



ML Strategies Update

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Africa Update

Leading the News

Nigeria

On April 9th, the United Nations (U.N.) refugee agency (UNHCR) issued an urgent funding appeal for \$174.4 million to provide assistance and protection to roughly 192,000 refugees fleeing violence perpetrated by Boko Haram in Nigeria's Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe states. According to UNHCR, since 2009, more than 15,000 people have been killed, abducted, recruited, or abused by Boko Haram in northeastern Nigeria. UNHCR's funding appeal was detailed [here](#).

On April 10th, as Nigeria prepared for gubernatorial and State Assembly elections, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon again congratulated the country's people and government on the peaceful manner in which the recent presidential and parliamentary elections were held and expressed hope that similar conditions would prevail during the new polls. Secretary-General Ban called on all political leaders to continue to uphold their commitments under the Abuja Accords to refrain from and immediately condemn any inflammatory statements that amount to an incitement to violence. His feedback was posted [here](#).

On April 10th, in advance of the April 11th state-level elections in Nigeria, the U.S. Department of State issued a statement again congratulating the people of Nigeria and the Nigerian Government on the historic, well-conducted, and largely peaceful elections the weekend of March 28th. Regarding the gubernatorial and State Assembly elections, U.S. officials encouraged Nigerian voters to bring the same level of commitment to peaceful, credible elections to the polls again and throughout the post-election period. The State Department also urged state and local electoral officials, as well as security providers, to discharge their responsibilities with neutrality, remaining vigilant to guard against fraud and intimidation. The State Department's message can be read [here](#).

On April 13th, in anticipation of the one-year anniversary of the kidnapping of more than 200 schoolgirls from Chibok, the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) released a report outlining how the conflict with Boko Haram is exerting a heavy toll on children in Nigeria and across the region. UNICEF reported at least 800,000 children have been forced to flee their homes as a result of the conflict in northeastern Nigeria between Boko Haram, military forces, and civilian self-defense groups. The report also finds children are increasingly being killed, maimed, and displaced or recruited by Boko Haram as combatants, cooks,

porters, and look-outs. The report can be accessed [here](#).

On April 13th, Nigerian President-Elect Muhammadu Buhari vowed to make every effort to free more than 200 schoolgirls abducted from Chibok one year ago, although he admitted it was uncertain whether they could ever be found. While acknowledging the whereabouts of the victims of the abduction remain unknown, President-Elect Buhari said his administration would do everything in its power to bring them home by executing an approach different from President Goodluck Jonathan's. His comments were recorded [here](#).

On April 13th, additional analysis was made available related to the results of Nigeria's state and local elections results first announced on Saturday. President-Elect Muhammadu Buhari's All Progressives Congress (APC) party won a landslide in elections for state governors, winning 19 of 28 governor posts. This represents the biggest defeat for President Goodluck Jonathan's Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) since military rule ended in 1999. APC leader and President-Buhari will be inaugurated on May 29th. Additional analysis can be seen [here](#).

On April 14th, ceremonies were held around the world to mark one year since more than 200 schoolgirls were abducted by Boko Haram in Chibok, Nigeria. In Abuja, a procession was staged with participants to mark each of the 219 schoolgirls who remain missing. While a witness reported seeing more than 50 of the girls alive in Gwoza last week, Boko Haram claims the girls have all been converted to Islam and married off. The anniversary was commemorated [here](#).

On April 14th, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said the kidnapped schoolgirls of Chibok must not be forgotten and reiterated his call for their immediate release and safe return to their families. Secretary-General Ban observed some of the girls were fortunate to have escaped, but the fate of many still remains unknown. More broadly, Secretary-Ban noted hundreds of thousands more Nigerian children have been displaced from their homes and deprived of their rights to live and grow up in safety due to the continued threat posed by Boko Haram. For details, click [here](#).

On April 14th, Acting U.S. State Department Spokesperson Marie Harf recognized the one-year anniversary of the kidnapping of the Chibok schoolgirls by Boko Haram. Spokesperson Harf noted the U.S. has once again called for all hostages held by Boko Haram to be released immediately without preconditions and noted the U.S. has supported Nigerian efforts to bring about the safe recovery of those kidnapped. She also noted while visiting Nigeria in January, Secretary of State John Kerry stressed the need for peaceful and credible elections in order to effectively combat Boko Haram. Spokesperson Harf added that an interdisciplinary team of U.S. specialists in Abuja is continuing to respond to requests for assistance from the Nigerian Government. Her comments were transcribed [here](#).

On April 14th, in recognition of the one-year anniversary of the abduction of more than 200 Chibok schoolgirls by Boko Haram, Pakistani education activist Malala Yousafzai wrote a letter to the kidnapping victims. In addition to advocating for access to free, safe, and quality secondary education for all girls and boys around the world, Yousafzai reflected on her visit to Nigeria last July to meet with the parents and classmates of the abducted schoolgirls. The letter can be downloaded [here](#).

On April 14th, acknowledging the one-year anniversary of the Boko Haram kidnappings in Chibok, Amnesty International reported at least 2,000 Nigerian girls and women have been kidnapped by Boko Haram since the start of last year. According to a new report, analysis suggests those abducted have been turned into cooks, sex slaves, and fighters. The report also notes that Boko Haram routinely rounds up women and girls after taking control of a town and holds them up in houses or prisons. Excerpts from the report were highlighted [here](#).

On April 15th, U.S. Vice President Joe Biden spoke with Nigerian President-Elect Muhammadu Buhari to congratulate him on his victory in the recent Nigerian elections and affirm the U.S. stands ready to expand collaboration with Nigeria on issues of common concern, including economic and security matters. Vice President Biden also expressed U.S. support for Nigeria's efforts to counter Boko Haram, recover hostages held by the group, and protect civilian populations. He also expressed the willingness of the U.S. to partner more closely with Nigeria to strengthen its economy. A readout of the call was presented [here](#).

On April 15th, policy advisors for Nigerian President-Elect Muhammadu Buhari's APC party provided insights on how President-Elect Buhari's Administration may institute reforms to end corruption in Nigeria's oil sector. The APC noted President-Elect Buhari may seek to address structural issues, such as enhancing transparency in the Nigeria National Petroleum corporation, first, and then later address fiscal issues, such as taxes. More information can be viewed [here](#).

Libya

On April 9th, briefing an audience of 250 women gathered in Tripoli, U.N. Special Representative for Libya and head of the U.N. Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) Bernardino Leon said women have a crucial role to play in the Libyan peace process. Special Representative Leon briefed the women on the progress of the ongoing political dialogue and answered questions regarding the ceasefire, timeframe for agreement, and addressed concerns about spoilers seeking to derail the process. For details, click [here](#).

On April 11th, UNSMIL announced a meeting of Libyan political leaders would be held in Algeria on April 13th as part of the process for devising a plan to end Libya's political crisis. During the meeting, U.N. Special Representative for Libya Bernardino Leon was expected to update participants on the process of the dialogue, while creating an opportunity for the participating parties and activists to analyze the documents related to the peace process that are being discussed. Next steps in the Libyan peace process were announced [here](#).

On April 12th, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius, German Foreign Affairs Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Italian Foreign Affairs Minister Paolo Gentiloni, Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs Jose Manuel Garcia-Margallo, and British Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Philip Hammond issued a joint statement on Libya. The leaders welcomed the resumption of the Libyan political dialogue under the auspices of U.N. Special Representative for Libya and head of UNSMIL Bernardino Leon in Morocco on April 15th and the next meeting of political parties in Algeria on April 13th. They strongly urged all participants to negotiate in good faith and use the opportunity to finalize agreements on the formation of a national unity government and make arrangements for an unconditional ceasefire. The full statement can be read [here](#).

On April 13th, militants claiming loyalty to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) took to Twitter to claim responsibility for attacks on two embassies in Tripoli. On Monday morning, a bomb exploded at the gate of the Moroccan Embassy, damaging the gate and a residential building, but hurting no one. On Sunday, gunmen fired shots at the South Korean Embassy, killing two local security guards and wounding a third person. Both incidents were highlighted [here](#).

On April 13th, U.N. Special Representative for Libya and head of the U.N. Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) Bernardino Leon opened a meeting of Libyan political leaders and activists by urging all stakeholders to give the U.N.-facilitated peace process a chance. The meeting is a follow up to an earlier meeting in March during which participants expressed strong support for dialogue as the way to resolve Libya's crisis peacefully. In addition, Special Representative Leon expressed solidarity with South Korea and Morocco following attacks on the two countries' embassies in Tripoli. The opening of the meeting was summarized [here](#).

On April 14th, a second meeting of Libyan political parties and activists, facilitated by UNSMIL, concluded in Algeria with parties reiterating a commitment to political dialogue as the only option for resolving the crisis in Libya. Participants also expressed concern over the escalation of terrorist attacks in the country. U.N. Special Representative Bernardino Leon, who is leading the talks, noted the participation of new personalities from across the political and social spectrum is enriching the discussion and the overall dialogue process. Details can be seen [here](#).

On April 15th, the U.N. Security Council condemned the recent terrorist attacks in Tripoli targeting the embassies of South Korea and Morocco in Libya. The Security Council condemned all acts of violence against diplomatic premises and underlined that host governments have an obligation to take all appropriate steps to protect foreign diplomatic facilities. In addition, the U.N. offered condolences of the families of the victims killed in the attacks and called for the perpetrators to be brought to justice. The Security Council's position was articulated [here](#).

On April 15th, a new round of political dialogue on Libya, hosted by Morocco and facilitated by UNSMIL, began in Skhirat. Since the last round of talks ended on March 26th, participants had the opportunity to consult with their constituencies and key stakeholders on a proposal on a comprehensive solution to end the conflict in Libya. During the meeting, parties were expected to present their remarks regarding the overall framework outlined in the Draft Agreement on the Political Transition in Libya. More information can be found [here](#).

On April 15th, forces loyal to Libya's internationally recognized government carried out airstrikes on rival government targets near Tripoli. A spokesperson for Prime Minister Abdullah al-Thinni said warplanes had attacked the Mitiga airport, among other targets. The airstrikes came as a new round of U.N.-brokered peace talks kicked off in Morocco. The latest round of airstrikes was reported [here](#).

On April 15th, Acting U.S. State Department Deputy Spokesperson Jeff Rathke opened the daily press briefing by welcoming the next round of the U.N.-led Libyan peace talks in Morocco. He urged all Libyan stakeholders to agree on arrangements to end Libya's political, security, and institutional crisis. In addition, the State Department condemned the latest airstrikes in Tripoli and again called on all parties to cease hostilities. Deputy Spokesperson Rathke also noted a meeting held in Washington with a delegation from the Libyan house of representatives, during which U.S. officials urged their continued engagement in the U.N.-led process to form a national unity government. A transcript of the press briefing can be read [here](#).

Kenya

On April 10th, Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta urged the Muslim community in Kenya to work with government officials to fight terrorism by alerting authorities to Al Shabaab sympathizers. Recently, the Kenyan Government has not enjoyed a strong relationship with the Muslim community, especially as ethnic Somali Muslims in the northeastern part of the country have expressed distrust of the government and as Kenyan security forces have engaged in violence against Muslim communities. For more information, click [here](#).

On April 12th, one Kenyan student died and 141 others suffered injuries in a stampede at the University of Nairobi when students mistook several accidental explosions for an attack. According to University of Nairobi Vice Chancellor Peter Mbithi, an electrical transformer exploded and students thought it was an attack like the April 2nd Al Shabaab assault on Garissa University College, which killed 148 people. He added that injured students had been taken to the hospital for treatment. The incident was reported [here](#).

On April 14th, UNHCR urged Kenya to reconsider its decision, announced over the weekend, to force the U.N. to close the Dadaab refugee camp for Somali refugees. While the Kenyan Government said the decision was part of a tough response to the killing of 148 people at Garissa University College by Somali Al Shabaab militants, UNHCR warned returning the refugees to Somalia would have extreme humanitarian and practical consequences and expressed a willingness to work with Kenyan authorities to instead strengthen law enforcement at the camp. More information was reported [here](#).

On April 14th, activists in Kenya objected to the inclusion of prominent Muslim groups Haki Africa and Muslims for Human Rights (MUHURI) on a list of possible groups with ties to Al Shabaab. In total, the list included 86 groups suspected of providing support to the terrorist group. Human rights groups have argued Kenyan authorities have been too heavy handed in using police to alienate and intimidate Muslims. Haki Africa is planning to release a report next week detailing extra-judicial killings carried out by the government. Details were shared [here](#).

On April 16th, Pope Francis appealed to Al Shababb militants, including those who participated in the attack on Kenya's Garissa University College and targeted Christian students, to stop their brutality and come to their senses. Pope Francis has repeatedly expressed alarm about Christians being targeted for their faith in Africa. He also told Kenyan bishops visiting the Vatican that he prayed for those killed by acts of terror, ethnic, and tribal hostilities in Kenya and elsewhere on the continent. Pope Francis' sentiments can be seen [here](#).

Sudan

On April 10th, Sudan's Foreign Ministry summoned European Union (EU) Ambassador to Sudan Tomas Ulicny to address recent remarks by EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini criticizing the political environment in the country ahead of upcoming elections. Last Thursday, High Representative Mogherini said the EU would not support the elections, as there was no conducive environment in Sudan for the polls and the people of Sudan deserve better. The full story is available [here](#).

On April 10th, in advance of the April 13th-15th polls representing Sudan's first election since the secession of South Sudan, *Reuters* reported that Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir and the National Congress Party appeared strong heading into presidential and parliamentary elections. The main opposition parties plan to boycott the election, leaving no real challenge to the ruling party. Meanwhile, President Bashir's critics continued to highlight his regime's crackdown on media, civil society, and political opposition. Additional analysis on the elections was provided [here](#).

On April 13th, voting began in Sudan's general elections. More than 13 million people were registered to vote at 11,000 polling stations across the country. Media reported that voting was off to a slow start, mostly with soldiers and elderly people showing up at polling sites. Because Sudan's opposition groups boycotted the elections, President Omar al-Bashir, who was competing against 15 little-known candidates, was widely expected to be elected to another five-year term. The start of voting in Sudan was noted [here](#).

On April 14th, Sudan's National Election Commission reported that voting had not been able to take place at a number of polling stations because ballot materials had not arrived on time. As a result, electoral authorities decided to extend voting for two days in affected areas. An update on the polls in Sudan was issued [here](#).

On April 15th, Ahmed al-Radi Jaber and Omar Awad al-Kareem Hussain, two independent candidates, withdrew from Sudan's presidential elections, citing irregularities in the polling process as voting was extended. In announcing his withdrawal, Jaber expressed his belief the National Election Commission was supporting the ruling party in the elections. Meanwhile, Hussain said problems with voting papers and the balloting process made the election a political farce. Their withdrawals were reported [here](#).

West Africa Ebola Outbreak

On April 9th, the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) announced the discharge of an American health care worker admitted to the NIH Clinical Center on March 13th for treatment for Ebola. The patient became infected with Ebola while caring for patients in Sierra Leone. The NIH reported the patient was successfully treated and is no longer contagious to the community. A press release was issued [here](#).

On April 9th, the *Wall Street Journal* highlighted the controversial nature of conducting Ebola vaccine trials in West Africa. While an NIH trial for an Ebola vaccine is underway in Liberia, where there are currently zero cases of Ebola, other studies in Guinea and Sierra Leone are not expected to produce meaningful evidence of vaccines' effectiveness, as medical officials in those countries have opposed giving a placebo to anyone at risk of being infected with Ebola. The full story is available [here](#).

On April 10th, the U.N. World Health Organization's (WHO) International Health Regulations (IHR) Emergency Committee held its fifth meeting, where it confirmed the Ebola outbreak in West Africa still poses a threat to international peace and security, despite a major fall-off in case incidence and geographic distribution in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. While determining the Ebola outbreak still constitutes a public health emergency, the Committee noted improvements in prevention and control activities in West Africa, including in contact tracing. The meeting was summarized [here](#).

On April 10th, Carol Han of the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance authored a blog post describing her experience serving on the Ebola Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) in Guinea. In particular, Han highlighted how USAID has been partnering with Guinean journalists to communicate with local communities about the Ebola outbreak. The blog post can be accessed [here](#).

On April 11th, *The New York Times* detailed how the Ebola outbreak in West Africa outpaced U.S. response efforts. After spending hundreds of millions of dollars and deploying nearly 3,000 troops to Liberia to help build Ebola treatment units (ETUs), only 28 Ebola patients have been treated at the 11 ETUs built by the U.S. military. Even before the first American ETU was built, the number of Ebola cases in the country had fallen drastically. An article on the U.S. response to Ebola in Liberia can be read [here](#).

On April 12th, *The New York Times* reported on safety lapses and confusing organizational issues at a government Ebola treatment center run by U.S. charity Partners in Health in Port Loko, Sierra Leone, which has now been closed following the evacuation of many staff members last month. Based on a previously undisclosed inquiry by international health officials and interviews with employees and managers for Partners in Health, the safety deficiencies included inadequate protective clothing, inconsistent protocols in using it, and inappropriate disposal of contaminated waste products. The situation was described [here](#).

On April 13th, a clinical trial for the rVSV-EBOV Ebola vaccine began in Sierra Leone. The study, which is the third vaccine trial in Sierra Leone, is sponsored by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Sierra Leone's Ministry of Health, and the University of Sierra Leone's College of Medicine and Allied Health Sciences. The goal is to voluntarily enroll 6,000 health workers to prove the effectiveness of the vaccine in preventing Ebola in humans. Details can be found [here](#).

On April 14th, schools in Sierra Leone reopened after being closed for nine months as part of the response to the Ebola outbreak. While authorities have waived fees at state schools as part of an effort to encourage 1.8 million children to return to school to catch up on a lost academic year, teachers and aid workers reported that attendance was low due to lingering fears of the disease. Experts expect school attendance to tick up in the coming days and weeks as case incidence continues to decline. The reopening of schools in Sierra Leone was noted [here](#).

On April 15th, the WHO released its weekly Ebola situation report. For the week ending April 12th, a total of 37 confirmed cases of Ebola were reported, compared to 30 cases the previous week. Case incidence in Guinea increased to 28, compared with 21 confirmed cases last week. Sierra Leone reported 9 confirmed cases, the same total as the week before. There were no new cases reported in Liberia. Additional data was presented [here](#).

On April 15th, in advance of the World Bank Group's Spring Meetings, which bring heads of state from Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea to Washington, DC to share their Ebola recovery plans with finance and development ministers and international partners, the World Bank released the findings of new surveys conducted in Liberia and Sierra Leone to assess how Ebola is impacting people's livelihoods. The World Bank found the return to work continues in Liberia, led by gains for wage workers and the rural self-employed, while the picture remains mixed in Sierra Leone, where urban youth and the non-farm self-employed continue to lag behind. The surveys were highlighted [here](#).

On April 15th, U.S. President Barack Obama hosted a meeting at the White House with Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Guinean President Alpha Conde, and Sierra Leonean President Ernest Bai Koroma to assess the Ebola response and the road ahead. President Obama pledged the U.S. will continue to help West Africa until Ebola is fully eradicated. The leaders also discussed plans to revive economic growth in the region following the deadly outbreak of the virus. For more information, click [here](#).

On April 15th, USAID highlighted the work of its DARTs in West Africa to control the spread of Ebola along country borders. Along the border between Liberia and Sierra Leone, USAID has constructed Ebola screening and triage stations to ensure travelers from both sides of the border would be effectively monitored for Ebola symptoms. Other USAID partners have also ramped up preparedness at border crossing stations with hand washing stations, temperature screening booths, and holding rooms for suspected cases. Details were shared [here](#).

On April 15th, the U.S. House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services (HHS), Education, and Related Agencies held a budget hearing on Ebola. Witnesses included Assistant Secretary of HHS Nicole Lurie, Director of the CDC Dr. Thomas Frieden, Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) Dr. Anthony Fauci, and Director of the Biomedical Advanced

Research and Development Agency (BARDA) Robin Robinson. The hearing was noticed [here](#).

United States – Africa Relations

White House

On April 11th, the White House issued a press statement condemning the life sentence issued in Egypt against American citizen Mohamed Soltan and called for his immediate release from prison. Soltan's sentence comes in response to his support for an Islamist protest against the military ouster of Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi. The White House expressed ongoing concern about Soltan's health, which has suffered during his 20 month-long incarceration. In addition, the White House noted President Barack Obama remains committed to the welfare of all U.S. citizens abroad and will continue to ensure that Soltan continues to receive consular support until he can return safely to the U.S. The full statement was published [here](#).

On April 13th, Vice President Joe Biden spoke with South African Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa about the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). Vice President Biden and Deputy President Ramaphosa discussed the critical role AGOA has played in expanding U.S.-Africa trade. The Vice President reiterated the U.S. interest in renewing AGOA as soon as possible, for as long as possible, in order to continue to encourage sustainable investment and robust economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa. He also expressed concern about barriers to market access in South Africa for certain U.S. products and urged South Africa to address these issues as soon as possible. The call was summarized [here](#).

On April 14th, National Security Advisor Susan Rice met with African Union (AU) Chairperson Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma at the White House. Ambassador Rice commended the AU's leadership on global health issues and the two discussed the need to continue focusing on Ebola until there are zero cases. Ambassador Rice also reaffirmed the U.S. remains committed to continuing to expand trade between the U.S. and Africa, including through initiatives launched last year at the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit. She also reiterated the strong U.S. interest in renewing AGOA as soon as possible for as long as possible. The two also discussed regional issues of mutual concern, including advancing peace in South Sudan and assisting Libya in countering terrorism. A readout of the meeting was shared [here](#).

State Department

On April 10th, Deputy Secretary of State Tony Blinken traveled to Tunis, Tunisia to meet with senior Tunisian Government officials and civil society representatives. Deputy Secretary Blinken's visit to Tunisia was intended to reinforce U.S. support for Tunisia's democracy in the face of the recent Bardo Museum attack. Deputy Secretary Blinken's travel was outlined [here](#).

On April 10th, State Department Counselor Tom Shannon met with U.S. Ambassador-designate to Mali Paul Folmsbee at the Department of State. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee held a hearing on Folmsbee's nomination on March 25th. The meeting was noticed [here](#).

On April 13th, Secretary of State John Kerry met with AU Chairperson Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma as part of the third iteration of the annual High Level Dialogue and signed a Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) to support the African Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The two leaders discussed expansion of cooperation on public health, trade, education, and governance. Through the MOC, the U.S. CDC will provide technical expertise to the AU to support establishing an African Surveillance and Response Unit and an Emergency Operations Center within the African CDC. More information was shared [here](#). Secretary Kerry's remarks were transcribed [here](#).

On April 14th, the State Department issued a statement expressing concern for the National Transitional Council's recent passage of changes to Burkina Faso's electoral code that excludes candidates in the upcoming elections who had voiced support for a constitutional revision to amend presidential term limits in late 2014. The State Department said the changes appear inconsistent with the democratic principles of freedom of expression, freedom of association, and free, fair, and peaceful elections. Further, the State Department urged the transitional government, civil society, and other actors to pursue a coordinated, consensual, and inclusive approach in conducting the elections. Additional feedback was

posted [here](#).

On April 14th-18th, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield was on travel to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. On April 16th, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Wendy Sherman was also on travel to Ethiopia. Their travel was announced [here](#).

On April 15th, the U.S. welcomed the AU's announcement of its new Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region and Head of the AU Liaison Office in Burundi, Dr. Arvin Boolell. The State Department noted the U.S. looks forward to continuing its partnership with the AU in promoting democratization, ending the threat of armed groups in the region, bolstering regional stability and cooperation, and ensuring that upcoming elections in several Great Lakes countries are free, fair, and peaceful. The U.S. also encouraged regional governments, including the Government of Burundi, to continue their engagement and cooperation with Special Representative Boolell. For details, click [here](#).

On April 16th, Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment Catherine Novelli met with Tunisian Minister of Finance Slim Chaker, Minister of Development, Investment, and International Cooperation Yassin Brahim, and Central Bank Governor Chadli Ayari. She also met separately with African Development Bank (AfDB) President Donald Kaberuka and Nigerian Coordinating Minister of the Economy and Minister of Finance Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala at the World Bank. Under Secretary Novelli's schedule was outlined [here](#).

U.S. Agency for International Development

On April 14th, USAID Senior Advisor for International Education at USAID Christie Vilsack authored a blog post on USAID's efforts to promote literacy in Rwanda. Through the USAID-funded Literacy, Language, and Learning project, launched in partnership with the Rwanda Educational Board and the Rwanda-based book distributor Drakkar Limited, since 2011 USAID has worked to improve literary education in Rwanda through the development of instructional materials, teacher training, policy development, and the delivery of education materials directly to Rwandan communities. The full blog post can be read [here](#).

Department of Defense

On April 8th-10th, in coordination with U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA), and the Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS) East Africa's senior leaders gathered for the inaugural Senior Leaders Summit in Nairobi, Kenya. Themed "Professionalization of Forces in the Horn of Africa," the purpose of the Summit was to discuss leadership development and share best practices for operating in the Horn of Africa and East Africa. For more information, click [here](#).

On April 14th, Jefferson Waterman International (JWI) announced that General Carter Ham, the immediate past Commander of AFRICOM, is joining the JWI Africa Advisory Board. As AFRICOM Commander, General Ham led all military activities across the African continent. General Ham's experience will inform and support JWI's international political and consulting activities, particularly those involving West Africa. A press release was issued [here](#).

Department of Commerce

On April 8th, Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker authored a blog post reporting on her participation in the first meeting of the President's Advisory Council on Doing Business in Africa. Secretary Pritzker noted the Council's job is to advise the Department of Commerce and the Obama Administration on how to expand trade and investment opportunities for U.S. firms in Africa and create opportunities for African companies that want to do business in America. She also said the Council is focused on three key areas, including mobilizing capital, improving supply chain efficiency, and developing African infrastructure. The Council's meeting was summarized [here](#).

Overseas Private Investment Corporation

On April 10th, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) highlighted the Gigawatt Global 8.5

megawatt (MW) solar facility east of Kigali, Rwanda. The project, which OPIC supported in its early phases, is East Africa's first grid-connected, utility-scale solar energy facility and represents a full six percent contribution to the entire country's power generation capacity. Gigawatt Global's solar facility is also the first project to come online under the U.S.-Africa Clean Energy Finance (ACEF) program as part of President Barack Obama's Power Africa initiative. The project was highlighted [here](#).

On April 13th, Citi Senegal granted Microcred Senegal a loan of \$2.5 million to drive and promote the development of the microfinance sector in Senegal. The loan is part of a long term business partnership between Citi Inclusive Finance and OPIC to provide financing in local currencies to leading microfinance institutions operating in frontier and emerging markets around the world. The financing will fund Microcred Senegal's microcredit portfolio in supporting the development of approximately two thousand micro and small enterprises in the country. Details were posted [here](#).

Millennium Challenge Corporation

On April 10th, the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) posted the text of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the MCC and Morocco on a shared vision for reducing poverty through sustainable economic growth. Under the MOU, the MCC agreed to provide Morocco with technical assistance on project management, public-private consultations, and technologies and innovative business models to promote entrepreneurship. Additionally, the MCC agreed to provide technical assistance to Morocco's energy sector to help advance President Barack Obama's Power Africa initiative. The MOU can be downloaded [here](#).

On April 13th, OPIC Deputy Chief Executive Officer Nancy Lee authored a blog post on her participation in the Third Annual U.S.-Morocco Strategic Dialogue hosted by Secretary of State John Kerry and Moroccan Foreign Minister Salaheddine Mezouar. The Strategic Dialogue included discussions related to the next phase of MCC's compact with Morocco to build on MCC CEO Dana Hyde's visit to Morocco last fall to discuss development of the next compact. The full blog post can be read [here](#).

Congress

On April 15th, House Foreign Affairs Africa Committee Ranking Member Karen Bass (D-CA) issued her biweekly Africa newsletter. The most recent edition of the Africa Update highlights recent elections in Nigeria and Kenya's use of social media to mourn the loss of the victims who were killed in Al Shabaab's attack on Garissa University College. The newsletter can be downloaded [here](#).

North Africa

On April 10th, Moroccan transportation officials reported at least 33 people were killed, most of them children returning from an athletic competition, when a bus burst into flames after crashing into a gas tanker. The bus had been heading from Benslimane to Laayoune before the accident, which occurred in Tan-Tan. Road accidents have been on the rise in Morocco, especially as car ownership has nearly doubled in the past 15 years. The accident was reported [here](#).

On April 13th, Morocco's Interior Ministry reported it had broken up a militant cell loyal to ISIL that was planning attacks both in the country, as well as against security forces in the Netherlands. Moroccan domestic intelligence officials gave Dutch authorities information that allowed the arrest of a member of the group living in the Netherlands, while five others had been operating in Nador. An article on the ISIL cell was published [here](#).

On April 13th, the Italian coast guard reported at least nine people died when an overcrowded migrant boat capsized off the coast of Libya and 144 others were rescued. According to Italian authorities, the coast guard rescued a total of 5,629 people from 22 different vessels between April 10th and 12th. The number of boats carrying African migrants to Europe has picked up in the recent weeks as spring weather has made the passage safer. More information can be viewed [here](#).

On April 14th, U.N. Deputy Special Representative for South Sudan Moustapha Soumare visited Malakal to meet with local officials and community leaders among 26,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) being sheltered by the U.N. Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). Over the past two weeks, fighting

between the Dinka and Shilluk communities has triggered an influx of more than 4,000 new IDPs into Malakal. Deputy Special Representative Soumare said he was impressed by progress made in building a new extension to house new IDPs. His visit was outlined [here](#).

On April 14th, the World Bank highlighted the findings of a forthcoming World Bank report on the cycle of poor delivery of public services in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. The report finds that while citizens in the MENA region have long enjoyed near universal access to free education and healthcare, they are often disappointed by the quality of services provided. The study seeks to explain that quality is often affected by a lack of accountability mechanisms within public institutions, mistrust of government and few opportunities for direct engagement with public officials, and limited channels for lodging complaints. The report's findings were summarized [here](#).

On April 14th, the Egyptian High Court upheld a seven-year jail for Islamist politician and ex-presidential candidate Hazem Salah Abu Ismail. Abu Ismail was convicted of falsifying documents and was one of several political figures arrested by the military in the crackdown on protests following the toppling of President Mohamed Morsi in 2013. During the 2012 election, Abu Ismail reportedly altered official documents noting his mother's U.S. citizenship. The full story is available [here](#).

On April 15th, two students from an Egyptian military academy were killed and six were wounded when a bomb targeting a minibus exploded in Kafr al-Sheikh. The bomb exploded as the minibus stopped near the city's stadium. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack, but Sinai Province, a militant group that has pledged allegiance to ISIL has claimed responsibility for similar attacks in the past. The incident was reported [here](#).

On April 16th, an Egyptian soldier was killed and another wounded when a bomb targeted an armored vehicle in the Northern Sinai town of Sheikh Zuweird. The attack is the latest in a series of violence in the region, which is home to many Islamist insurgents. More information can be seen [here](#).

East Africa

On April 10th, Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan selected two firms to carry out studies on the potential impact of Ethiopia's Grand Renaissance Dam on the flow of the Nile. Leaders of all three countries reached a cooperation agreement in March, paving the way for a joint approach to regional water supplies. While officials declined to name the firms, Egyptian Irrigation Minister Hossam al-Moghazi indicated the firms were of French and Dutch origins and additional information would be released publicly by May 4th. More information was shared [here](#).

On April 13th, a Kenyan court sentenced three men to 15 years in prison for the gang rape of a 16-year-old girl in 2013. Initially sentenced to cutting grass at a police compound as their sentence, the case triggered extensive protests last year in which hundreds of people marched on the office of the head of police in Nairobi to demand justice. An update on the case was provided [here](#).

On April 14th, Al Shabaab militants attacked a government building in Mogadishu that houses the ministries for higher education and petroleum and minerals. According to government sources, Al Shabaab set off two blasts before gunmen stormed inside, killing at least ten people. About an hour and a half after the first explosion, police had secured the building. An article on the incident can be read [here](#).

On April 14th, the *Associated Press* reported that a new plan launched by Kenyan authorities earlier this month to ease traffic in Nairobi may actually be causing more congestion. The new strategy was intended to ease road congestion by replacing key traffic circles with intersections and stoplights, but the changes have actually led to more cars at a standstill and increasingly angry drivers. Traffic has been a persistent challenge in Nairobi, which is home to more than three million people and lacks modern mass transit systems. Experts estimate the congestion may have an economic cost of approximately \$1 billion per year. Details were posted [here](#).

On April 14th, a lightning strike killed six students and their teacher at a school in northwestern Tanzania, just two months after a similar incident at another school in the area. Another 15 people were injured. Fatalities are common during lightning storms in northwestern Tanzania during the rainy seasons in

October/November and March/April. The full story was outlined [here](#).

On April 15th, U.N. Special Representative for Somalia Nicholas Kay condemned the Al Shabaab terrorist attack against the Ministry of Culture and Higher Education in Mogadishu that resulted in the death and injuries of civilians, members of the security forces, and government workers. He labeled the attack as an assault on Somalis' brave efforts to build a brighter future for the youth of their nation and called for unity in the face of continuing terrorism. Special Representative Kay's comments were captured [here](#).

On April 15th, the World Bank highlighted the launch of the Negawatt Challenge, an international competition designed by the World Bank to inspire cities around the globe to innovate around urban energy efficiency challenges. Participants in the first phase of the competition hailed from Kenya, Ghana, and Tanzania. Nairobi, Accra, and Dar es Salaam are all rapidly urbanizing and growing capitals where increasing demand for energy is putting additional pressure on public service delivery and reliable access to electricity. More information can be found [here](#).

West Africa

On April 8th, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) of Switzerland launched the Africa Corporate Governance Program for Ghana to help strengthen businesses and boost economic growth in the country. IFC and SECO launched the program at an event attended by Ghanaian regulators, including representatives of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, business leaders, and training institutions. The program was launched [here](#).

On April 9th, U.N. Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Herve Ladsous and Malian Foreign Minister Abdoulaye Diop briefed the U.N. Security Council on the situation in Mali. Under-Secretary-General Ladsous told the Security Council there is a historical opportunity currently present in Mali as the international community has shown willingness to help parties in the country achieve and implement a peace agreement. Additionally, he reported efforts are ongoing to scale up U.N. Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) operations in the northern part of the country. Excerpts from the briefing were highlighted [here](#).

On April 9th, French Finance Minister Michel Sapin announced that France had canceled approximately \$71 million worth of debt owed by Mali. Following a meeting with Malian President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, Minister Sapin said the move is intended to support Mali in coping with old debt that is difficult to manage. It was not immediately clear what portion of Mali's overall debt to France has been forgiven. For more information, click [here](#).

On April 10th, the U.N. Security Council welcomed the peace and reconciliation accord between the Malian Government, armed groups, and an international mediation team. The Security Council applauded the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation, signed by representatives of the Government and the coalition of armed groups known as Platform, on March 1st. Further, members of the Security Council urged parties in Mali to continue to engage constructively with sustained political will and in good faith to complete implementation of the agreement as soon as possible. Feedback from the U.N. Security Council was shared [here](#).

On April 10th, Mali announced that northern Tuareg-led separatist rebels would give preliminary approval to a U.N. brokered peace deal. Meanwhile a representative of the Coalition for the People of Azawad (CPA), one of five groups in the rebel coalition, said his organization was willing to initial the deal, but wanted further negotiations before giving definitive approval. CPA has repeatedly stressed the deal, which the Malian Government indicated it would sign in early March, does not grant enough concessions to the desert region of Azawad. The conflicting reports were noted [here](#).

On April 13th, at least two people were wounded during opposition protests in Guinea against the government's electoral time table and insecurity in Conakry. The protests were announced last week after unidentified gunmen attacked the vehicle of Aboubacar Sylla, an opposition spokesman, in what they said was a targeted assassination attempt. According to witnesses, opposition supporters began barricading streets and several witnesses reported gunfire, while the government said a police vehicle had been attacked and one member of the security forces injured by stone-throwing demonstrators. The

protests were highlighted [here](#).

On April 13th, Ghana's Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources reported the country's export revenues from the minerals sector amounted to \$5 billion last year. According to the government agency, the sector employs about 32,000 people in the large scale sector and more than 1,000,000 in small scale mining. Ghana's minerals sector contributes an average of 40 percent to the state's revenue and 17.5 percent of the total national corporate tax earnings. Additional analysis of Ghana's mining sector was provided [here](#).

On April 13th, Ivory Coast's National Civil Aviation Authority announced the U.S. Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has granted authorization to start direct flights between the two countries. The news comes as President Alassane Ouattara has been pushing to make Ivory Coast a regional transportation hub. Transportation officials believe direct flights between Ivory Coast and the U.S. will help increase U.S. investment in the country. Details can be seen [here](#).

On April 14th, the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) said it is deeply disturbed by the series of violent attacks that have occurred in the Gao and Kidal regions of northern Mali, making an already precarious security situation more volatile. Further, OHCHR noted there is an increasing use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and mines that is particularly worrisome and urged all parties involved in the conflict in Mali to ensure the protection of civilians, including U.N. personnel and humanitarian workers. Feedback from OHCHR was posted [here](#).

On April 14th, *Mail & Guardian* reported Nigeria is in talks with Russia's Rosatom Corp. to build as many as four nuclear power plants costing about \$20 billion in order to add 1,200 MW of capacity by the end of the decade. Nigeria Atomic Energy Commission Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Franklin Erepmo Osaisai said a joint coordination committee is in place and negotiations around financing and contracting are ongoing. The first Nigerian plant is anticipated to be operational in 2025. More information was posted [here](#).

On April 15th, MINUSMA condemned a suicide vehicle explosion that injured nine peacekeepers, killed at least three civilians, and injured seven others. The attack occurred as the vehicle attempted to enter the MINUSMA camp in Ansongo. While condemning the attack, U.N. Special Representative for Mali and head of MINUSMA Mongi Hamdi said the attack will not deter MINUSMA in its mission to restore peace and security in Mali. MINUSMA's feedback was shared [here](#).

On April 16th, Ivory Coast Agriculture Minister Sangafowa Coulibaly outlined how the government's National Plan for Agricultural Investment (PNIA) will reduce poverty and lead to the local processing of half of Ivory Coast's agricultural output. As part of the plan, the government is seeking to offer more tax breaks for agricultural firms and step up land reform and infrastructure projects. Additional comments from Minister Coulibaly were captured [here](#).

Sub-Saharan Africa

On April 10th, the U.N. Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (CAR) (MINUSCA) reported one person died and a dozen people were wounded when hundreds of protestors clashed with U.N. peacekeepers in Kaga-Bandoro. The demonstrators were angry that MINUSCA had failed to stop raids by ethnic Peuhl pastoralists. According to witnesses, U.N. peacekeepers responded with tear gas and guns when protestors attacked the town's aerodrome and tried to force their way through the camp barrier, which was set on fire. The situation was described [here](#).

On April 10th, South African Trade and Industry Minister Rob Davies said AGOA has had a positive impact on both South Africa and the U.S. and should be renewed. He said South Africa's trade with the U.S. has been growing steadily. He also said a South African delegation comprised of government, business, and trade unions would soon be taking part in the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) with the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) and advocating for the renewal of AGOA. Minister Davies' comments were captured [here](#).

On April 12th, Helen Zille, the leader of South Africa's opposition party, the Democratic Alliance (DA),

said she will not stand for re-election at the party's congress next month. Having led the party since 2007, Zille said the DA will benefit from new blood, although she will remain premier of Western cape province until 2019. Zille has been a fierce critic of South African President Jacob Zuma and the ruling African National Congress (ANC) party. More information was shared [here](#).

On April 13th, the World Bank issued new projections for economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa. According to the World Bank analysis, sub-Saharan Africa's growth will slow in 2015 to 4 percent from 4.5 percent in 2014. The 2015 forecast is below the 4.4 percent average annual growth rate of the past two decades, and short of Africa's peak growth rate of 6.4 percent. The downturn largely reflects the fall in the prices commodities of which sub-Saharan Africa is a net exporter, including oil, gold, and natural gas. Additional analysis was presented [here](#).

On April 13th, South African police reported that four people were killed and shops owned by immigrants in Durban were looted and burnt as violence between residents and foreign nationals escalated. South Africa is home to roughly 5 million immigrants, among a population of about 50 million. Some residents argued that foreign nationals are in the country illegally committing crimes and taking local jobs. In response, President Jacob Zuma called for an end to the violence and directed federal and local officials to work together to stop the violence and enforce laws to curb the growth of illegal trading and unlicensed shops. Details can be accessed [here](#).

On April 13th, Angola's sovereign wealth fund, the Fundo Soberano de Angola (FSDEA), announced it was allocating \$1.4 billion to five new vehicles that will invest in sectors such as mining, timber, agriculture, and healthcare in Angola and throughout Africa. The first three vehicles are focused on mining, timber, and agriculture, and will each have \$250 million to invest, while a fourth health care fund will have \$400 million. A fifth fund is being established to provide \$250 million in financing to entrepreneurs who do not have access to traditional debt funding. More information was reported [here](#).

On April 14th, U.N. Special Representative for the CAR and head of MINUSCA Babacar Gaye briefed the U.N. Security Council on the security situation in the country. Special Representative Gaye warned that much of the CAR's population remained at risk from attacks by the Muslim Seleka alliance and the Christian anti-Balaka militia as the two groups continue to wage hostilities. However, he also highlighted the historical local consultations held in March that offered CAR citizens a forum to express their views on issues related to justice and reconciliation, peace and security, governance, and socio-economic development priorities. Excerpts from the briefing were highlighted [here](#).

On April 14th, the World Bank launched the maiden Malawi Economic Monitor report in Lilongwe. This first report provides a macroeconomic outlook for Malawi and includes recommendations for building trade competitiveness and addressing constraints that limit the country from benefitting from opportunities created by international trade. The report indicated that Malawi's economic growth remained stable in 2014 at 5.7 percent, but is projected to slow slightly to 5.1 percent due to recent weather that has affected agricultural production and subsequent manufacturing. The report can be downloaded [here](#).

On April 14th, the Zambian cabinet approved a proposal to drop a recent hike in royalties demanded on mining operations in the country, following a six-month standoff with mining companies over the controversial tax system. According to a spokesperson for President Edgar Lungu, a panel of government ministers was directed to finalize the details of proposed changes for parliamentary approval next week. Last October, Zambian officials announced a 14 percentage-point jump in royalty fees, while leading copper mining companies indicated such a move could lead to the closure of current and future projects. Details can be seen [here](#).

On April 15th, during a visit to Burundi, U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein raised concerns about tensions rising in the country ahead of a series of elections scheduled to take place between May and August. High Commissioner Zeid urged that free and fair elections would strengthen and mature Burundi's still fragile democracy and enable an improvement in its dire socio-economic situation. His comments were recorded [here](#).

On April 15th, Zimbabwe's constitutional court upheld the expulsion from parliament last month of 21 opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) members after their party dismissed them following

internal squabbling over leadership. Chief Justice Chidyausiku said the challenge by former Secretary General and Finance Minister Tendai Biti and his group lacked merit and dismissed the case. The ruling is expected to weaken the MDC's voice in the parliament, where the Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) holds a strong majority. More information can be found [here](#).

On April 15th, South African utility Eskom resumed widespread power cuts for the fourth day in a row. While Eskom has routinely implemented intentional power outages to prevent the grid from collapsing, more than a quarter of the country's power supply was down on Tuesday due to scheduled maintenance and plant breakdowns. Despite the energy challenges South Africa is confronting, Minister of Public Enterprises Lynn Brown said a total blackout is unlikely. The situation was detailed [here](#).

On April 15th immigrants in Johannesburg, South Africa reportedly shut down their shops out of fear that anti-foreign violence that erupted near Durban earlier this week could spread. While there have been no recent reports of looting or violence in Johannesburg, the city saw similar attacks in 2008 that resulted in the deaths of more than 60 people. The situation was described [here](#).

On April 15th, a new World Bank-Gallup poll found that countries in sub-Saharan Africa are the world's leaders in sending and saving money via phone. According to the World Bank, sub-Saharan Africa is the only one of the World Bank's regions where more than ten percent of adults report having a mobile account. Sixty-four million of the region's adults, or roughly 12 percent have mobile accounts, compared to just two percent globally. In addition, 45 percent of the people surveyed only had a mobile account as a way to transfer funds. The survey findings were analyzed [here](#).

On April 16th, more than 5,000 people participated in a rally against xenophobia in Durban, South Africa, following this week's attacks on foreigners. A march was led by the city mayor and the premier of KwaZulu-Natal province, with reports that police dispersed anti-immigrant protestors with water cannons and pepper spray. The demonstration occurred as South African President Jacob Zuma condemned the attacks and called for calm to be restored and as police in Johannesburg fired tear gas and rubber bullets at a crowd chanting anti-immigrant slogans. The full story is available [here](#).

On April 16th, Human Rights Watch said security forces in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) have illegally detained and tortured pro-democracy advocates as part of a crackdown before next year's presidential elections. The human rights group suggested as many as 40 activists, musicians, and journalists were arrested in Kinshasa on March 15th during a conference organized by Congolese and West African campaigners to promote youth participation in politics. Meanwhile the government has argued those who were detained were teaching armed insurrection. More information was shared [here](#).

On April 16th, *Reuters* reported on the revival of tobacco farming in Zimbabwe following the collapse of the agriculture sector under President Robert Mugabe's indigenization policies. Tobacco production was up 235 percent last year when compared to production rates in 2009. President Mugabe continues to defend his seizure of land owned by white farmers as necessary to correct skewed colonial land ownership, but the state Tobacco Industry and Marketing Board reported that export earnings fell from \$600 million in 2000 to \$175 million in 2009 due to the policy. Details were provided [here](#).

General Africa News

On April 13th, *Tourism_Review.com* noted that Kenya, South Africa, and The Gambia are beginning to target Nigerian tourists to increase their foreign profits. Currently tourism contributes roughly 11 percent to Kenya's gross domestic product (GDP), 3.6 percent of South Africa's GDP, and 16 percent of GDP in The Gambia. The South Africa Tourism (SAT) department has recently opened a new regional office in Lagos, while the Kenya Tourism Board (KTB) reported that Nigeria currently contributes the highest number of African tourist arrivals in Kenya. Details were featured [here](#).

On April 13th, ten African entrepreneurs were chosen as finalists for the African Innovation Prize. The award was created to recognize individuals whose grassroots efforts are making advances in addressing some of the continent's social and technical problems. This year's finalists hail from Burundi, Cameroon, Kenya, Morocco, South Africa, and Uganda and come from an array of fields including agriculture, health, and education. In May, two winners will be selected to share a cash prize of \$150,000. The finalists were profiled [here](#).

On April 14th, the European Commission said European importers of minerals from conflict zones should be forced to certify their goods are blood-free as part of an effort to prevent the financing of warlords in Africa. A more robust policy proposal would mean the approximately 420 companies that import minerals for the EU to certify their goods are conflict-free. While the U.S. defines the conflict mineral zone as the DRC, Angola, and South Sudan, the European Commission said its plan is not limited to sub-Saharan Africa and could be applied around the globe. Details can be viewed [here](#).

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