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ML Strategies Update

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Africa Update

***Editor's Note:** For the past several years, ML Strategies has published our weekly Africa Update, offering clients and others a report on social, political, and economic developments relevant to those with business interests on the continent. Long time readers will recall that the Africa Update occasionally goes on a brief hiatus. As of today, we will take a break to review and retool the Update and other ML Strategies publications. Even during this review period, we will continue to provide real-time information and intelligence to our valued and trusted clients. For others, we invite you to contact us to learn how ML Strategies can offer the same degree of service to you and your team.

Leading the News

Libya

On March 28th, Libya's United Nations (U.N.)-backed unity government accused authorities in Tripoli of closing down the capital's airspace to prevent it from travelling to Libya from Tunisia to start work. According to a statement released by the Presidential Council, a minority of the Tripoli-based government was terrorizing the safe population of Tripoli and obstructing the unity government by closing the airspace. The accusations followed the suspension of flights at the Mitiga Airport over the weekend, which the self-declared government in Tripoli claimed were enacted for safety and security reasons. The tensions in Tripoli were highlighted [here](#).

On March 29th, following reports of the execution of six men last week by armed groups in Warshafana, U.N. Special Representative to Libya and head of the U.N. Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) Martin Kobler condemned the killings and called for those responsible to be held to account. Special Representative Kobler also issued a reminder that the execution of prisoners and direct or indiscriminate attacks against civilians are prohibited under international humanitarian and human rights law. His reaction was articulated [here](#).

On March 29th, U.S. Department of State Spokesperson John Kirby said the U.S. was deeply troubled by reports that a small group of political obstructionists had closed the airspace around Tripoli in a deliberate attempt to prevent the Libyan Government of National Accord from traveling to Tripoli. Spokesperson Kirby reiterated U.S. support for the Presidential Council of the Government of National Accord and their move to Tripoli, and called upon all Libyan public institutions to facilitate a peaceful handover of power so that Libya's new leaders can begin the hard work of restoring stability to the country. He also noted the U.S. would continue to consult with the U.N. and U.N. Special Representative to Libya Martin Kobler over the issue of supporting the Presidential Council's move to Tripoli. Spokesperson Kirby's comments were transcribed [here](#).

On March 30th, Prime Minister Designate Fayez Sarraj and seven members of the Libyan Presidential Council arrived in Tripoli after traveling by sea from Tunisia due to a closure of regional airspace by the self-declared government authorities based in Tripoli. Upon his arrival in Libya, Prime Minister Sarraj said he will work for a nationwide ceasefire, the return of displaced people, and fighting the threat posed by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). The arrival of the Government of National Accord in Libya was reported [here](#).

On March 30th, U.N. Special Representative for Libya and head of UNSMIL Martin Kobler welcomed the arrival of the Libyan Presidential Council in Tripoli, marking an important step in Libya's democratic transition and path to peace, security, and prosperity. Special Representative Kobler reiterated the international community's backing of the Government of National Accord and called for all Libyans and public institutions to support the new government and facilitate an immediate, orderly, and peaceful handover of power. Special Representative Kobler's feedback was shared [here](#).

On March 30th, the U.S. Department of State welcomed the Libyan Presidential Council's arrival in Tripoli, the result of two years of work. The State Department acknowledged this development will allow the Government of National Accord to begin the crucial work of addressing the full range of Libya's political, security, economic, and humanitarian challenges. The State Department reiterated calls by the Libyan Political Dialogue and the international community for all Libyan public institutions to facilitate and support a peaceful and orderly transition in the capital and urged all Libyans to support the Government of National Accord. A press statement was released [here](#).

Central African Republic

On March 25th, U.S. President Barack Obama announced the designation of a Presidential Delegation to the Central African Republic (CAR) to attend the inauguration of President-elect Faustin Archange Touadera. Led by U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Samantha Power, the delegation also included U.S. Ambassador to the CAR Jeffrey Hawkins, House Foreign Affairs Africa Subcommittee Ranking Member Karen Bass (D-CA), U.S. Representative to the U.N. for U.N. Management and Reform Isabel Coleman, U.S. Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Assistant Administrator for Africa Linda Etim, U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) Commander General David Rodriguez, and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs D. Bruce Wharton. The delegation was announced [here](#).

On March 28th, the U.N. stated it had learned of new allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation against Moroccan and Burundian peacekeepers serving in the U.N. Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the CAR (MINUSCA). The U.N. noted the allegations entailed Burundian peacekeepers raping a 14-year-old girl earlier this month, while a Moroccan soldier had been accused of engaging in an exploitative sexual relationship with a woman in February. The accusations are the latest in dozens of allegations implicating peacekeepers in the CAR since MINUSCA assumed authority from African Union (AU) troops in September 2014. An article on the most recent allegations can be read [here](#).

On March 30th, the U.N. announced it was widening its investigation of sexual exploitation allegations in the CAR after new accusations were brought forward against French and Gabonese peacekeepers serving with MINUSCA. The news came as a team from MINUSCA deployed to the Kemo prefecture to look into the most recent allegations. An update was provided [here](#).

On March 30th, acknowledging the transition of power in the CAR, the World Bank conducted an interview with outgoing President Catherine Samba-Panza on her experiencing working to end months of sectarian violence in the country. President Samba-Panza highlighted gains that have been made in security, the provision of humanitarian assistance, and political dialogue. She also noted remaining challenges, such as security sector reform and the need to demobilize armed groups. The interview was transcribed [here](#).

On March 30th, former CAR Prime Minister Faustin Archange Touadera was inaugurated as president. In taking the oath of office, President Touadera said he would focus on building peace and enacting reforms to end years of violent turmoil in the CAR. He also indicated his priorities include disarmament of rival factions, reform of the armed forces, and promoting progress in the agricultural sector. Highlights from the inauguration were noted [here](#).

On March 31st, 20 Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) soldiers went on trial in a military court in Kinshasa for alleged rape and other crimes committed while serving in the CAR as MINUSCA peacekeepers. The soldiers have been in jail since they were repatriated to the DRC in December. While Congolese authorities have promised to investigate the allegations, the government has previously dismissed some of the allegations as a targeting of Congolese soldiers. The full story is available [here](#).

Nigeria

On March 26th, a spokesperson for Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari announced the Nigerian Government was sending the parents of schoolgirls from Chibok who were abducted by Boko Haram in April 2014 to Cameroon to verify whether a suspected suicide bomber who was recently detained is one of the kidnapped girls. A group of suspected female suicide bombers were arrested on Friday in the Limani border area that has recently been targeted for suicide attacks. The Nigerian Government hopes to verify the identity of one girl claiming to be one of the kidnapping victims so that she can be brought back to Nigeria to assist the government in its investigation into the whereabouts of the other schoolgirls who remain missing. The full story is available [here](#).

On March 29th, Cameroonian officials delayed the questioning of a female suicide bomber who claimed to be one of the schoolgirls abducted from Chibok, Nigeria by Boko Haram as doubts rose concerning her identity. A spokesperson for Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari reported the girl needed medical treatment before being questioned with the cause of her injuries unknown. Meanwhile, Cameroonian security forces said they had passed photos of the suspect on to the Murtala Muhammad Foundation to be shared with the Chibok parents. Developments were noted [here](#).

Burundi

On March 26th, the Burundian Republican Forces (FOREBU) claimed responsibility for last week's assassination of Army Lieutenant Colonel Darius Ikurakure in Bujumbura. Lieutenant Colonel Ikurakure was killed inside the Defense Ministry compound by an assassin disguised in a military uniform. FOREBU is led by Godefroid Niyombare, a former intelligence chief and senior army officer behind the attempted coup against President Pierre Nkurunziza last May. This incident has raised concerns about ongoing and worsening political tensions in Burundi. Additional analysis was provided [here](#).

On March 29th, European diplomats indicated the European Union (EU) is planning on cutting back funding for Burundi's peacekeeping contingent in Somalia to try to force President Pierre Nkurunziza into talks with opponents to mitigate a worsening of the country's political conflict. Burundi's 5,400-strong contribution to the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) earns that state roughly \$13 million a year and its soldiers a combined \$52 million. The proposal was discussed [here](#).

Egypt

On March 29th, a Cairo-bound EgyptAir flight departing from Alexandria was hijacked by Egyptian national Seif El Din Mustafa and diverted to Cyprus, where the hijacker was taken into custody and the plane's crew and passengers were safely released. According to the Cypriot Ministry of Foreign Affairs, early reports that Mustafa has been armed with explosives appeared to be false. His motives were not immediately clear, although those involved alleged that Mustafa hijacked the flight hoping to see his ex-wife. Investigators did not believe the incident was linked to terrorism. The full story is available [here](#).

On March 30th, Seif El Din Mustafa, the hijacker in this week's EgyptAir incident, told Cypriot and Egyptian authorities he acted because he wanted to see his estranged wife and children. A court in Larnaca ordered Mustafa to be held in custody for eight days on suspicion of hijacking, abduction, threatening violence, terrorism-related offenses and two counts related to possession of explosives. The latter counts were connected to Mustafa's claim of being strapped with explosives, even though the belt he wore was believed to be fake. An update on the situation was provided [here](#).

Republic of Congo

On March 24th, the U.S. Department of State acknowledged the presidential election results announced by the Minister of Interior in the Republic of Congo (ROC). Pending the proclamation of the definitive results by the Constitutional Court, the State Department appealed to all candidates and their supporters to remain calm and for any challenges to be made in accordance with the ROC's laws. The State Department noted concern about the transparency and credibility of the electoral process, including reports of irregularities and the prolonged communications blackout. It also recognized the assaults on journalists from Le Monde and Agence Frane-Presse and called on the ROC Government to ensure respect for freedom of expression, assembly, and movement, and urged security forces to remain professional and continue to exercise restraint. The State Department's feedback was posted [here](#).

On March 25th, police forces in the ROC fired teargas at opposition supporters and arrested ten people at a meeting of opposition groups ahead of a planned news conference where a coalition of five opposition groups were expected to announce their own results in the March 20th presidential election. Following the announcement of the official results, which handed incumbent President Denis Sassou Nguesso victory with 60 percent of the vote, the opposition continued to argue election fraud, claiming its results showed President Nguesso headed for defeat. The ongoing tensions surrounded the election were reported [here](#).

Uganda

On March 31st, Uganda's Supreme Court dismissed a petition seeking nullification of President Yoweri Museveni's victory in the recent presidential election. While electoral authorities reported that President Museveni had won another five-year term in the February 18th contest with 60 percent of the vote, his main opponents claimed vote rigging and intimidation by security forces. Opposition leader Kizza Besigye, who placed second with 35 percent of the vote, has been kept under virtual house arrest since election day. The ruling was announced [here](#).

West Africa Ebola Outbreak

On March 29th, speaking at a World Health Organization (WHO) Emergency Committee meeting, WHO Director-General Margaret Chan said the Ebola outbreak in West Africa no longer constitutes an international public health threat. While Director-General Chan said the 20-month global emergency response is now over, she pressed that vigilance must be maintained to address and contain any future flare ups. Her comments were captured [here](#).

On March 30th, the WHO updated its statistics on the presence of Ebola in West Africa based on data up to March 27th. While investigations into the source of infection for the most recent five confirmed cases of Ebola in Guinea continue, the WHO reported that 1,033 contacts linked to the cluster of recent cases have been identified and all but ten contacts have been traced. Vaccination of contacts has been initiated and one suspected case is currently under observation at an Ebola treatment center. The latest statistics were analyzed [here](#).

On March 30th, the WHO confirmed two more Ebola deaths in Koropara, Guinea, bringing the total number of deaths in the most recent flare up in the country to seven. According to Guinea's Ebola response unit, as of March 30th, there were nine registered cases of Ebola and seven deaths linked to the current outbreak. Additionally, Guinean authorities elaborated the two remaining patients were being treated at a facility in the southern part of the country near the border with Liberia. Developments were noted [here](#).

United States – Africa Relations

White House

On March 30th, President Barack Obama notified Congress of his intent to continue the national emergency with respect to South Sudan beyond April 3rd. President Obama noted the situation in and in relation to South Sudan has been marked by activities that threaten the peace, security, or stability of the country and the surrounding region, including widespread violence and atrocities, human rights abuses, recruitment and use of child soldiers, attacks on peacekeepers, and obstruction of humanitarian operations. President Obama stated these conditions continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the U.S. His letter to Congress was posted [here](#).

Office of the U.S. Trade Representative

On March 30th, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) released a joint statement on the U.S.-Tunisia Council on Trade and Investment, which recently held its sixth session in Washington, DC to continue its examination of ways to increase trade and investment between the two economies. The Council focused on topics that show the greatest promise in the short to medium term for broadening opportunities for Tunisian and American businesses, especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The delegations also exchanged ideas on possibly extending existing programs or designing new ones to help Tunisia better attract foreign investors and facilitate the participation of female entrepreneurs in U.S.-Tunisian trade. For more information, click [here](#).

State Department

On March 24th, the U.S. welcomed the peaceful conduct of the March 20th presidential runoff election in Niger. However, the State Department expressed disappointment that differences among some of the parties concerning the conduct of the election were not resolved in advance, resulting in some voters and political parties choosing not to participate in the runoff. The State Department called on all stakeholders to resolve differences peacefully through dialogue and existing legal processes, and urged the government and the people of Niger to continue working to unify the country and strengthen its democratic institutions. A statement is released [here](#).

On March 24th, the State Department congratulated Cabo Verde for its successful parliamentary elections, held on March 20th, that were once again free and fair. According to the State Department, the elections and the peaceful transfer of power they brought about reaffirm Cabo Verde's position as a model of democracy in Africa. The State Department congratulated Movement for Democracy (MPD) party leader Ulisses Correia e Silva on the historic victory and noted the U.S. looks forward to continuing its partnership with Cabo Verde to strengthen governance, promote economic growth and development, and build enduring cooperation on regional security. The State Department's position on the elections was articulated [here](#).

On March 26th, the State Department congratulated the people of Benin on holding a successful presidential election that international observers deemed free and fair. As over the past 25 years the Beninese people and their leaders have repeatedly demonstrated their commitment to the democratic process, and the State Department commended Benin for once again proving the strength and vibrancy of its democracy. The State Department also congratulated President-elect Patrice Talon and applauded outgoing President Thomas Boni Yayi for his commitment to an orderly and timely political transition, as well as Prime Minister Lionel Zinsou for his respect for the election results. The State Department's reaction to the election in Benin was shared [here](#).

On March 28th, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield delivered a speech at the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP) titled, "Partnership with Nigeria: The U.S. View." Assistant Secretary Thomas-Greenfield applauded Nigeria for its economic growth and expanding middle class. She also highlighted challenges affecting the country's development, including ethnic tensions, corruption, instability brought about by Boko Haram, and a weak education system. Assistant Secretary Thomas-Greenfield's full speech was posted [here](#).

On March 29th, Secretary of State John Kerry presented the 2016 Secretary of State's International Women of Courage award to a group of women from around the world recognized for demonstrating exceptional courage and leadership in advocating for peace, justice, human rights, gender equality, and women's empowerment. Among this year's awardees are Fatimata M'Baye, Co-Founder and President of the Mauritanian Association for Human Rights, Awadeya Mahmoud, Founder and Chair of the Women's Food and Tea Sellers' Cooperative and the Women's Multi-Purpose Cooperative for Khartoum, State, Sudan, and Vicky Ntetema, Executive Director of Tanzania's Under the Same Sun. The winners were profiled [here](#).

On March 29th – April 6th, Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Tom Malinowski will be on foreign travel in Africa. Assistant Secretary Malinowski arrived in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on March 20th for meetings with government officials as a follow up to President Barack Obama's visit to the country in July. On March 30th-31st, Assistant Secretary Malinowski was in Kigali, Rwanda for meetings with government officials and civil society groups to discuss media freedom, regulations governing NGO operations, and broader dynamics in the region. Following his visit to Rwanda, Assistant Secretary Malinowski was expected to travel on to Bujumbura, Burundi to meet with government officials on the importance of conducting immediate and independent investigations of human rights abuse allegations. On April 2nd-6th, Assistant Secretary Malinowski will be in Nairobi, Kenya for meetings with government and security force officials, parliamentarians, civil society advocates, and

religious leaders to discuss a range of issues including the importance of an active and empowered civil society, rule of law, the intersection of human rights and security efforts, and progress on implementing the Kenya-U.S. Joint Commitment to Promote Good Governance and Anti-Corruption Efforts. His travel was announced [here](#).

On March 30th, Secretary of State John Kerry delivered remarks at the U.S.-Nigeria Binational Commission (BNC) at the Department of State, and hosted a working luncheon. Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield also participated in the BNC. Events around the BNC, which were focused on security cooperation, economic growth and development, and governance and democracy, were outlined [here](#). Secretary Kerry's remarks to the BNC were transcribed [here](#). A joint communique issued at the conclusion of the BNC can be accessed [here](#).

On March 30th, Secretary of State John Kerry met with Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry at the Department of State. Secretary Kerry and Minister Shoukry discussed the recent EgyptAir hijacking, the role Egypt is playing in responding to the situation in Libya, and Egypt's economic challenges. Secretary Kerry also discussed the importance of easing restrictions on association and expression in Egypt and of allowing human rights NGOs to operate freely. A readout of the meeting was released [here](#). Secretary Kerry's remarks with Minister Shoukry were shared [here](#).

On March 31st, Secretary of State John Kerry and Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield met with Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari on the sidelines of the 2016 Nuclear Security Summit held in Washington, DC. The meeting was noticed [here](#).

On March 31st, Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with Algerian Prime Minister Abdelmalek Sellal in Washington, DC. Their meeting was listed [here](#).

On March 31st, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield met with the 2016 International Women of Courage awardees from Africa. She also held meetings with Gabonese President Ali Bongo Ondimba and Nigerian Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission Ibrahim Magu. Assistant Secretary Thomas-Greenfield's schedule was detailed [here](#).

U.S. Agency for International Development

On March 24th, in recognition of World Tuberculosis (TB) Day, Keri Lijinksy, the HIV/AIDS and TB Advisor at USAID's Bureau for Africa, and Rudi Thetard, Project Director for USAID's African Strategies for Health Project, authored a blog post highlighting USAID's efforts to fight TB. USAID is currently executing childhood TB programming in 12 countries in Africa that are focused on strengthening the capacity of health workers to identify and diagnose TB in children, implementing active case finding strategies for early identification of TB, and ensuring adequate care closer to home. The blog post can be accessed [here](#).

Department of Defense

On March 25th, AFRICOM-sponsored Exercise Obangame/Saharan Express 2016 closed in Douala Cameroon. The exercise was held to increase regional cooperation, maritime domain awareness, and information sharing practices, and to improve interoperability among participating forces in order to enhance maritime security and regional economic stability. The closing ceremony was highlighted [here](#).

On March 28th, AFRICOM highlighted a five-week training program Marines with Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force – Crisis Response – Africa (SPMAGTF-CR-AF) are conducting with Utah Air National Guard and National Guard technicians and engineers to build up Morocco's demining capabilities. The training, which aims to educate and train Moroccan personnel on removing explosive remnants of war in post-conflict areas, is being executed as part of the U.S. Humanitarian Mine Action Program. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On March 29th, U.S. Army Africa called attention to the recently concluded three-week Medical Training Exercise (MEDRETE) 16-2 held at the 37 Military Hospital in Ghana. MEDRETE 16-2 allowed U.S. doctors and nurses to train in an austere environment, share medical procedures, and build lasting relationships with Ghanaian medical professionals. The exercise also allowed some Ghanaians serving with the U.S. Army to return to their roots. For more information, click [here](#).

Department of Justice

On March 25th, Malian national Alhassane Ould Mohamed appeared in federal court in Brooklyn, New York, where he pleaded guilty to charges that he conspired to kill William Bultemeier, a defense attaché system operations coordinator working at the U.S. Embassy in Niger in 2000. Under the plea agreement, prosecutors are considering a 25-year prison sentence for Mohamed, who was otherwise eligible for a sentence of up to life in prison. The case was analyzed [here](#).

Overseas Private Investment Corporation

On March 25th, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) highlighted OPIC President and CEO Elizabeth Littlefield's recent meeting with Ivorian President Alassane Ouattara to discuss growth and investment opportunities. The meeting occurred during President Littlefield's trip to West Africa for the opening of OPIC's regional office for West Africa, located in Abidjan. President Littlefield was accompanied by a group of CEOs on a business development and investment mission to explore the opportunity in the region, which is seeing increased demand for power, infrastructure, clean water, and food. The meeting was highlighted [here](#).

Millennium Challenge Corporation

On March 28th, the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Board of Directors determined that the Government of Tanzania has engaged in a pattern of actions inconsistent with MCC's eligibility criteria and voted to suspend the agency's partnership with the Government of Tanzania. In particular, the Board cited the recent election in Zanzibar that was neither inclusive nor representative and the lack of measures taken to ensure freedom of expression and association in the Tanzanian Government's implementation of the Cyber Crimes Act. As a result of the decision, MCC will cease all activities related to the development of a second compact with Tanzania. A press release was issued [here](#).

Congress

On March 30th, a letter sent by Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT) and ten House members to Secretary of State John Kerry last month urging the Obama Administration to investigate claims that Egyptian security forces have committed human rights abuses became public. The letter requests that the Administration look into the August 2013 massacre in Rab'aa Square and suggests if allegations are confirmed Congress may decide to withhold military assistance to Egypt. The letter can be downloaded [here](#).

North Africa

On March 24th, the Government of Sudan inaugurated an online trading system of its stock market in Khartoum. Financed by the African Development Bank (AfDB) as part of its commitment to Sudan's Public Financial and Macroeconomic Management (PFM) project. The e-trading system will be instrumental in promoting rapid development of the Khartoum Stock Exchange Market, which is a central element in the country's financial market. Details can be seen [here](#).

On March 24th, Moroccan Foreign Minister Salaheddine Mezouar said Morocco's decision to reduce U.N. staff at the U.N. Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) is sovereign and irreversible. However, Minister Mezouar clarified the Moroccan Government remains committed to military cooperation with the U.N. to guarantee the ceasefire in the disputed Western Sahara territory. His comments were captured [here](#).

On March 25th, Algerian authorities reported they had shot and killed an Islamist militant wearing a suicide belt before detonating the explosives on Wednesday night in the small town of Maatkas, which was once a stronghold of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Security forces believe the attacker may have been targeting the police station in Maatkas. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On March 25th, noting World Bank President Jim Yong Kim's upcoming visit to Tunisia with U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Islamic Development Bank President Mohamed Ali Al-Madani, World Bank Country Manager for Tunisia Eileen Murray announced the World Bank plans to led Tunisia \$5 billion over five years to support the

democratic transition in the country and revive its economy. Tunisia's economy has been unsteady since the 2011 uprising against President Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali. More information was shared [here](#).

On March 26th, Algerian security forces killed three Islamist militants in a military ambush after an army sweep of the forests of Sid Ali Bounab in Tizi Ouzou. The raid occurred near the town of Maatkas, where Algerian security forces killed a militant wearing a suicide belt earlier in the week. The situation was described [here](#).

On March 27th, the Algerian Ministry of Defense reported at least 12 Algerian soldiers were killed when a military helicopter crashed in the southern part of the country. Two other soldiers were wounded in the crash, which occurred near Reggane town. More information can be accessed [here](#).

On March 28th, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon visited Tunisia with World Bank President Jim Yong Kim, where they met with Tunisian President Beji Caid Essebsi, Prime Minister Habib Essid, and President of the Assembly of the Representatives of the People Mohamed Ennaceur. Talks focused on proposals to generate job creation and economic growth. Secretary-General Ban commended Tunisia's democratic progress, while calling attention to youth unemployment and instability in neighboring Libya. Details can be seen [here](#).

On March 28th, following a meeting with Tunisian President Beji Caid Essebsi, World Bank President Jim Yong Kim delivered remarks in Carthage as part of his joint visit to Tunisia with U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Islamic Development Bank President Mohamed Ali Al-Madani. During the joint visit to Tunisia, President Kim reaffirmed support for Tunisia in its historic transition to a more stable post-revolution era and called for a sharper focus on creating jobs for disenfranchised youth and spurring economic growth in the country's lagging regions. The joint visit to Tunisia was summarized [here](#). President Kim's remarks were transcribed [here](#).

On March 28th, U.N. Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict Leila Zerrougui welcomed Sudan's signing of an action plan to prevent the recruitment and use of children by national security forces as an important milestone for child protection in the country. The action plan sets out a series of measures to enhance the overall protection of children affected by armed conflict, including the cessation and prevention of child recruitment and the release of children from national security forces. An article on the action plan was published [here](#).

On March 29th, a spokesman for U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said the U.N. leader regrets the misunderstanding of his use of the term occupation to describe Morocco's annexation of the Western Sahara, which has led to Morocco expelling dozens of U.N. staff from the country. According to the U.N., Secretary-General Ban's use of the word was not planned nor deliberate, but rather a spontaneous, personal reaction. An explanation of the situation was provided [here](#).

On March 29th, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon welcomed the AU's latest initiative to accelerate progress towards ending the fighting in the Darfur region of Sudan. The AU proposal would bring together the Sudanese Government, the National Umma Party, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement – North (SPLM–N), the Justice and Equality Movement, and the Sudan Liberation Movement/Minni Minawi to reach an agreement on a cessation of hostilities, humanitarian access, and an inclusive national dialogue process. For details, click [here](#).

On March 29th, the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that growing food insecurity is causing people to flee South Sudan into Sudan. As roughly 38,000 people have crossed the border since the end of January, UNHCR called for greater funding to provide clean water, sanitation and health services, and food and shelter to those impacted by ongoing violence in South Sudan. An update from UNHCR is available [here](#).

On March 29th, the World Bank and the Government of Egypt signed a \$5 million grant to support the Equal Access and Simplified Environment for Investment in Egypt (EASE) project, which was launched to improve the regulatory environment for investors through simplified licensing and transparent industrial land allocation processes. The project aims to position Egypt's General Authority for Investments and Free Zones (GAFI) as the focal point for investment services and will also support the Industrial Development Authority (IDA) in implementing international best practices related to regulation of investments. More information can be found [here](#).

On March 30th, the World Bank called attention to its support for the Sustainable Natural Resources Management Project (SNRMP) in Sudan. The project, which has effectively improved the livelihoods of more than 50,000 people

in Gezera, White Nile, and Kassala states, is helping to increase the adoption of sustainable land and water management practices and helping to establish nurseries to support the rehabilitation of degraded lands. The project was described [here](#).

On March 31st, Tunisia's central bank reported tourism revenue fell by 54 percent in the first two months of 2016 when compared with the same period of 2015. The steep decline is attributed to the two major attacks executed by terrorists again foreigners at a hotel in Sousse and at the Bardo National Museum in Tunis. Further analysis can be seen [here](#).

East Africa

On March 24th, the U.N. Security Council extended the U.N. Assistance Mission in Somalia's (UNOSOM) mandate through March 2017. In a unanimous vote, the Security Council underscored the need for the continuation of U.N. support to the Somali Government's peace and reconciliation process, including preparation for an inclusive, free, fair, and transparent electoral process in 2016 and universal elections by 2020. The vote was recorded [here](#).

On March 24th, the U.N. and humanitarian partners launched a 90-day campaign to raise awareness about the food crisis in Ethiopia brought on by El Nino weather patterns and to raise funds to bridge a \$700 million gap in aid funding. According to U.N. Humanitarian Coordinator for Ethiopia Ahunna Eziakonwa-Onuchie, 10 million people in the country are facing lost harvests and livestock as well as sever water shortages and health risks. The situation was described [here](#).

On March 25th, the Ethiopian Agriculture Investment and Land Administration Agency suspended the issuance of new licenses for use of parcels of land for commercial farming. Licensing was put on hold to allow the agency to complete a review of the licenses issued under the program to date, as much of the land already allocated has yet to be development. More information can be found [here](#).

On March 30th, Kenyan wildlife rangers shot and killed a stray male lion on the outskirts of Nairobi after it attacked and injured a local resident. Following the attack, a mob gathered around the lion, leaving the rangers with limited options other than to shoot the lion to avert further injuries. This is the third incident of lion escaping from Nairobi National Park in recent weeks. An article on the incident was published [here](#).

On March 31st, the World Bank issued a new report titled, "Kenya Economic Update (KEU): Kazi ni Kazi: Informality Should Not Be Normal." The report finds Kenya's economy is projected to grow at an improved rate of 5.9 percent in 2016. The publication attributes this positive outlook to low oil prices, good agriculture performance, supportive monetary policy, and ongoing infrastructure investments. The full report can be downloaded [here](#).

On March 31st, Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta was forced to cut short his annual address to parliament after opposition lawmakers started whistling in an intentional effort to disrupt the speech. Speaker Justin Muturi intervened, ejecting some opposition lawmakers from the session. The interruption was the first of its kind since early 2008, when parliament dissolved into heckling over the disputed 2007 presidential election. The scene in parliament was described [here](#).

On March 31st, Al Shabaab executed a suicide attack in the autonomous Somali region of Puntland, killing the treasurer of Galkayo Saeed Ali and several police officers that were guarding him. The suicide bomber allegedly put his armed around Ali, as if giving him a hug, and then detonated his explosives, blowing them both up. Witnesses also reported that two bystanders died in the blast. Details can be accessed [here](#).

West Africa

On March 24th, International Criminal Court (ICC) Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda announced that Ahmad al-Faqi al-Mahdi, a Tuareg Islamist rebel charged with desecrating national monuments in Timbuktu Mali, had indicated a desire to plead guilty to war crimes. His trial will proceed as judges decide how to accommodate his wish to plead guilty. Al-Mahdi is the first person charged with war crimes for damaging cultural heritage. Developments in the case were noted [here](#).

On March 24th, a team from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) completed a visit to Sao Tome and Principe to conduct the 2016 Article IV consultation and the first review of the country's economic program supported by the IMF's three-year Extended Credit Facility (ECF). While the IMF team observed that Sao Tome and Principe's recent economic performance has been favorable, it warned that economic growth has not been strong enough to make a significant reduction in poverty. As a result, the IMF advised authorities to continue to maintain fiscal prudence and reform momentum, especially in an election year, to bring down debt and ensure that efforts benefit a broader part of the population. Additional analysis was provided [here](#).

On March 24th, the World Bank's Board of Executive Directors approved an additional \$10 million International Development Association (IDA) credit for the Liberia Urban Water Supply Project (LUWSP). The new funding will increase access to piped water supply services in Monrovia and surrounding areas and improve the operational efficiency of the Liberia Water and Sewer Corporation (LWSC). The project targets roughly 63,000 direct beneficiaries with critical repairs and the expansion of pipelines to new areas with additional customers. For more information, click [here](#).

On March 24th, the Nigerian Government accused 300 firms and individuals, including army officers, of embezzling roughly \$241 million through overpaid defense contracts or fraud. President Muhammadu Buhari's office announced a committee has been established to investigate the contracts awarded by the Office of the National Security Adviser from 2011 to 2015. More information can be found [here](#).

On March 25th, Benin's constitutional court confirmed Patrice Talon's victory in the country's recent presidential election. Consistent with his campaign platform, President-elect Talon said his first priority will be to tackle constitutional reforms, including a reduction in presidential term limits from two, five-year terms, to one, five-year term. He also indicated plans to announce a government composed of 16 members, a decrease from the current 28-member government. President-elect Talon's comments were recorded [here](#).

On March 27th, Malian authorities arrested two men believed to be linked to the March 13th AQIM attack on beach resorts in Cote d'Ivoire's Grand-Bassam. The identities of the suspects were not revealed, but authorities indicated they were detained in the northern Timbuktu region. Kounta Dallah, the suspected ringleader of the attack is thought to remain at large. The arrests were reported [here](#).

On March 27th, Nigerian Science and Technology Minister Ogbonnaya Onu said Nigeria will send an astronaut into space by 2030, joining India, China, Japan, Canada, Russia, and the U.S. and a space faring nation. Minister Onu made the announcement while visiting Nigeria's new Defense Space Agency in Abuja. His comments were captured [here](#).

On March 27th, three people were killed and several others wounded when an oil pipeline exploded during repairs in the Nigerian Delta. The explosion also resulted in a fire that was not brought under control until Monday. The pipeline belonged to Italy's ENI. Details can be seen [here](#).

On March 29th, an IMF mission completed a visit to Freetown, Sierra Leone to conduct the fifth review under the ECF and hold the 2016 Article IV consultation discussions. The IMF team observed that Sierra Leone's economy is recovering from the twin shocks of the Ebola epidemic and the halt in iron ore mining. Due to reverses in both trends, the IMF forecast economic growth at a rate of 4.3 percent this year. Additional data was analyzed [here](#).

On March 29th, Bank of Ghana Governor Henry Kofi Wampah announced plans to retire at the end of March, cutting short a four-year term that was supposed to end on August 5th. Governor Wampah, who has struggled to stabilize inflation and the local currency, said his early departure was intended to allow his successor time to transition before the presidential and parliamentary elections due to be held in November. His retirement was announced [here](#).

Sub-Saharan Africa

On March 24th, the World Bank's Board of Executive Directors approved \$10 million in new financing to support the Government of Lesotho's efforts to improve the quality and delivery of services and boost poverty reduction through a project aimed at modernizing the country's private sector. Over the next four years, the Lesotho Public Sector

Modernization Project will help Lesotho strengthen its public administration, improve efficiency in resource management systems, and increase capacities for the delivery of public services. The project was detailed [here](#).

On March 25th, the African Regional Technical Assistance Center (AFRITAC) South concluded a workshop at the Africa Training Institute in Mauritius on export and import price indices. The workshop brought together 27 economic statisticians from 12 AFRITAC South countries, including national accounts compilers from statistical offices and data users from policy-making government institutions and agencies. The objective of the workshop was to broaden participants' understanding of the theory and practice of compiling export and import price indices. The workshop was described [here](#).

On March 28th, a court in Luanda, Angola sentenced 17 youth activists to between two and eight years in prison for rebelling against President Jose Eduardo dos Santos' government. The activists, who were arrested in June, have repeatedly denied the charges against them, leading Angola's political opposition to claim the case proves the existence of ingrained political repression in the country. The full story is available [here](#).

On March 28th, the Zambian Department of National Parks and Wildlife reported the Great Elephant Survey, a recent aerial surveillance exercise of the country's elephant population, shows that Zambia's anti-poaching efforts are yielding positive results in national parks. The aerial survey was conducted over 21 million acres of national parks and found that elephant numbers are stable in some areas, but require ongoing efforts in the fight against poaching. The survey's results were analyzed [here](#).

On March 29th, the World Bank's Board of Executive Directors approved an additional grant of \$30 million for the Human Development Systems Strengthening Project in the DRC. The grant will be used to expand the geographic scope and depth of the Education Management Information System and cover a financing gap for service delivery. It will also be used to enhance the DRC's pharmaceutical regulatory system, as well as public supply chain management. More information can be found [here](#).

On March 29th, the World Bank's Board of Executive Directors approved a \$95 million International Development Association (IDA) credit to support Rwanda's urbanization strategy through targeted infrastructure development and support for local economic development in six secondary cities, including Muhanga, Rubavu, Rusizi, Nyagatare, Huye, and Musanze. The goal of the project is to create enabling environments for economic development. For details, click [here](#).

On March 29th, South African National Parks (SANParks) reported that Sylvester the lion, who escaped from his game park for three weeks last year, was once again on the loose. Authorities believe that Sylvester broke out of the reserve by crawling under an electric fence after heavy rains dislodged earth over the weekend. A helicopter is conducting an aerial search for the lion. More information can be viewed [here](#).

On March 29th, Australian authorities said debris recovered earlier this month from a beach in Mozambique was highly likely to be from the missing Malaysia Airlines flight MH370. As a result, investigators called for ramped up search efforts along the African coastline for any additional clues on what might have happened to the plane. Developments were noted [here](#).

On March 30th, the U.N. Security Council extended the mandate of the U.N. Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) for another year in light of the humanitarian situation in the country, as well as concerns about preparations for the presidential election planned for November. The Security Council urged the DRC Government to hold those guilty of human rights violations accountable and called on the Government and in particular the independent electoral commission (CENI) to ensure a transparent and credible electoral process. The vote was discussed [here](#).

On March 30th, hacking group Anonymous claimed responsibility for a cyberattack against the Angolan Government that shut down more than 20 government websites in response to the recent sentencing of 17 youth activists. The sites had been down for 20 hours when Anonymous claimed the attack in a post on its Facebook page. The full story is available [here](#).

On March 30th, as part of a strategy for providing drought relief, the South African Land Bank announced farmers impacted by drought conditions could apply for concessional loans to help them make it through the lean season.

The loans, which can be used as emergency capital to minimize losses and replace weather damaged property and equipment, will be made immediately available to farmers in KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga, North West, Limpopo, and Free State. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On March 31st, South Africa's top court ordered President Jacob Zuma to pay back some of the state funding he used in 2014 for upgrading his private residence at Nkandla in rural KwaZulu-Natal. The upgrades included a swimming pool, cattle enclosure, chicken run, amphitheater, and visit center. Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng gave the Treasury 60 days to determine the reasonable cost of the upgrades, which President Zuma will have 45 days to pay. The ruling was detailed [here](#).

On March 31st, following the South African constitutional court's ruling for President Jacob Zuma to repay the state some of the \$16 million spent on upgrades to his private home, General Secretary of the ruling African National Congress (ANC) party Gwede Mantashe said he had no authority to declare a vote of no confidence in President Zuma on behalf of the party. The ANC's response to the ruling was highlighted [here](#).

General Africa News

On March 24th, the AfDB's Board of Directors approved a \$25 million equity investment in the Abraaj Growth Markets Health Fund. The contribution will allow the Fund to provide access to finance and capacity building for scalable and sustainable health care models for middle- and low-income segments of populations in Africa. A press release was issued [here](#).

On March 27th, during his visit to South Korea, Japan, and China, AfDB President Akinwumi Adesina urged African diplomats to work harder on promoting the development of the continent by exploring business opportunities that can mutually benefit their hosts as well as their home countries. He also highlighted the lessons that could be learned from South Korea, Japan, and China. President Adesina's remarks were captured [here](#).

On March 28th, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, the Executive Director of U.N. Women presented to the U.N. Security Council during an open debate on the role of women in conflict prevention in Africa. Director Mlambo-Ngcuka called for the allocation of at least 15 percent of peacebuilding funds to gender equality and women's empowerment as a means to help counter violent extremism. Her presentation was summarized [here](#).

On March 29th, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) held a briefing titled, "El Nino's Wake: Examining Africa's Latest Food Crisis." The event included panels on the scale and impact of the crisis and building resilience to climate volatility. A full agenda was posted [here](#).

On March 30th, the Research and Markets "Africa 2016 Wealth Report" was published, examining various factors related to wealth on the continent, including the trends of High Net Worth Individuals (HNWIs) and wealth management in each country. The report identifies Mauritius' population as the richest in Africa, with an average wealth of \$21,700 per person, while Zimbabwe's population was found to be the poorest with average wealth calculated at just \$200. The report can be downloaded [here](#).

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