with an opening ceremony that brought together senior leaders and guests from more than 30 participating countries. The Flintock exercise started in 2005 across the Sahel region of Africa with participants comprising the Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership. The exercises are planned by African partner nation Special Operations Forces and Special Operations Command Africa to develop the capacity and collaboration among African security forces to protect civilian populations. More information can be found [here](#).

On February 8<sup>th</sup>, speaking on the sidelines of the Flintock exercise underway in Senegal, Brigadier General Donald Bolduc, head of the U.S. military's Special Operations Command Africa, said violent extremist groups and their affiliates are collaborating more in North Africa, and regional forces must be built up and supported with deeper intelligence sharing to counter the increasing threat of attacks. While noting military coordination will be vital to defeating extremist groups in Africa, Commander Bolduc also encouraged work with civil administrations to connect from the ground up to deal with the threat. For more information, click [here](#).

On February 9<sup>th</sup>, Nigerian Chief of Defense Staff (CDS) General Abayomi Gabriel Olonisakin, along with several of his most senior military officers, met with U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) Commander General David Rodriguez and AFRICOM component commanders at AFRICOM headquarters in Stuttgart, Germany. The military leaders discussed strategies for security cooperation. Their meetings were summarized [here](#).

On February 10<sup>th</sup>, the Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) highlighted U.S. Air Forces Africa Commander General Frank Gorenc's recent visit to Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti to visit deployment airmen and highlight their importance to the East African region. Commander Gorenc visited several facilities, spoke and ate with Airmen, and hosted an All Call for Air Force personnel assigned to CJTF-HOA. Details were shared [here](#).

### ***Department of Commerce***

On February 5<sup>th</sup>, the Department of Commerce published a blog post summarizing Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker's recent fact-finding mission to Africa with the President's Advisory Council on Doing Business in Africa (PAC-DBIA). The goal of the group's visit to Rwanda and Nigeria was for the PAC-DBIA members to listen and learn from local stakeholders as they develop recommendations for President Barack Obama and Secretary Pritzker to guide the Administration's policy choices with respect to enhancing commercial ties between the U.S. and countries across Africa. The blog post can be accessed [here](#).

### ***U.S. African Development Foundation***

On February 9<sup>th</sup>, the U.S. African Development Foundation (USADF) announced the passing of President and CEO Shari Berenbach, who had been suffering from advanced breast cancer. As the leader of USADF since 2012, Berenbach was a pioneer in promoting economic growth and prosperity in Africa and an advocate of impact investing for vulnerable and underserved populations, promoting investments that generate beneficial social and environmental impact, and ensuring the resilience of USADF grantees and their communities. Berenbach's legacy was honored [here](#).

### ***Millennium Challenge Corporation***

On February 9<sup>th</sup>, the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) applauded the \$1 billion included in the President's FY17 budget request to support MCC in fighting global poverty through economic growth in the coming year. The MCC said the President's budget will allow MCC to deepen partnerships in Africa, where roughly 65 percent of the agency's compact portfolio has been invested. In particular, the budget will support a threshold program with Togo

and a compact with Lesotho, both of which have improved their performance on MCC's annual scorecard. MCC is also developing compacts with Cote d'Ivoire and Senegal. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On February 9<sup>th</sup>, MCC CEO Dana Hyde released a statement following the passing of President and CEO of USADF Shari Berenbach. Hyde said Berenbach was a friend, role model, and champion of America's effort to spread prosperity and hope around the world. As the head of USADF, she brought new ideas, energy, and innovation to the agency's efforts to help African entrepreneurs and farmers lift up their communities and spur economic growth across Africa. CEO Hyde's full statement can be read [here](#).

### ***Overseas Private Investment Corporation***

On February 9<sup>th</sup>, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) highlighted its partnership with Envirofit International. Earlier this year, OPIC committed a \$4 million loan to Envirofit to help advance the company's mission to develop clean cookstoves to reduce indoor air pollution, a major health threat throughout the developing world. Envirofit has invested in centralized and regional manufacturing in key markets, including in East and West Africa. The partnership was highlighted [here](#).

On February 11<sup>th</sup>, OPIC announced the extension of the Portfolio for Impact (PI), a successful pilot program first launched in May 2014 to facilitate the financing of highly developmental and innovative early-stage projects, which otherwise face challenges in attracting growth capital. During the initial phase of PI, OPIC commitments of over \$30 million have supported sever projects across the developing world, including in many countries in Africa. Details were released [here](#).

### ***Congress***

On February 8<sup>th</sup>, Senators Bob Corker (R-TN), Ben Cardin (D-MD), Marco Rubio (R-FL), and Chris Coons (D-DE), all members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, applauded President Obama's signing of the Electrify Africa Act into law. The legislation, which was unanimously passed by the Senate last year and passed by the House of Representatives last week, will leverage private sector resources through loan guarantees to help 50 million Africans access electricity for the first time and add 20,000 megawatts (MW) of electricity to the grid by 2020. A press release was issued [here](#).

On February 8<sup>th</sup>, House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Ed Royce (R-CA) applauded enactment of the Electrify Africa Act. Congressman Royce said the bill stands to improve the lives of millions in sub-Saharan Africa by helping to reduce reliance on charcoal and other toxic fuel sources that produce fumes that kill more than HIV/AIDS and malaria combined. He said the legislation will also promote the development of affordable and reliable energy in Africa, creating new opportunities for U.S. job creators looking to compete in the continent's growing markets. Congressman Royce's statement was posted [here](#).

On February 10<sup>th</sup>, Senators Ben Cardin (D-MD), Chris Coons (D-DE), and Tim Kaine (D-VA), members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, praised the Committee's passage of a resolution congratulating the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet for winning the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize. The resolution commends the Quartet for forging peaceful political compromise and reaffirms the U.S. commitment to support Tunisia as it continues on the path to democracy, stability, and prosperity. The Committee's passage of the resolution was noted [here](#).

On February 10<sup>th</sup>, the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee held a hearing on "U.S. Policy in Central Africa: The Imperative of Good Governance." The Committee received testimony from Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield and U.S. Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region of Africa Thomas Perriello. Testimony was also provided by former U.S. Ambassador to the DRC Roger Meece and Washington Director for Human Rights Watch Sarah Margon. A webcast of the hearing can be watched [here](#).

### **North Africa**

On February 5<sup>th</sup>, U.N. human rights expert on the situation in Sudan Aristide Nononsi observed that a new escalation of violence has forced tens of thousands of civilians to flee their homes in the Jebel Marra area of Darfur, triggering new protection and humanitarian concerns. Noting that ongoing hostilities between government forces and the Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid have resulted in human rights violations and violations of international

humanitarian law, Nononsi called on the Government of Sudan to create the conditions for an inclusive dialogue to ensure the participation of all armed opposition groups and advance peace and reconciliation. His feedback was articulated [here](#).

On February 6<sup>th</sup>, Tunisia Minister of Defense Farhat Hachani said security forces have completed the construction of a fence along its border with Libya intended to keep ISIL militants out of the country. As a follow on measure, Minister Hachani noted European and American military trainers will soon train Tunisian forces to improve electronic surveillance along the border. Details can be seen [here](#).

On February 6<sup>th</sup>, *The New York Times* reported the Moroccan Government has yet to release Younis Shokuri, a Moroccan detainee previously held at Guantanamo Bay (GTMO) and transferred to the Government of Morocco in September. Despite the Moroccan Government's assurances that it would likely release Shokuri within 72 hours without charges, Moroccan authorities continue to detain Shokuri and are allegedly considering criminal charges related to his involvement with a Moroccan terrorist organization. The full story is available [here](#).

On February 7<sup>th</sup>, an official delegation of seven Executive Directors (EDs) of the African Development Bank (AfDB) arrived in Cairo for a six-day consultation mission to Egypt. The EDs sit on the Board at the AfDB's headquarters in Abidjan and provide oversight of the AfDB's lending and operational activities. The trip was reported [here](#).

On February 7<sup>th</sup>, the Egyptian Interior Ministry announced that Egyptian police had shot dead four suspected Afnad Misr militants inside a house a few miles from central Cairo. Afnad Misr emerged in January 2014 and is thought to be behind a number of attacks targeting security forces in and around the city. The fighters who were killed were suspects in the killing of two policemen, a soldier, and a civilian, and were also suspected of blowing up a police vehicle and bombing a security checkpoint. Details were provided [here](#).

On February 7<sup>th</sup>, Algeria's parliament adopted a package of constitutional reforms that authorities say will strengthen democracy. The reforms include a two-term limit on the presidency, a requirement for the president to nominate a prime minister from the largest party in parliament, and a restriction preventing Algerians with dual nationality from running for high posts in public office. The package also included a measure to recognize the Amazigh language spoken by the indigenous Berber population as an official language of Algeria. The reform package was further detailed [here](#).

On February 8<sup>th</sup>, the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP), and the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) warned that South Sudan is facing unprecedented levels of food insecurity, especially as there has been an increase in the number of people in need of food assistance during the post-hard period, when the country traditionally has the most food. According to the U.N., roughly 2.8 million people, or nearly 25 percent of the population, are in need of urgent food aid. More information can be found [here](#).

On February 8<sup>th</sup>, Egyptian President Abdul Fattah Al-Sisi came under scrutiny for the rollout of red carpet for the arrival of his motorcade at the opening of a social housing project in 6<sup>th</sup> of October City. Critics argued the red carpet evidenced the wastefulness of the Sisi Administration during a time when much of the country suffers from high levels of poverty. An article on the criticism can be read [here](#).

On February 8<sup>th</sup>, *The New York Times* provided an update on the ongoing protests over youth unemployment in Kasserine, Tunisia. For the past three weeks, several hundred jobless youths have occupied part of the governor's office demanding employment. Most recently, some of the protestors have started a hunger strike. More information was posted [here](#).

On February 9<sup>th</sup>, the World Bank highlighted its South Sudan Rural Roads Project, which was created to finance the construction of better, smoother roads in rural areas in the southern part of the country. The new roads have been effective in promoting growth for the predominantly agricultural communities by enhancing connectivity to markets, schools, and health care. The project's success was highlighted [here](#).

On February 9<sup>th</sup>, wheat company Bunge Ltd. initiated legal proceedings against the Egyptian Government over a cargo of grain that was rejected in December for containing traces of the potentially dangerous ergot fungus. Bunge insists the shipment met the quality standards of the Egyptian General Authority for Supply Commodities (GASC),

the state grain buyer. The incident has resulted in hesitance among wheat suppliers to sell to Egypt. The full story is available [here](#).

On February 10<sup>th</sup>, Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir replaced Lieutenant General Mostafa Obeid as the head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. His successor, Lieutenant General Emadeddine Mostaga Adawi, who played a leading role in negotiations with anti-government rebels, is viewed as a loyalist to President Bashir. The change came as part of a broader reshuffling of Sudan's military leaders. Details can be seen [here](#).

On February 10<sup>th</sup>, U.N. Humanitarian Coordinator for South Sudan Eugene Owusu called for urgent funding to allow aid organizations to rapidly increase humanitarian action during the current dry season. Roughly \$20.3 million has been allocated to top priority projects from the South Sudan Common Humanitarian Fund, but \$220 million more is required for urgent assistance that will be needed before the end of the dry season in May. For more information, click [here](#).

## [East Africa](#)

On February 4<sup>th</sup>, U.N. Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman traveled to Mogadishu, Somalia to show support for last month's breakthrough political achievement in selecting an electoral model to be used later this year. The model envisions a Lower House of 275 members based on maintenance of the 4.5 power sharing formula between the clans, and an Upper House of 54 members based on equal representation of existing, emerging, and prospective federal member states and the allocation of additional seats to the pre-existing entities of Puntland and Somaliland. During his visit, Under-Secretary-General Feltman met with Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud and Speaker of the Federal Parliament Mohamed Sheikh Osman Jawari to reinforce the U.N.'s support. Details were posted [here](#).

On February 4<sup>th</sup>, Atheists in Kenya (AIK) argued they accused Kenyan authorities of blatant discrimination after they refused to register their society late last year. AIK was told their application was turned down because of concerns that registration could affect peace and good order in the country. The group plans to take the case to court, where it will argue group members' constitutional right to freedom of association has been violated. The full story is available [here](#).

On February 5<sup>th</sup>, Al Shabaab claimed to have taken control of the port city of Merca, Somalia. Despite the radical group's claims, the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) disputed Al Shabaab's account and said it still had control of the town despite a readjustment of its positions. According to witnesses, Al Shabaab secured the town without any fighting, raising its flag over the city's police station and other administrative buildings. Various accounts of the activity in Merca were reported [here](#).

On February 8<sup>th</sup>, the FAO produced a new assessment finding that food security and nutrition in Somalia is alarmingly high, and could be made worse in parts of Puntland and Somaliland hit by drought exacerbated by El Nino. According to the assessment, U.N. officials estimated 3.7 million people in the country will be acutely food insecure through mid-2016. Additional data was analyzed [here](#).

On February 8<sup>th</sup>, Daallo Airlines said the suspected suicide bomber who blew a hole in the side of a plane last week and forced it to make an emergency landing in Mogadishu, Somalia, was meant to be on a Turkish Airlines flight. Daallo picked up 70 stranded Turkish Airlines passengers to fly them to Djibouti after their flight was canceled. While there has been claim of responsibility for the bombing, the U.S. Government believes Al Shabaab was behind the attack. Developments were reported [here](#).

On February 9<sup>th</sup>, Ugandan police spokeswoman Polly Namaye reported that local security forces have purchased equipment to help with transportation, crowd control, and public order management leading up to the February 18<sup>th</sup> presidential election. Concerns about security have been high as incumbent President Yoweri Museveni is expected to see his toughest race yet against Kizza Besigye and Amama Mbabazi, a former prime minister and secretary general of the ruling party. Tensions related to the presidential race were described [here](#).

On February 9<sup>th</sup>, *Mail & Guardian* reported that attacks by Islamist militants in Kenya dropped to the lowest level in three years in 2015, attributing the decline to better intelligence gathering. In total, there were 46 attacks last year.

However, the April 2015 Al Shabaab attack on Garissa University, which killed 148 people, had the highest death toll of a single terrorist attack in Kenya in nearly two decades. Additional analysis was provided [here](#).

On February 10<sup>th</sup>, Uganda's main opposition said next week's elections still face the threat of rigging, even after authorities introduced a biometric system to register voters for the polls in which President Yoweri Museveni is seeking to extend his three-decade rule. The new voting system was detailed [here](#).

On February 10<sup>th</sup>, AMISOM indicated it had obtained reliable information that Al Shabaab fighters had stolen uniforms from camps run by the AU and are planning to launch attacks in Somalia disguised as peacekeepers. In the past year, Al Shabaab has staged attacks on multiple AU bases in the country, seeking to expel foreign troops and promote its harsh version of Islamic law. The intelligence on Al Shabaab's plans was detailed [here](#).

On February 11<sup>th</sup>, the Ugandan military announced the surrender of George Okot, a senior commander in warlord Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), in the CAR. Analysts believe the move is evidence of disarray in rebel ranks, which could strengthen the possibility of Kony's capture. Okot had fallen out with Kony after Kony learned that Okot aided the defection of another senior commander, Dominic Ongwen. The full story is available [here](#).

## [West Africa](#)

On February 4<sup>th</sup>, a consecration ceremony of the Timbuktu mausoleums was held as part of the final phase of the U.N.-backed cultural rebirth of the city after many Malian cultural sites were destroyed by radical Islamist rebels in 2012. Sixteen mausoleums in Mali are inscribed on the U.N. Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) World Heritage List and 14 were destroyed in 2012. For more information, click [here](#).

On February 4<sup>th</sup>, a court in Bo, Sierra Leone convicted six people opposed to a palm oil project to be executed by French conglomerate Bolloré of destroying trees and inciting the local population to protest over land rights. The defendants, who included a former lawmaker and members of a local landowners association, received sentences ranging from five to six months in prison, in addition to fines. In the past, Sierra Leone has seen riots launched by locals accusing mining and agribusiness companies of land grabs. An article on the case can be read [here](#).

On February 5<sup>th</sup>, following the identification of four cases of Lassa fever in Benin, the WHO and UNICEF launched a coordinated response against the epidemic. As part of its response, the U.N. will set up quarantine units in affected areas to separate suspected cases from other patients and limit the risks of exposure, as well as develop a tracing system to follow the contact cases in the affected zone. The U.N.'s reaction to the latest cases of Lassa fever was described [here](#).

On February 5<sup>th</sup>, a group of Islamist militants drove up to a U.N. base in the former Hotel Palmeraie at the entrance to Timbuktu, Mali and detonated a car bomb before taking over the building. In response, Malian troops backed by U.N. helicopters stormed the building and recaptured it from the extremist fighters. Malian Defense Minister Tieman Hubert Coulibaly said an army commander was killed in the operation, as well as three unidentified attackers. The clashes over control of the U.N. base were reported [here](#).

On February 5<sup>th</sup>, Nigerian Minister of Justice Abubakar Malami reported the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has recovered more than \$2 trillion looted from the national treasury in the past five years. Fifty-five former public officials are standing trial on corruption cases, including 15 former governors, four former ministers, and 12 public servants at both the federal and state levels. According to Minister Malami, the high rate of economic and financial crimes was possible in Nigeria due to severe mismanagement, the lack of a comprehensive legal framework, and weak law enforcement. His comments were captured [here](#).

On February 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>, Director of the Africa Department of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Antoinette Sayeh visited Sao Tome and Principe. During her visit, Director Sayeh met with Prime Minister Patrice Trovoada and several other senior government officials, members of the national parliament, donors, and representatives of the private sector and civil society to discuss the opportunities and challenges facing the country and how to transform stronger economic growth into better living standards for its citizens. Her trip was summarized [here](#).

On February 7<sup>th</sup>, suspected Icelder cultists attacked a gas storage facility in the run by Italian oil company Eni in the village of Akala, Nigeria. The attackers demanded the release of Emmanuel Odum, a suspect who has been detained for questioning in connection with other recent incidents of pipeline vandalism and cult-related activities. Attacks on oil installations in the Niger Delta have picked up in recent weeks surrounding the issuance of an arrest warrant for a former militant leader in the region, known as Tompolo. An article on the attacks was published [here](#).

On February 8<sup>th</sup>, Nigerian Minister of Solid Mineral Development Kayode Fayemi said authorities had completed a review of mining licenses and plans to publish the results next week. Minister Fayemi indicated an amnesty period for companies to comply would not be extended, and those companies found out of compliance could have their licenses revoked. The review is part of a strategy aimed at growing Nigeria's mining sector and diversifying its energy supply away from a reliance on crude oil. Minister Fayemi's comments were recorded [here](#).

On February 9<sup>th</sup>, a coalition of public and private media outlets came together to institute a press-free day in Guinea in honor of slain journalist El Hadji Mohamed Diallo. Diallo, who worked for the Guinee7 news website, was shot and killed on Friday in clashes outside the offices of an opposition party in Conakry. Bare newsstands were intended to draw attention to the risks faced by journalists reporting in the country. Details were shared [here](#).

On February 10<sup>th</sup>, while out on the campaign trail, Chadian President Idriss Deby said he will reintroduce constitutional term limits if reelected for a fifth term in April. President Deby rose to power in a 1990 coup and was most recently reelected in 2011. A 2005 referendum did away with constitutional term limits before President Deby was reelected in a controversial race the following year. Term limits in Chad were discussed [here](#).

On February 10<sup>th</sup>, AngloGold Ashanti confirmed John Owusu, the head of its corporate affairs in Ghana, was killed over the weekend during a riot started by illegal miners at its Obuasi mine. Since the violence, local police have been patrolling the mine, personnel have been asked to work from home, and the underground part of the mine has remained closed. The incident was detailed [here](#).

On February 11<sup>th</sup>, *Reuters* reported that Nigeria's most prominent Muslim leader Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky's compound was levelled after three days of clashes between the army and Shi'ite residents of the city of Zaria in December. According to human rights groups, hundreds of Shi'ites were killed in the violence. The army declined to give a Shi'ite death toll, but said one soldier was killed and five were wounded. More information was reported [here](#).

## Sub-Saharan Africa

On February 5<sup>th</sup>, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis (TB), and Malaria and a Regional Coordinating Mechanism (RCM) supported by the World Bank and representing a group of ten southern African countries signed a \$30 million grant to pioneer innovative models to reduce high rates of TB in the mining sector. The grant will specifically target interventions for TB in Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On February 5<sup>th</sup>, Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe declared a state of disaster in most rural parts of the country affected by drought and noted 26 percent of the population is in need of food aid. The declaration of the state of emergency was intended to push international donors to raise money for the provision of food assistance to Zimbabwe, which has already undertaken measures to boost maize imports to avert hunger. More information can be found [here](#).

On February 5<sup>th</sup>, the Makonjwa Lily gold mine, located in South Africa's eastern Mpumalanga province, collapsed after an underground pillar caved in, creating a sinkhole that swallowed a mobile office container. All 87 of the miners who were underground during the collapse were rescued. However, rescue efforts aimed at finding the three people who were in the mobile office when the mine collapsed continue. The incident was reported [here](#).

On February 8<sup>th</sup>, the U.N. reported at least 21 people were killed, 40 wounded, and dozens of houses burned in weekend attacks targeting Hutus in the eastern DRC. According to the U.N., the attacks were carried out by members of two militias, the Nande-dominated UPDI and the Nduma Defense Coalition (NDC), which consists mostly of members of the Nyanga ethnic group. In the past year, ethnic violence in the area has been high following the launch of a military offensive against the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR). The attacks were discussed [here](#).

On February 8<sup>th</sup>, South African Minister of Mineral Resources Mosebenzi Zwane said the South Africa Government wants the issue of economic empowerment in the mining sector to be settled outside the courts. More than a decade ago, revisions to the mining code required that black partners own 26 percent of mining companies in the country by 2014. The mining industry has since failed to meet these targets. More information was posted [here](#).

On February 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>, World Bank Vice President for the Africa Region Makhtar Diop visited Burkina Faso to inform the new authorities about the World Bank's commitment to supporting the country's economic and social development agenda. During his trip, Vice President Diop met with President Roch Marc Christian Kabore, Prime Minister Paul Kaba Thieba, and National Assembly President Salifou Diallo. This marks Vice President Diop's third trip to Burkina Faso since taking office in 2012 and the first visit of a high level official from the World Bank to Burkina Faso since the November presidential elections. His trip was announced [here](#).

On February 9<sup>th</sup>, South African opposition parties requested the country's constitutional court rule on whether President Jacob Zuma broke the law by using state funds to finance \$23 million in security upgrades to his home. The court is expected to announce a decision on taking up the case within the next few days. While President Zuma has denied any wrongdoing, last week he signaled he would refund the money spent on home improvements not related to security. Developments were noted [here](#).

On February 9<sup>th</sup>, Vinay Somera, Chief Executive of Isondo Precious Metals, said his firm is planning to build a fuel cell component plant in South Africa by 2018. The construction of the plant, which is viewed as an initiative intended to increase demand for platinum, allow Isondo to manufacture, market, and sell fuel cell components globally. More information was shared [here](#).

On February 9<sup>th</sup>, Jonah Ratsimbazafy, one of Madagascar's leading scientists, said more than 90 percent of Madagascar's lemurs are on the verge of extinction. It is a grim prediction for the primates, which are only found on Madagascar and the neighboring Comoros Islands. Ratsimbazafy's comments were captured [here](#).

On February 10<sup>th</sup>, the U.N. Development Programme (UNDP) announced it had raised \$60 million for food aid in Zimbabwe as it continues to feed one million people across the country affected by the worst drought in a quarter century. According to Bishow Parajuli, head of the UNDP Mission in Zimbabwe, the U.N. plans to raise \$130 million under an emergency fund to support Zimbabwe. More information can be accessed [here](#).

On February 10<sup>th</sup>, the WFP issued a situation report recording the lowest rainfall totals in many parts of Southern Africa in the last 35 years. Based on data collected from October to December, the WFP warned poor rainfall, combined with excessive temperatures, could create conditions not conducive for crop growth as the current growing season continues. The WFP noted this is particularly concerning as poor harvests were also recorded in 2014 and 2015. For more information, click [here](#).

On February 10<sup>th</sup>, the World Bank reported on food security and agricultural productivity in Burkina Faso. According to the World Bank, investments in agricultural productivity and food production systems have reduced food insecurity, and an innovative warehouse receipt system, known as warrantage, is allowing farmers to use their harvests as collateral to obtain credit. The full story is available [here](#).

On February 10<sup>th</sup>, speaking at a mining conference in Cape Town, South Africa, Zambian Deputy Finance Minister Christopher Mvunga said that Zambia plans to provide stable policies and a predictable tax regime to keep and attract mining business in the country, particularly for cooper. Zambia has resumed issuing new mining licenses and granting renewal and transfer of rights which were suspended in August 2015. More information can be found [here](#).

On February 10<sup>th</sup>, Angolan National Director of Health Adelaide de Carvalho said a yellow fever outbreak in Angola has killed 37 people since December, with eight new cases reported on Wednesday alone. More information can be found [here](#).

On February 11<sup>th</sup>, hundreds of protesters marched outside South Africa's parliament hours before an annual state-of-the-nation speech by President Jacob Zuma, whom they accuse of corruption and mismanaging the country's flagging economy. The atmosphere leading up to President Zuma's address was described [here](#).

On February 11<sup>th</sup>, Angola's new budget came out with significant cuts and topline spending 40 percent lower than two years ago. Budget challenges in the past two years have limited Angola's ability to provide public services, including rubbish collection and water sanitation, contributing to a surge in deadly diseases. Angola's budget challenges were described [here](#).

## **General Africa News**

On February 5<sup>th</sup>, on the International Day of Zero Tolerance for FGM/C, UNICEF revealed new statistics on the prevalence of FGM/C around the globe. The data shows at least 200 million girls and women alive today have undergone ritual cutting, with half of them residing in Indonesia, Egypt, and Ethiopia. Additionally, UNICEF noted Somalia has the highest prevalence of women and girls who have been cut, with 98 percent of the female population between the ages of 15 and 49 experiencing FGM. The data was analyzed [here](#).

On February 5<sup>th</sup>, the AfDB published a new report finding it is easier for North Americans to travel within Africa than for Africans themselves. To travel to other countries in Africa, Africans need visas to enter 55 percent of other countries on the continent. Twenty percent of African countries allow Africans to visit without visas and another 25 percent offer visas upon arrival. Meanwhile, North Americans require a visa to travel to only 45 percent of African countries. They can get a visa upon arrival in 35 percent of countries and do not need a visa at all in 25 percent of countries. The report can be downloaded [here](#).

On February 6<sup>th</sup>, UNESCO published its Global Education Monitoring report, highlighting that thousands of African children lack textbooks or must share them. The World Bank recommends that between three and five percent of a country's education budget be spent on textbooks, but in some African countries, such as Burundi and the CAR, that figure is only at one percent. Other problems contributing to the shortages include the late arrival or diversions of funds allocated for purchasing textbooks and the need to frequently replace textbooks produced cheaply. The report's findings were highlighted [here](#).

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