



ML Strategies Update

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Africa Update

Leading the News

Somalia

On March 5th, the U.S. military, in self-defense and in defense of African Union (AU) Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) partners, conducted an airstrike against Raso Camp, a training facility of Al Shabaab. The strike was conducted using manned and unmanned aircraft. According to the Pentagon, the fighters who were scheduled to depart the camp posed an immediate threat to U.S. and AMISOM forces in the country. The Pentagon argued the removal of these approximately 150 fighters degrades Al Shabaab's ability to meet its objectives in Somalia, including recruiting new members, establishing bases, and planning attacks. A statement on the airstrike was released [here](#).

On March 7th, the Australian Navy reported the seizure of a cache of weapons worth an estimated \$2 million, including nearly 2,000 AK-47 rifles, 100 rocket-propelled grenade launchers, and 49 PKM machine guns, near Oman's coast from a fishing vessel bound for Somalia. The United Nations (U.N.) has a decades-long arms embargo in place against Somalia, with some waivers that allow the Somali Government to purchase light weapons for fighting Al Shabaab. It was not clear who was the intended recipient of the confiscated weapons. The full story is available [here](#).

On March 8th, Al Shabaab confirmed the U.S. had bombed an area under its control, but argued the U.S. figure of more than 150 casualties was an exaggeration. Sheikh Abdiasis Abu Musab, the group's military spokesperson, said Al Shabaab would never gather more than 100 fighters in one spot for security reasons. However, he did not provide an adjusted death toll for the attack. Al Shabaab's description of the airstrike can be seen [here](#).

On March 8th, despite U.S. efforts to counter Al Shabaab, *The Washington Post* reported the Somali militant group is emerging as one of the most loyal and lethal Al Qaeda affiliates, even as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) expands its reach in Africa. While the U.S. has conducted airstrikes against various Al Shabaab positions in Somalia, the group has shown signs of its resurgence, including its ability to continue stage deadly attacks and assassinations. Additional analysis was reported [here](#).

On March 9th, the *Associated Press* reported that helicopters dropped U.S. Special Forces outside of Awdhegele, a town in Somalia controlled by Al Shabaab, leading to a firefight that killed more than ten extremists. While the exact target of the attack was not immediately clear, Somali intelligence officials indicated their belief that the high-profile target was, in fact, killed. According to the Pentagon, U.S. forces accompanied Somali troops who carried out the attack and served in an advisory capacity. An article on the mission can be read [here](#).

On March 9th, Al Shabaab confirmed it had fought off an attack on one of its bases in southern Somalia launched by foreign commandos who flew in on two helicopters. Al Shabaab's military spokesman Sheikh Abdiasis Abu Musab did not identify the nationality of the troops that launched the assault in the Awdhegele district of the Lower Shabelle area, and said only one Al Shabaab fighter was killed in the raid. For more information, click [here](#).

On March 9th, Al Shabaab claimed responsibility for a car bombing outside of a police station in Mogadishu that killed at least three police officers in training. A second device was detonated, but caused no casualties after police spotted it and caught two men thought to have laid the explosives. Al Shabaab cited a higher death toll in the attack, claiming it had killed ten police officers. Both accounts of the incident can be viewed [here](#).

Libya

On March 3rd, the Italian press reported 50 members of Italian special forces will join other Western forces in fight against terrorist in Libya. A small number of U.S., British, and French special forces have already been reported in the country. Last week, the United Kingdom (U.K.) announced it was also sending a team of 20 soldiers to Tunisia to train troops patrolling the border with Libya. Details were shared [here](#).

On March 3rd, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry met with U.N. Special Representative for Libya and head of the U.N. Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) Martin Kobler to discuss ongoing efforts to support a unified Government of National Accord in Libya. Secretary Kerry made clear the U.S. will continue to support Prime Minister al-Sarraj and the Government of National Accord as they take their rightful place in Tripoli and said he looks forward to seeing Libyan Political Dialogue members reconvene in Tunisia. He also expressed concern that, despite the efforts of a majority of Libyan leaders to seat this government, a small group of spoilers prevented a formal vote that would have endorsed the cabinet. A readout of the meeting was provided [here](#).

On March 8th, *The New York Times* reported the Pentagon has presented the White House with a detailed set of military options for attacking ISIL in Libya. The plan that U.S. Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter presented to President Barack Obama in late February allegedly included airstrikes against as many as 40 targets in four regions in Libya, such as training camps, command centers, munitions depots, and other ISIL positions. According to the Obama Administration, the plan is not actively under consideration, as the U.S. is continuing to implement a diplomatic strategy aimed at supporting the formation of a unity government in Libya. An article on the proposal can be read [here](#).

On March 10th, ISIL fighters attacked the Abu Grain checkpoint in Misrata, Libya, killing three security personnel. The checkpoint is located on the main road between Misrata and Sirte, which ISIL has controlled since late last year. Observers believe the attack may have been carried out in retaliation for Libyan airstrikes recently conducted against three different sites in Sirte, which left three children dead and their mother wounded. For more information, click [here](#).

Tunisia

On March 7th, at least 45 people were killed in clashes between Tunisian forces and Islamist extremists in the town of Ben Guerdane, which is located along the border with Libya. The attack began when gunmen targeted a police station and military facilities at dawn. According to the Tunisian Interior Ministry, 28 terrorists, seven civilians, and ten members of Tunisia's armed forces were killed in the fighting. In response to the attack, the Interior Ministry closed its two border crossings with Libya and imposed a night curfew until further notice. Details were reported [here](#).

On March 7th, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon condemned the terrorist attacks carried out on police and army posts in Ben Guerdane, Tunisia. Secretary-General Ban reiterated the U.N. commitment to standing with the people of Tunisia as they confront the scourge of terrorism and work to preserve the gains of the recent revolution. His response to the attack was articulated [here](#).

On March 7th, U.S. Department of State Spokesperson John Kirby condemned the terrorist attack in the town of Ben Guerdane, which he noted killed at least ten Tunisian security officials and five civilians. He extended condolences to the victims' families and commended the swift and courageous response of Tunisian security forces. Spokesperson Kirby also shared Tunisians' concerns about extremist activity, whether homegrown or

external, and the threat it poses to the country's stability and prosperity. Spokesperson Kirby also renewed the U.S. Government's offer to help the Tunisian Government in the fight against terrorism. His comments were transcribed [here](#).

On March 9th, the U.N. Security Council condemned the March 7th terrorist attack that killed at least 12 members of Tunisia's security forces and seven civilians, and injured more than 17 in Ben Guerdane. In a statement, the Security Council underlined the need to bring perpetrators, organizers, financiers, and sponsors of terrorism to justice and reaffirmed the need for all States to combat the threat posed by terrorist acts to international peace and security. The Security Council's response to the attack was posted [here](#).

On March 9th, Tunisian authorities reported that troops had killed ten Islamist militants around Ben Guerdane in an overnight raid carried out in response to the attacks against army and police posts in the town on Monday. Tunisian Prime Minister Habib Essid blamed Monday's attack on ISIL, which has been growing its numbers across the border in Libya. As a result, the Tunisian military has been taking up more command positions against ISIL positions across the border. Developments were noted [here](#).

Central African Republic

On March 4th, the U.N., the AU, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the European Union (EU), and the International Organization of La Francophonie expressed their support for the determination of Central African Republic (CAR) President-elect Faustin Archange Touadera for his determination to further efforts to promote dialogue and national reconciliation. The multilateral organizations also paid tribute to Anicet Georges Dologuele, who lost the runoff election, and to the Central African People for their resolve to find durable solutions in support of peace, reconciliation, and economic and social development. The joint statement was highlighted [here](#).

On March 6th, armed men killed 12 people in attacks on villages in the CAR near the central town of Bambari, marking the first violence since Faustin Archange Touadera was officially confirmed the winner of the recent presidential contest. The violence did not appear directly connected to the political transition and may instead have been linked to livestock rustling or an inter-ethnic dispute involving the Peuhl ethnic group. More information can be found [here](#).

On March 7th, the U.N. released its latest report on children and armed conflict in the CAR. The report documents the killing of 333 children and maiming of 589 others in brutal attacks carried out between January 2011 and December 2015, with the majority of the attacks reported between 2013 and 2014, following Seleka rebels' takeover of the government and the rise of anti-Balaka militias. The report includes a number of recommendations to address violations against children, including the establishment of a special criminal court. Details can be seen [here](#).

Nigeria

On March 4th, *The New York Times* reported the search for food is pushing Nigerian Boko Haram fighters further into Cameroon. In the most recent attack on the village of Mora, instead of burning homes and abducting hostages, Boko Haram militants reportedly gathered livestock and other food and fled. Boko Haram violence in the region has caused a food shortage, with farmers fleeing their land and rerouting cattle to avoid areas where Boko Haram has a presence. The situation was described [here](#).

On March 8th, during a meeting with South African President Jacob Zuma in Abuja, Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari said South African mobile phone operator MTN fueled the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria by failing to disconnect unregistered sim cards. Government officials believe Boko Haram militants are using unregistered sim cards to coordinate attacks. Last year, the Nigerian Government fined MTN \$3.4 billion for missing a deadline to disconnect the cards. Following his meeting with President Zuma, President Buhari said he would initiate talks with MTN to reduce the fine. President Buhari's comments were captured [here](#).

Benin

On March 4th, *Reuters* reported on logistical challenges and political tensions heading into the March 6th presidential election in Benin. Campaigning among a record number of candidates has largely focused on limited progress in the country to address unemployment, educational disparities, and slow economic growth. Many watching the elections preparations raised concerns that delays in the distributing of voting cards could increase tensions around the vote. Details can be accessed [here](#).

On March 6th, voters in Benin went to the polls to pick a new president, with incumbent President Thomas Boni Yayi stepping down after serving the constitutional maximum of two terms. A record of 33 candidates ran in the election. Prime Minister Lionel Zinsou was largely viewed as the frontrunner heading into the polls, although he faced some criticism for being born and raised in France. Food industry magnate Sebastien Ajavon and cotton tycoon Patrice Talon were also thought to be competitive candidates. Without a clear majority, Benin will hold a runoff election in two weeks. The presidential contest was discussed [here](#).

On March 6th, following the close of polls, vote counting began in Benin's presidential election. Despite concerns about the election, monitors reported few issues. A tally of the paper ballots used in the election was anticipated within 72 hours. However, analysts predicted with 33 candidates in the race, there would be no decisive victory. It was also predicted that whichever candidate collected the most votes in the northern part of the country would ultimately win a runoff. An update was provided [here](#).

On March 8th, the preliminary results of Benin's presidential election were announced, with Prime Minister Lionel Zinsou set to face off against businessman Patrice Talon in a runoff on a date yet to be announced. According to the vote count, Prime Minister Zinsou won 28 percent of the vote, while Talon won 25 percent of the vote. While the results had yet to be confirmed by Benin's constitutional court, some speculated the vote count could be challenged by Sebastien Ajavon, another candidate who finished less than two percent behind Talon. The results were detailed [here](#).

Niger

On March 9th, the partnership of opposition groups in Niger known as the Coalition for an Alternative said its candidate, Hama Amadou, would not contest a runoff election scheduled for March 20th, increasing the chances that incumbent President Mahamadou Issoufou will win a second term. Amadou has been in prison since November on charges related to baby trafficking, which he denies. The Coalition denounced Amadou's detention and claimed the constitutional court had not followed the proper procedures in announcing the results of the first round of voting. More information can be accessed [here](#).

West Africa Ebola Outbreak

On March 7th, an *Associated Press* investigation revealed that Metabiota, a U.S. startup launched to track emerging epidemics and tapped by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Government of Sierra Leone during the Ebola outbreak, made a series of deadly and costly mistakes in tracking new cases and reading the trajectory of the disease. The investigation suggests that false reporting by Metabiota may have made the chaotic situation on the ground worse. Meanwhile, Nathan Wolfe, the company's CEO, argued Metabiota cannot be held accountable for lab blunders and that the organization was not designed to specialize in disaster response. The full story is available [here](#).

On March 8th, timed to coincide with International Women's Day, the African Development Bank (AfDB) launched a new report titled, "Women's Resilience: Integrating Gender in the Response to Ebola." The report finds the Ebola crisis impacted men and women in West Africa differently. The study concludes that outbreaks of infectious diseases like Ebola tend to exacerbate the socioeconomic vulnerabilities that exist prior to an outbreak, including many factors that impact economic growth and gender inequality. The report can be downloaded [here](#).

United States – Africa Relations

State Department

On March 4th, Secretary of State John Kerry issued a statement conveying best wishes to the people of Ghana on the celebration of their 59th anniversary of independence on March 6th. Secretary Kerry said Ghana and the U.S.

are strong partners that share the ideals of democracy, human rights, educational opportunity, free enterprise, peace, and stability. He noted the longstanding partnership is also based on mutual interest in the region's future. Secretary Kerry observed Ghana is one of the leading democracies on the continent and expressed hope Ghana will remain a model for the region with fair and credible elections later this year. Secretary Kerry's statement can be read [here](#).

On March 8th, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield met with Nigerian Chief of Air Staff Air Marshal Sadique Baba Abubakar at the Department of State. Their meeting was listed [here](#).

U.S. Agency for International Development

On March 3rd, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Administrator Gayle Smith announced the U.S. is dispatching a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) to Ethiopia to help avert a crisis triggered by El Nino. Administrator Smith observed the current drought in Ethiopia follows successive poor rainy seasons and is one of the worst to hit the country in decades. The DART will provide technical assistance to the Government of Ethiopia, conduct humanitarian assessments, and coordinate with humanitarian organizations on the ground to bring aid including food assistance, seeds, safe drinking water, and nutrition treatments to those in need. A press release was issued [here](#). A briefing on the deployment was transcribed [here](#).

On March 9th, USAID issued its monthly Power Africa newsletter. This month's edition places a spotlight on gender, calling attention to how Power Africa supports projects, programs, and policies that strive to reduce gender inequalities and promote increased participation of women in the African energy sector. The newsletter also notes efforts underway in Zambia to scale up solar power, as well as the potential for hydropower in Kenya. The February newsletter can be read [here](#).

Department of Defense

On March 3rd, U.S. Africa Command's (AFRICOM) Office of Legal Counsel concluded the Fourth Africa Accountability Colloquium (ACIV), themed "Responding to Gender Based Violence During Peace Operations." Held at the International Institute of Humanitarian Law (IIHL) in Sanremo, Italy, ACIV brought together nearly 40 military legal professionals and commanders from 20 African countries to discuss the appropriate response to sexual violence allegations that occur during peacekeeping operations. Details can be seen [here](#).

On March 3rd, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Europe and Africa highlighted how U.S. Marines and sailors working with Cameroon's Fusiliers Marins (FUMA) and Compagnie des Palmeurs de Combat (COPALCO) to increase their capabilities to combat illicit activity and increase security in the waterways and along the borders in Cameroon. As part of the partnership, Marines and sailors are conducting training in combat marksmanship, patrolling, ambush techniques, close-quarters combat, tactical questions, and operations orders. More information was shared [here](#).

On March 4th, the Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) noted six engineers with the Rwanda Defense Force (RDF) recently visited Camp Lemonnier and Chebelley Airfield, Djibouti to observe how U.S. military members work and live in different types of expeditionary camps. The visiting RDF members toured critical utilities that support Camp Lemonnier's more than 4,000 residents and also stayed in living quarters and ate at the dining facilities during their stay. The visit was summarized [here](#).

On March 6th, U.S. Marines with Combat Logistics Battalion 6 concluded a five-week mission in Mauritania. The mission was requested by the Mauritanian Government to address the operations of local terrorist groups along Mauritania's borders with Mali and Algeria. During the mission, the Marines trained local logisticians on convoy operations and also taught best practices in motor transportation maintenance, supply, field medicine, and marksmanship. An article on the mission was published [here](#).

On March 9th, AFRICOM highlighted the Medical Exercise Readiness Training (MEDRET) recently held as part of Flintock 2016 at the Children's School in Kedougou, Senegal. During the MEDRET, Senegalese, U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), U.S. Department of State, and NGO personnel provided more than 600 patients with basic health care services, including triage, general medicine, pharmacy, podiatry, optometry, and dentistry. For details, click [here](#).

Department of the Treasury

On March 8th, the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designated the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and its leader, Joseph Kony, for sanctions for the targeting of civilians in the CAR through the commission of acts of violence, abduction, and forced displacement. Complementary to the U.N. Security Council's decision to impose multilateral sanctions, the U.S. sanctions freeze any LRA assets within U.S. jurisdiction and prohibit U.S. persons from engaging with the group. The Treasury Department's latest announcement increases the initial sanctions first imposed on Kony in August 2008. More information can be accessed [here](#).

On March 8th, OFAC added additional Zimbabwean entities to the Treasury Department's Specially Designated National (SDN) list, subjecting them to U.S. sanctions. The newly sanctioned entities include Chemplex Corporation Limited and the Zimbabwe Fertilizer Company. The SDN List was updated [here](#).

On March 9th, Treasury's OFAC identified Tanzanian national Ali Khatib Haji Hassan and the Hassan Drug Trafficking Organization as significant foreign narcotics traffickers pursuant to the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act, freezing all assets of Hassan and his organization within U.S. jurisdiction and prohibiting U.S. persons from engaging in transactions with them. The Treasury Department noted Hassan is a major international drug kingpin who smuggles multi-ton shipments of heroin and cocaine to Africa, Europe, Asia, and North America via his East Africa-based drug trafficking organization. Details were posted [here](#).

Department of Justice

On March 8th, victims of the 2000 USS Cole bombing asked the Second Circuit to disregard the Sudanese Government's latest arguments for rehearing its appeal of a \$315 million judgement. While the Sudanese Government continues to argue it may not have properly been served with notice of the initial lawsuit, the victims maintained their position that Sudan cannot make new arguments about the service of the suit at this point in the case. Developments were discussed [here](#).

U.S. Trade and Development Agency

On March 7th, the U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) invited proposals from U.S. firms to provide technical assistance to the Office of Ethiopian Electric Power (EEP) on achieving value in publicly-funded energy projects. USTDA will provide the EEP with a grant as part of the third phase of the Procurement Assistance Program for Ethiopia under USTDA's Global Procurement Initiative: Understand Best Value (GPI). The solicitation can be accessed [here](#).

On March 8th, USTDA announced plans to host three reverse trade missions (RTMs) this spring designed to introduce delegates from high-growth emerging markets to U.S. providers of energy storage solutions. One of the RTMs will bring a delegation from South Africa to California, North Carolina, and Washington, DC, to explore U.S. solutions for planned investments in energy storage projects. The RTMs were announced [here](#).

On March 13th-24th, USTDA will host a delegation of senior public and private sector officials from Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, and Djibouti for an East Africa Ports Security and Modernization RTM. The RTM is designed to introduce delegates to U.S. technologies, service providers, operational best practices, financing products, and training resources in the areas of port development, operation, and security. The RTM will address key themes of security and safety solutions, including risk assessment methodologies and best practices for cross-departmental coordination. More information was posted [here](#).

Overseas Private Investment Corporation

On March 7th, leading up to International Women's Day, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) published a blog post to highlight the agency's investments in women around the globe. OPIC is helping farmers in Africa earn more income by supporting multiple projects, such as the One Acre Fund, which provides financing and training to smallholder farmers so they can grow more food and reach more markets. OPIC political risk insurance is also supporting Belstar Development in a major project to improve the quality and availability of health care in Ghana. Details can be seen [here](#).

On March 7th, OPIC President and CEO Elizabeth Littlefield authored a blog post for *The Huffington Post* calling attention to the progress made by women around the world. In sub-Saharan African countries that have traditionally had patriarchal societies, President Littlefield said women now make up roughly 40 percent of parliamentarians in Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, and Senegal. She also praised Rwanda, where 64 percent of parliamentarians are women. The blog post was published [here](#).

Congress

On March 8th, the Senate Armed Services Committee held a hearing on U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), AFRICOM, and U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM). As part of the hearing, the Committee received testimony from AFRICOM Commander General David Rodriguez. As part of his testimony, Commander Rodriguez said more must be done to counter ISIL in Libya and that it could take as long as a decade to restore stability in the country. A webcast of the hearing can be watched [here](#).

On March 10th, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee held a hearing to consider a number of ambassadorial nominees. The Committee received testimony on the nominations of Christine Ann Elder to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Liberia and Stephen Michael Schwartz to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Somalia, among others. The hearing was noticed [here](#).

North Africa

On March 3rd, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and AU Chairperson Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma issued a joint statement expressing deep concern about the upsurge in fighting between the Sudanese Government and Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid rebel group in the Jebel Marra area of Darfur. Secretary-General Ban and Chairperson Dlamini-Zuma warned of the impact of renewed fighting on civilians and called for freedom of movement for U.N. peacekeepers and humanitarian actors seeking to help those affected. Their feedback was articulated [here](#).

On March 3rd, an International Monetary Fund (IMF) mission completed a visit to Tunis, Tunisia to hold discussions on a four-year arrangement under the IMF's Extended Fund Facility (EFF) estimated at \$2.8 billion to support the country's economic reform program. Representatives with the IMF met with senior government and Central Bank officials, as well as the private sector and members of civil society to express support for policies to promote private sector development and modernize public sector spending. Details can be seen [here](#).

On March 5th, during a visit to Algeria, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called attention to the plight of Sahrawi refugees in Algeria who have fled the Western Sahara conflict. After meeting with refugees at Smara camp, Secretary-General Ban also met with the Polisario Front's Secretary-General Mohamed Abdelaziz. Secretary-General Ban also visited the U.N. Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) to discuss the lack of progress in negotiations for a political solution for the disputed Western Sahara territory. More information can be viewed [here](#).

On March 5th, Hassan al-Turabi, the leader of Sudan's Popular Congress Party (PCP) died of a heart attack in Khartoum at the age of 84. Turabi was largely considered to be the mastermind of the 1989 coup that brought current President Omar al-Bashir to power. Although he previously served as President of the National Assembly, Turabi was ousted from the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) in 1999, leading to the founding of the PCP opposition party. His death was announced [here](#).

On March 6th, continuing his visit to Algeria, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon met with President Abdelaziz Bouteflika and Minister of State and Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Ramtane Lamamra. During those meetings, Secretary-General Ban raised concern regarding the security situation in Libya, as well as the political stalemate related to the Western Sahara. Secretary-General Ban also participated in a symposium at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. For details, click [here](#).

On March 6th, Egyptian Interior Minister Magdy Abdul Ghaffar appeared on state television to announce the government had found 14 people responsible for the assassination of Prosecutor Hisham Barakat in Cairo last June. According to Minister Ghaffar, those responsible are members of a terrorist cell of 48 members who have all

been arrested and confessed to being members of the Muslim Brotherhood and receiving training from Hamas. Meanwhile, no group has claimed responsibility for the car bombings that resulted in Prosecutor Barakat's death and Hamas has denied the allegations. The full story is available [here](#).

On March 7th, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon spoke at the opening of the Fifth General Assembly of the Kigali International Conference on the role of security forces in combatting violence against women, held in Algiers, Algeria. Secretary-General Ban called on the international community to contribute more female police, especially French-speaking women, to serve in U.N. peacekeeping operations. Excerpts from Secretary-General Ban's remarks were highlighted [here](#).

On March 8th, Egyptian security forces fired tear gas to disperse taxi drivers who had blocked a major road in Cairo to protest Uber and other car-hailing apps, insisting they are illegal. The drivers stood in a roundabout after the canister was fired at them when they left their cars. Egyptian taxi drivers have repeatedly launched protests against Uber. The most recent demonstration was described [here](#).

On March 8th, Algerian energy company Sonatrach announced plans to invest \$3.2 billion over four years to increase pipeline capacity in the country as natural gas output rises from new and existing fields. Like other oil producing countries, Algeria has been negatively affected by falling oil prices, forcing the government to cut spending and freeze some infrastructure projects. The announcement can be seen [here](#).

On March 9th, the Moroccan Government accused U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon of dropping his neutrality in the Western Saharan conflict by using the word "occupation" to describe Morocco's presence in the disputed territory. The U.N. dismissed the suggestion that Secretary-General Ban was anything but neutral. Secretary-General Ban has pledged to restart U.N. efforts to reach a solution after his recent visit to camps in southern Algeria for the Polasario Front leadership and refugees who have fled the conflict. The tensions were discussed [here](#).

On March 10th, Egyptian opposition leader Hamdeen Sabahy pledged to start a new political movement aimed at providing an alternative to the administration currently in power. In 2013, Sabahy backed now-President Abdul Fattah Al-Sisi's ousting of then-President Mohamed Morsi and the ban on the Muslim Brotherhood. Since then Sabahy has become increasingly vocal in opposing President Sisi's crackdown on democratic freedoms, including the right to protest, and criticized the government's failure to unite non-Islamist opposition groups. More information can be found [here](#).

East Africa

On March 3rd-4th, the IMF and the Bank of Tanzania (BOT) held a regional workshop in Dar es Salaam on improving the tools of analysis for assessing the health and soundness of financial systems across sub-Saharan Africa. Participants at the workshop agreed on the relevance and pertinence of tools that can be used to limit systemic risk and reduce the frequency and severity of financial crises. The workshop was detailed [here](#).

On March 7th, the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) announced that timely agricultural assistance for the upcoming rainy season is essential to helping the people affected by the drought in Ethiopia. The FAO appealed for \$13 million by the end of March to support 600,000 of the most vulnerable people in the country, especially as the need for assistance is expected to spike in the coming weeks. More information was posted [here](#).

On March 8th, the World Bank published the "Kenya Country Economic Memorandum (CEM): From Economic Growth to Jobs and Shared Prosperity." The CEM notes that Kenya's growth model has been well-regarded because of the significant level of service exports, as well as the country's efforts to embrace the private sector. Additionally, the CEM notes Kenya has never sought or received debt relief, but has opted for better economic policies, such as raising revenue and liberalizing trade. The CEM can be downloaded [here](#).

On March 8th, the AfDB launched a partnership with Facebook, the Kenya Internet Communications Authority, and Kenyan police to increase awareness on cyber-based gender violence. Announced on International Women's Day, the partnership will build the capacity of the Kenya Police and Judiciary to handle gender-based violence by gathering more data on cases of women being harassed online. Details were released [here](#).

On March 9th, the AfDB's Board of Directors approved the 2016-2020 Country Strategy Paper (CSP) for Djibouti. The CSP aims to promote inclusive and diversified growth through support to the energy and health sectors, as well as private sector-related institutions. The AfDB's continued investments in Djibouti will also strive to create employment opportunities for the country's young population in these sectors. A press release was issued [here](#).

On March 9th, Uber's General Manager for sub-Saharan Africa Alon Lits announced Uber plans to expand in Tanzania, Uganda, and Ghana this year, and will focus on convincing traditional taxi drivers to drive for Uber. Uber is already active in seven cities in South Africa, Nigeria, and Kenya, and continues to face challenges including not only tensions with traditional taxi drivers who view Uber as a business threat, but also traffic, high rates of urban crime, and the lack of credit cards. Details can be seen [here](#).

On March 10th, Philip Kinisu, Chairman of Kenya's Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC), reported that Kenya is losing a third of its annual budget, estimated to be the equivalent of \$6 billion, to corruption every year. Chairman Kinisu also expressed concern that his agency may be too short-staffed and under-resourced to address the problem. The challenge of addressing corruption in Kenya was detailed [here](#).

[West Africa](#)

On March 2nd, the Global Chairman and CEO of General Electric (GE) Jeff Immelt and GE leadership held a working sessions with senior AfDB leadership, led by Acting First Vice President Charlies Boamah, in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire. Meeting participants discussed mutually beneficially opportunities to broaden and deepen existing relationships between GE and the AfDB, with Vice President Boamah noting infrastructure is a key pillar in the AfDB's 2013-2022 Strategy. The meeting was summarized [here](#).

On March 3rd, the World Bank highlighted its Social Safety Net Project in Cameroon, which has implemented a cash transfer program to help the poorest households address their daily needs and emerge from chronic poverty. The national poverty rate has leveled at roughly 31 percent since 2001. The program targets close to 65,000 rural and urban households in five regions of Cameroon, including 5,000 urban households in Douala and Yaounde. The project was described [here](#).

On March 3rd, Nigerian Petroleum Minister Emmanuel Kachikwu said key members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) will meet with other producers in Russia on March 20th to renew talks on an agreement to cap oil output. Minister Kachikwu said there would be a dramatic movement on price if producers respect the production freeze in an effort to tackle global oversupply. His comments were recorded [here](#).

On March 4th, U.N. Special Rapporteur on cultural rights Karima Bennouna expressed her belief the destruction of cultural heritage is a violation of human rights that must be urgently addressed by the international community. Special Rapporteur Bennouna welcomed the decision of the International Criminal Court (ICC) Prosecutor's Office, for the first time, to charge the destruction of cultural and religious sites, as well as historical monuments in Mali, as a stand-alone war crime. Her views were expressed [here](#).

On March 5th, the U.N. Security Council arrived in Mali, the first stop on a visit to the continent. During its visit to Mali, the Security Council aimed to give renewed impulse to the implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation, express support for Mali's fight against terrorism, and promote reconciliation. The objectives for the Security Council's visit to Mali were stated [here](#).

On March 6th, during his speech on Ghanaian independence day, President John Dramani Mahama announced the country will begin to offer visas on arrival to citizens of all 54 AU member states, effective this July. The policy change was widely applauded, as currently only 25 percent of African countries offer visas on arrival to nationals of other African countries. Ghana currently offers visa free entry for citizens of the 15 countries within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Details can be accessed [here](#).

On March 7th, former Nigerian Chief of Defense Staff Air Marshall Alex Badeh appeared at the Federal High Court in Abuja, where he pleaded not guilty to charges of alleged fraud, criminal breach of trust, and money laundering involved roughly \$15.1 million. Badeh was sacked two months after President Buhari took office, facing allegations that he embezzled federal funds to buy a mansion and a commercial plot of land, and build a shopping mall. The case was detailed [here](#).

On March 9th, the Joint U.N. Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and local telecommunications operator Orange announced starting this month a thousand people living with HIV in Cote d'Ivoire will receive additional health information through their mobile phones as part of a new pilot program. The pilot will allow health care workers to communicate with enrolled patients via text messages, calls, and voicemails. The project was described [here](#).

On March 9th, Nigerian Petroleum Minister Emmanuel Ibe Kachikwu expressed concern for a strike by staff at the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) over a restructuring that is anticipated to split the state oil company into five divisions. Minister Kachikwu said the planned changes were merely part of a reorganization effort, and pledged to meet with trade unions to resolve the dispute. His input was captured [here](#).

On March 9th, at least 30 people were killed when a five-story building under construction in Lagos, Nigeria collapsed. Located in the city's Lekki district, the building saw structural challenges when the owners attempted to add floors without receiving the proper permits. The Lagos state government has told the management of the builder to report to police or face arrest. The incident was reported [here](#).

On March 10th, the AU indicated it will send a mission to northern Mali in the next few weeks to explore the need for a new counterterrorism force in the region. The decision comes in response to requests from the Malian Government and the U.N. Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) for greater assistance in fighting militants linked to Al Qaeda. MINUSMA is not permitted to conduct offensive counterterrorism operations under its current mandate. Details were shared [here](#).

On March 10th-11th, AfDB President Akinwumi Adesina will lead a delegation on a working visit to Liberia to hold discussions with Liberian officials and review AfDB-supported projects and programs in the country. During the visit, President Adesina and senior management will hold discussions with Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, several ministers and other government officials, development partners, diplomats, and the media. President Adesina also planned to engage with Liberia's Agriculture Task Force on how it can work with the AfDB to ensure that Liberia makes a smooth transition towards a more sustainable growth model. His visit to Liberia was outlined [here](#).

Sub-Saharan Africa

On March 3rd, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon visited Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, where he praised the Burkinabe Government and the people for their perseverance during a series of tests in recent years and acknowledged the country is now on a path to consolidating democratic gains and ensuring sustainable development. During his trip to Burkina Faso, Secretary-General Ban met with President Roch Marc Christian Kabore and also visited a pediatric unit for nutritional recovery in Shifra Medical Center. His visit was outlined [here](#).

On March 3rd, in recognition of World Wildlife Day, the World Bank highlighted the human-wildlife conflict in Botswana, where the World Bank has launched the Northern Botswana Human Wildlife Coexisting Project to promote wellness of some of the poorest villages, as well as elephants and other animals. Botswana has a population of about 2.2 million people and an estimated 134,000 elephants, the largest population of elephants in Africa. Since 1994, the Botswana Department of Wildlife has recorded a number of crop and livestock conflicts in areas where population growth has encroached on animal territory. Details can be seen [here](#).

On March 3rd, South Africa's Constitutional Court denied Paralympian Oscar Pistorius leave to appeal his murder conviction in the death of Reeva Steenkamp, claiming the defense had no reasonable prospects for success. As a result, Pistorius will be sentenced for murder on April 18th. The National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) is seeking a minimum sentence of 15 years in prison. Developments were noted [here](#).

On March 3rd, Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe announced the government will take over diamond operations in the country because existing miners had robbed the country of its wealth. The announcement came a week after the Ministry of Mines ordered all mining companies to stop work and leave the Marange fields, saying they had not renewed their licenses. The government's new position can be viewed [here](#).

On March 4th, the World Food Programme (WFP) warned almost 16 million people face hunger in Southern Africa because of drought conditions exacerbated by an El Nino weather pattern, up from 14 million people in January. If

the current weather conditions persist, the WFP raised concern that as many as 50 million people in the region could ultimately be impacted by food shortages. More information was shared [here](#).

On March 4th, Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe threatened to punch a television interviewer who asked about his retirement and who might replace him. President Mugabe, who just turned 92, has been in power since the country was established in 1980 and has repeatedly indicated he plans to stay in power. In the clearest signs that he plans to stay in office for life, President Mugabe said his successor must be chosen democratically, and his wife will not automatically inherit the role. The incident was reported [here](#).

On March 4th, Geoffrey Mwamba, Vice President of the main Zambian opposition party, the United Party for National Development, was arrested on suspicion of inciting violence against President Edgar Lungu. Mwamba allegedly said he would go for President Lungu's throat in the August elections. The incident occurred just after Mwamba was arrested and released last week, facing allegations that he was training party supporters to become an illegal militia. Mwamba denied threatening President Lungu and was ultimately released on bail. The full story is available [here](#).

On March 8th, in a statement on International Women's Day, former Rwandan Agriculture Kalibata highlighted the fact that while many East and South African countries have improved their policies, many women lack an equal right to land ownership. Only about 30 percent of women have access to land in eastern and southern Africa, compared to less than ten percent in northern and central Africa. Further, Minister Kalibata observed six out of ten African women depend on land for their livelihoods. Her statement was recorded [here](#).

On March 8th, three Congolese employees of charity organization Save the Children who were kidnapped on March 2nd in the eastern part of the country were released. While it is not clear which group was behind the abductions, the incident has renewed concerns about security in North Kivu province. According to Human Rights Watch (HRW), at least 175 people were kidnapped for ransom in the region last year. For more information, click [here](#).

On March 8th, Acting Chief Executive of South Africa's Petroleum Agency Lindiwe Mekwe said the agency plans to make its recommendations on the first two of five shale gas exploration license applications by early May. Mekwe said the first two applications under consideration were submitted by Falcon and Bundu. The agency is also considering an application put forward by Shell. More information was shared [here](#).

On March 9th, an IMF mission concluded a visit to Harare to hold discussions on the 2016 Article IV consultations with Zimbabwe, as well as the third and final review under a 15-month Staff-Monitored Program (SMP) approved in October 2014. The mission observed that economic difficulties in the country have worsened due to the El Niño-induced drought, lower commodity prices, and the appreciation of the U.S. dollar. As a result, the IMF noted a comprehensive and ambitious economic transformation program is needed to revive the Zimbabwean economy and to cement support among international partners. Additional feedback can be viewed [here](#).

On March 9th, as an IMF team completed a visit to Zimbabwe, Finance Minister Patrick Chinamasa said President Robert Mugabe is fully supportive of the country's re-engagement with foreign creditors. This represents a shift from President Mugabe's earlier comments, which have been negative on the IMF and the World Bank since the international lenders halted lending to Zimbabwe following defaults in 1999. The situation was discussed [here](#).

On March 9th, Eskom, South Africa's state power provider said it will increase its capital expenditure by 44 percent to \$21 billion over the next five years to build new power stations across the country. Eskom is building three new power plants to help shore up power reserves and expected to add 5,620 megawatts (MW) to the network by 2018 when new units at Medupi and Kusile's coal-fired plant come online. An article on the investments was published [here](#).

On March 9th, *The Namibian* issued a report finding about 30 Namibians suspected of poaching have been killed under Botswana's "shoot to kill police" near the river in Chobe National Park. Locals interviewed in connection with the report said it was possible those executed by the Botswana Defense Force (BDF) were not actually poachers. Botswana's strict policy against poachers is controversial, especially as poachers are often killed even if they surrender. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On March 9th, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) reported a record 1,338 rhinos were killed in sub-Saharan Africa last year. While the number of rhinos poached in South Africa, which is home to four fifths of Africa's rhino population, went down for the first time in nearly a decade, increases in the number of rhinos killed in Namibia and Zimbabwe offset the decline in South Africa. The data was analyzed [here](#).

On March 10th, a court in Pretoria announced Janusz Walus, the convicted killer of South African anti-apartheid killer Chris Hani, will be freed on parole in two weeks after more than 20 years in prison. Walus had been serving a life sentence for the 1993 crime. The court's decision is controversial, given the fact that Walus had initially been sentenced for death at a time the tensions surrounding the apartheid era were still high. The case was detailed [here](#).

On March 10th, activists in the DRC urged the government to continue its efforts to revise the 2002 mining code. A review of the code was initiated in 2012 as part of an effort to increase revenue and strengthen environmental regulations. However, that effort was put on hold last month, with the government citing weakness in the metal market. The demands to move consideration of a new draft code forward followed a meeting between the government, NGOs, and the mining sector. The situation was described [here](#).

General Africa News

On March 3rd, the World Bank and the AfDB hosted a panel on concessions and contracts in the natural resource sector in fragile situations as part of the World Bank's Fragility, Conflict, and Violence Forum held in Washington, DC. The panel brought together experts to discuss ways to enhance effectiveness, transparency, and accountability in natural resource management for the purposes of contributing to higher economic growth, sustainable development, and stability and resilience in Africa. More information can be found [here](#).

On March 4th, the U.N. released a report on the 69 allegations of sexual abuse lodged against peacekeepers hailing from 21 countries. Most of the allegations addressed by the report involved troops from African countries, including Cameroon, Congo, Tanzania, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Gabon, Niger, Nigeria, and Togo. Police from Rwanda, Ghana, Madagascar, and Senegal also faced claims. The report's findings were highlighted [here](#).

On March 4th, the AfDB noted the Agriculture Fast Track Fund (AFT), a multi-donor fund contributed by USAID, the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), and the Swedish Development Agency (SIDA), is promoting an Ongoing Call for Concept Notes and Project Grants. The period for the Call is March 1st-15th. Details on eligibility and the application process were posted [here](#).

On March 5th, leading up to International Women's Day, *Ventures Africa* compiled a list of African countries with policies most favorable to women and their quest for equality. Rwanda, South Africa, and Namibia topped the list, followed by Burundi, Mozambique, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Cape Verde, and Botswana. Additional analysis was provided [here](#).

On March 9th, the FAO published its Crops Prospect and Food Situation report. The latest analysis finds that 34 countries around the globe, including 27 in Africa, are currently in need of external assistance for food due to drought, flooding, and civil conflicts. The report notes the drought associated with El Nino has sharply reduced crop production in Southern Africa, while dry conditions have also lowered expectations for the harvests in Morocco and Algeria. Additionally, countries that are hosting large refugee populations, such as Cameroon and the DRC, also face food shortages. The report can be downloaded [here](#).

On March 9th, the AfDB announced its accreditation as a multilateral implementing entity and intermediary to the Green Climate Fund (GCF), further enabling it to scale up the financing necessary to address the impacts of climate change. The GCF was founded under the U.N. as a mechanism to assist developing countries in adapting to and mitigating the adverse effects of climate change, including by expanding sustainable climate-smart agriculture, transforming energy generation and increasing energy access, scaling up financing for forest protection, and enhancing the resilience of small island developing states. For more information, click [here](#).

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