



ML Strategies Update

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Africa Update

Leading the News

World Bank – International Monetary Fund Spring Meetings

On April 11th, a panel of African policy makers, entrepreneurs, and bankers gathered in Washington, DC, as part of the World Bank – International Monetary Fund (IMF) Spring Meetings to discuss ways to boost African businesses with homegrown investments. Panelists discussed the importance of creating large firms in Africa as a means for increasing employment, enhancing economic growth, and eradicating poverty. The panel discussion was detailed [here](#).

On April 11th, the World Bank – IMF Spring Meetings brought together 50 leaders of African civil society organizations and the media to discuss the participation of civil society and media stakeholders in designing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating development projects in Africa. World Bank Vice President for Africa Makhtar Diop addressed the group and called for citizen engagement as part of a sustainable development strategy in Africa. More information can be seen [here](#).

On April 12th, at the Spring Meetings of the World Bank and IMF, World Bank officials cautioned against any complacency in tackling African development challenges, especially after 19 years of robust growth on the continent. Meeting participants also expressed support for smart investments that can help tackle income inequality as Africa is poised to achieve an economic growth rate of 5.1% in 2014. Highlights from the discussion were noted [here](#).

On April 12th, Mozambique's Minister of Finance Manuel Chang, Uganda's Minister of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development Maria Kiwanuka, Chad's Minister of Finance and Budget Bedouma Kordje, and Djibouti's Central Bank Governor Ahmed Osman Ali held a press conference at the IMF. The African Ministers discussed the economic outlooks in their respective countries, as well as other topics, including public investment in infrastructure. The press briefing was transcribed [here](#).

On April 13th, Chairman of the African Caucus Bader Eldin Mahmoud Abbas and Managing Director of the IMF Christine Lagarde co-chaired the Africa Consultative Group meeting at IMF headquarters. The discussion at the meeting focused on the economic outlook and policy challenges facing Africa, with consensus that economic prospects for the continent are strong, with the growth rate expected to increase as inflation decreases over the next two years. Excerpts of the discussion were highlighted [here](#).

Nigeria

On April 14th, in the most deadly attack to ever occur in Nigeria's capital city of Abuja, suspected Islamic militants bombed a bus station during the morning rush hour, killing at least 72 people and wounding at least 164 others. Shortly after the attack, Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan visited the bombing scene, where he blamed Boko Haram for perpetrating the attack, although the group has not yet claimed responsibility. Initial investigations suggest that bombs could have been hidden underground and in vehicles. Details are available [here](#).

On April 14th, United Nations (U.N.) Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon expressed shock and sadness for the bombing attack at a bus station outside of Abuja, Nigeria, that killed at least 70 people and injured more than 100 others. Later in the day, the U.N. Security Council joined Secretary-General Ban in condemning this attack, as well as additional attacks committed over the past several days by Boko Haram in Nigeria. The U.N.'s reactions to the attack were shared [here](#).

On April 14th, State Department Spokesperson Jen Psaki condemned the attack on the Nyana Motor Park, just south of Abuja, Nigeria, and expressed condolences for the more than 70 people who were killed. She also condemned the attacks in three separate villages in Borno state that killed an additional 100 people, and encouraged the Government of Nigeria to fully investigate the incidents. While U.S. officials felt it was preliminary to blame Boko Haram for the attacks, Spokesperson Psaki indicated the U.S. will continue to work with Nigeria and its neighbors to combat the threat posed by Boko Haram. Comments from Spokesperson Psaki can be found [here](#).

On April 15th, heavily armed men attacked the Government Girls Secondary School in Cibok, Nigeria, killing a soldier and a police officer who were guarding the school and kidnapping more than 100 girls. Security had recently been ramped up at the school to coincide with the administration of annual exams. While no group has claimed responsibility for the incident, witnesses have accused the military group Boko Haram of executing the attack. The full story can be viewed [here](#).

On April 16th, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, in conjunction with the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF), condemned the abduction of some 100 school girls between the ages of 12 and 17 from their hostel in Chibok in Nigeria's Borno state and called for their immediate release. More generally, U.N. officials also condemned an increasing frequency of attacks against educational institutions in Nigeria. The U.N.'s reaction to the incident was reported [here](#).

On April 16th, military leaders in Nigeria reported they had freed most of the 129 female pupils who had been abducted by the Government Girls Secondary School in Borno state, with only eight of the students still reported missing. Security forces also announced that they had captured one suspect thought to be involved in the attack, but declined to provide any further details. The news comes as other attacks rattled Nigeria, killing at least 20 additional people in the northeastern part of the country. Developments were noted [here](#).

Libya

On April 13th, just one month after being appointed as Libya's interim Prime Minister, Abdullah Al-Thinni submitted his resignation to Libya's General National Congress (GNC). In his resignation letter, Prime Minister Thinni said that unidentified gunmen had tried to attack him and his family and that he would not accept to see any violence because of his position. Prime Minister Thinni's resignation was noted [here](#).

On April 14th, the State Department issued a statement condemning threats of violence against Libya's Prime Minister and other Libyan cabinet officials. State Department officials also cautioned that extortion by physical attack must not hijack peaceful dialogue in Libya's democratic transition and urged all Libyans to find common ground to ensure good governance and security. The full statement can be read [here](#).

On April 15th, Jordanian Ambassador to Libya Fawaz Al-Etan was abducted by masked gunmen in Tripoli after they fired upon his vehicle, wounding his driver. The Libyan Foreign Ministry issued a statement shortly after the abduction, noting it is following the case closely and will exert all efforts to ensure Ambassador Etan's safety. A description of the incident is available [here](#).

Guinea Bissau

On April 11th, in advance of the weekend elections in Guinea-Bissau, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called on all people and institutions in the country to help ensure that the forthcoming elections would be peaceful and credible. The elections, which have been postponed several times, are the first to take place since the coup that ousted interim President Raimundo Pereira from office in 2012. Elections preparations were detailed [here](#).

On April 13th, following the closing of polling stations, Guinea Bissau started counting votes in its presidential and legislative elections. Observers indicated that voter turnout was as high as 775,500 out of a population of 1.6 million people. As the polls closed, former Finance Minister Jose Mario Vaz was considered the frontrunner of the 13 candidates in the presidential race. Minister Vaz's Partido Africano da Independencia da Guine e Cabo Verde (PAIGC) party, one of 15 in play for the 102 seats in parliament, was also expected to hold control of the legislature. Information on the elections can be viewed [here](#).

On April 14th, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon applauded the people of Guinea-Bissau for their orderly and peaceful participation in the country's April 13th presidential and legislative elections. In addition, Secretary-General Ban commended elections management bodies in Guinea-Bissau, as well as the international partners that helped support the elections, and called on all candidates to respect the elections results when they are announced. Feedback from Secretary-General Ban was posted [here](#).

On April 15th, the U.S. issued a press statement congratulating Guinea-Bissau on the successful completion of peaceful and orderly first round elections. The State Department also commended the work of Bissau-Guineans who operated more than 3,000 polling stations, as well as the Bissau-Guinean security services that helped to ensure voting without intimidation. The full statement can be read [here](#).

Algeria

On April 15th, in advance of the April 17th presidential elections in Algeria, State Department Spokesperson Jen Psaki noted the U.S. would be watching the elections closely. While the U.S. does not engage in supporting political candidates in other countries, Spokesperson Psaki noted that Secretary of State John Kerry was recently in Algeria for discussions on a range of issues, including cooperation on counterterrorism efforts and strengthening bilateral strategic partnerships. Spokesperson Psaki's comments were transcribed [here](#).

On April 17th, Algerians headed to the polls to vote in the country's presidential elections. It is widely expected that President Abdelaziz Bouteflika will be reelected to a fourth term as president. The announcement of President Bouteflika's reelection bid recently sparked the Barakat, or Enough movement, led by Algerians who are concerned that President Bouteflika's poor health makes him unfit to rule. Information on the opening of the polls in Algeria can be found [here](#).

South Sudan

On April 10th, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry met with South Sudanese Minister in the Office of the President Awan Riak. During the meeting, Secretary Kerry expressed grave concern for the human rights situation in South Sudan and called on the South Sudanese Government to immediately stop the fighting, provide full humanitarian access, and cease threats against the U.N. Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). Secretary Kerry also expressed support for peace negotiations conducted under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). A readout of the meeting was provided [here](#).

On April 11th, the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said the recent sighting of unidentified planes over Yida, South Sudan, and the aerial bombing of Neem are increasing fear among South Sudanese refugees. Last week, five bombs were dropped by a military aircraft along a road used by refugees fleeing the Nuba Mountains region. In addition, military aircraft were also seen circling the refugee settlement in Yida, which previously came under aerial attack in November 2011. The incidents were reported [here](#).

On April 12th, the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the U.S. Agency for

International Development (USAID), and the European Union (EU) Commissioner for International Cooperation and Humanitarian and Crisis Response issued a call for action in South Sudan. Despite a cessation of hostilities agreement, U.N., U.S., and EU officials noted that fighting continues, causing suffering and displacement throughout the country. The call to action was posted [here](#). A press release can be seen [here](#).

On April 15th, U.N. Humanitarian Coordinator in South Sudan Toby Lanzer expressed concern that the number of people seeking shelter at the U.N. base in Bentiu in Unity State has doubled, up from just 4,500 people two weeks ago. UNMISS has recently deployed a patrol of peacekeepers to protect civilians who are now living at the base. Coordinator Lanzer also expressed frustration that, despite a cessation of hostilities agreement, fighting continues in Unity State. More information is available [here](#).

On April 16th, UNMISS confirmed that increasing violence has forced a surge in the number of civilians in Unity State seeking refuge at the U.N. site in Bentiu. More than 12,000 civilians, the majority of them women and children, are now gathering at the U.N. Mission, as anti-Government forces took control of the city of Bentiu, as well as Guit and Rubkona counties. An update from UNMISS can be viewed [here](#).

Central African Republic

On April 10th, the U.N. World Food Programme (WFP) said it is struggling to keep international attention focused on the escalating humanitarian crisis in the Central Africa Republic (CAR). Despite bad weather conditions, donors have provided just \$37 million to WFP's emergency response effort in the CAR, but WFP still requires close to \$70 million to carry out in-country operations through August and an additional \$17 million to provide food assistance to Central African refugees in neighboring countries. An update from WFP was provided [here](#).

On April 11th, UNHCR expressed concern following reports from U.N. officials in Cameroon that anti-Balaka militias in the CAR are blocking and attacking civilians who attempt to leave the country. According to U.N. officials, there has been an uptick in border crossings at more remote locations as refugees seek to avoid confrontations with Christian militants. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On April 14th, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon penned an op-ed for the *Washington Post* on his recent travel to the CAR. Secretary-General Ban expressed grave concern for displaced people, noting that more than 70,000 people are living in horrendous conditions at the airport in Bangui, while others remain entirely exposed. He also cautioned that challenges in the CAR are undermining the stability of an already fragile part of Africa. Observations for Secretary-General Ban's trip were shared [here](#).

On April 16th, the U.N. and other humanitarian partners operating in the CAR issued a joint appeal to fund emergency operations to support Central African refugees. By U.N. estimates, nearly 200,000 Central Africans have left the CAR over the past four months for Cameroon, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and the Republic of Congo (ROC). \$274 million has been requested for the CAR Regional Response Plan to cover shelter, food, water, sanitation, health, and education needs for refugees. Details can be found [here](#).

Egypt

On April 11th, the *Washington Post* Editorial Board published an op-ed calling on Egypt's military regime to adhere to the standards of democracy. The article expressed concern about General Abdul Fattah Al-Sisi's likely presidency, as well as the Egyptian judicial system, which continues to uphold harsh sentences for political prisoners. The full piece can be read [here](#).

On April 13th, U.S. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel spoke with Egyptian Minister of Defense Colonel General Sedki Sobhy. The phone call marked the first conversation between the two leaders. Secretary Hagel congratulated General Sobhy on his promotion and expressed his desire to maintain close contact. The leaders also discussed security issues, including the threat posed by terrorist networks and the importance of free and fair elections in Egypt. The call was summarized [here](#).

On April 23rd, The Brookings Institution will hold a briefing on "Understanding Tahrir Square: The Prospects for Arab Democracy." Scheduled speakers include Tamara Cofman Wittes and Stephen Grans of The Brookings Institution and Jackson Diehl of the *Washington Post*. Event logistics were

posted [here](#).

United States – Africa Relations

White House

On April 15th, the White House announced that President Barack Obama will host Djiboutian President Ismail Omar Guelleh at the White House on May 5th. The White House said that President Guelleh's visit underscores the strength of the strategic partnership between the U.S. and Djibouti, including the role that Djibouti plays in preventing conflict, promoting regional stability, and countering terrorism, especially as host to the Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) at Camp Lemonnier. During their meeting, President Obama and President Guelleh are expected to discuss a range of issues, including security and counterterrorism, development, trade, and energy cooperation. President Guelleh's upcoming visit to Washington was noted [here](#).

State Department

On April 8th-18th, Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs Doug Frantz was on foreign travel, including a stop in South Africa. In South Africa, Assistant Secretary Frantz was scheduled to visit the Public Affairs Africa Regional Media Hub in Johannesburg, and to meet with journalism students to discuss the intersection of foreign policy and the media. Assistant Secretary Frantz was also scheduled to travel to Cape Town to participate in a panel discussion at the International Press Institute World Congress. Assistant Secretary Frantz's travel was announced [here](#).

On April 10th-11th, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield was on foreign travel to Luanda, Angola. Assistant Secretary Thomas-Greenfield attended meetings with Angolan government officials and met with representatives from the U.S.-Angola Chamber of Commerce. Assistant Secretary Thomas-Greenfield's travel was detailed [here](#).

On April 10th-15th, State Department Counselor Tom Shannon was on foreign travel. Among his destinations, Counselor Shannon visited Stuttgart, Germany, to participate in a range of bilateral discussion and to conduct consultations with U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM). Counselor Shannon's travel was noted [here](#).

On April 11th, Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment Cathy Novelli met with President of PepsiCo Middle East and Africa Omar Farid, at the Department of State. Later, Under Secretary Novelli met with the African Development Bank (AfDB) Group President Donald Kaberuka at the World Bank. The meetings were noticed [here](#).

On April 17th, Secretary of State John Kerry issued a press statement sending best wishes to the people of Zimbabwe on their independence day. Secretary Kerry said that the U.S. remains committed to supporting Zimbabweans in their pursuit of a more democratic, prosperous, and healthy future. The full statement can be seen [here](#).

Department of Defense

On April 10th, *National Defense Magazine* ran an article on the expanding role of U.S. Marines in Africa. According to II Marine Expeditionary Force Major General Raymond Fox, U.S. Marines are expected to have a much larger role in crisis response operations in the future. In addition, he noted that the Benghazi terrorist attack changed AFRICOM forever, especially as the command seeks to respond to terrorist threats and instability in the region. The full article can be accessed [here](#).

On April 11th, U.S. and Ghanaian maritime forces completed a three-week combined maritime law enforcement operation as part of African Maritime Law Enforcement Partnership (AMLEP) program, the operational phase of Africa Partnership Station (APS). As part of the exercise, which involved U.S. and Ghanaian forces patrolling waters off the coast of Sekondi for illicit activity, a combined boarding team stopped three vessels that were fishing in Ghanaian waters illegally and recorded six infractions worth up to \$2 million in fines. More information was posted [here](#).

On April 12th, the *Marine Corps Times* reported that the Special-Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force

(SP-MAGTF) created last year for crisis response operations is currently in the process of moving from Europe to West Africa. According to Marine Corps Commandant General Jim Amos, the relocation is intended to increase the proximity of the unit to potential crisis, and additional force deployments to the continent are likely on the horizon. The full report is available [here](#).

On April 14th, *Stars and Stripes* ran an article on the Army's new East Africa Response Force (EARF), stationed at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti. EARF recently deployed 45 soldiers and a C-130 aircraft to South Sudan to assist in curtailing fighting outside of the U.S. Embassy in Juba. EARF is also assisting in lessening the threat posed by Somalia-based terrorist group, Al Shabaab. The full article can be read [here](#).

On April 15th, Marine Forces Europe and Africa Public Affairs provided additional insights into Exercise African Lion, AFRICOM's flagship program in North Africa to build partner-nation capacity and interoperability. This year's three-week exercise, hosted by Morocco, included a multilateral observer program with participants from Mauritania, Egypt, Tunisia, Turkey, Great Britain, Belgium, the Netherlands, Portugal, Germany, Spain, Senegal, Poland, Italy and France. Details were shared [here](#).

On April 16th, *Air Force Times* reported on the expansion of AFRICOM missions. Since 2008, the Command has grown to at least 5,000 troops. In addition, due in part to the threat of insurgents from Syria returning to Africa, AFRICOM has coordinated with African partner militaries to quietly and strategically place small groups of troops throughout the continent. The full article can be accessed [here](#).

Department of Justice

On April 14th, the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia struck down the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) conflict minerals rule, which required publicly traded companies to disclose when their products contain minerals from parts of Africa where mining tends to be controlled by warlords. The court said that the rule, which was included as part of the 2010 Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act SEC regulation, violated first amendment rights by compelling companies to criticize their own products. The ruling was detailed [here](#).

Export-Import Bank of the U.S.

On April 11th, at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce "Unlocking Growth in Africa: How the Diaspora can Partner with the Public and Private Sectors in the U.S. and Africa" conference in Washington, DC, the Export-Import (Ex-Im) Bank of the U.S. signed a \$100 million memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Eastern and Southern African Trade and Development Bank (PTA Bank). According to the MOU, Ex-Im Bank and PTA Bank will explore options for utilizing up to \$100 million in medium and long-term loan guarantees or direct loans to finance U.S. exports to sub-Saharan Africa. In the past four years, Ex-Im Bank has authorized more than \$4 billion in financing for U.S. exports to sub-Saharan Africa. A press release was issued [here](#).

Overseas Private Investment Corporation

On April 11th, in recognition of the 20th anniversary of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) posted photos on The OPIC Blog from OPIC President CEO Elizabeth Littlefield's visit to Rwanda's Genocide Memorial while leading a delegation to meet with investors and government leaders in February. The photos can be viewed [here](#).

Congress

On April 10th, during his weekly press conference, House Speaker John Boehner (R-OH) continued to criticize the Obama Administration for its failure to provide answers to congressional investigators looking into the Benghazi terrorist attack. Clips from the press conference can be watched [here](#).

On April 10th, as congressional investigations of the September 2012 terrorist attack against the U.S. diplomatic compound in Benghazi, Libya, continue, Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee Buck McKeon (R-CA) said he believes U.S. forces responded appropriately to the attack. He also noted that since the attack, the Pentagon has deployed more Marines crisis responses teams that are

strengthening security around the globe. Representative McKeon's comments were reported [here](#).

North Africa

On April 14th, *Defense News* reported that Morocco, and possibly Egypt, were invited in late March to join the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, as well as Jordan, in forming a military alliance. According to reports, the military alliance would receive 300,000 additional troops from Morocco, Egypt, and Jordan in exchange for GCC financial assistance. More information can be seen [here](#).

East Africa

On April 10th, *BBC News* detailed the culture shock that has taken place in Somalia as fiber optic services have been launched in Mogadishu over the past week, increasing the speed at which content may be accessed online. Previously, Internet access has only been available via dial-up or satellite links and 3G mobile phone services were cut off after a threat was issued by militant group Al Shabaab. The full story is available [here](#).

On April 13th, the World Bank and the Government of Djibouti signed a \$3.8 million grant to support the government's Access to Quality Education Project. The grant, which was provided by the Global Partnership for Education, will be overseen by the World Bank and will support the government's goal of improving teaching practices and facilities for primary education, with a specific focus on mathematics. A press release on the grant was posted [here](#).

On April 13th, Kenyan Deputy President William Ruto signaled that construction on the \$14 billion Mombasa-Nairobi railway line will begin next month following Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang's visit to Kenya to finalize commercial agreements for the project. While the initial phase of the project is expected to be completed by 2018, the rail line will later be extended to Kigali, Rwanda, and Juba, South Sudan. Deputy President Ruto's update on the project was documented [here](#).

On April 16th, unidentified gunmen attacked a bus in the Banishangul Gumuz region of Ethiopia, killing nine people and wounding at least seven others. The attack occurred near the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam project, where security has recently been increased to protect the construction work underway. While no arrests have been made, Ethiopian authorities have indicated they are pursuing suspects. The attack was detailed [here](#).

On April 17th, UNHCR expressed ongoing concern with Kenya's arrest and detention of more than 1,000 refugees in counterterrorism sweeps launched by security forces in Nairobi earlier this month. Many of those detailed are Somali nationals, at least 82 who have since been deported to Mogadishu. While acknowledging Kenya's desire to increase security, UNHCR noted that many of the refugees had been law abiding members of Kenyan communities. Feedback from UNHCR was shared [here](#).

West Africa

On April 10th, UNICEF, in partnership with the Ministries of Health of Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal, Mali, and Guinea-Bissau, deployed a culturally sensitive communications campaign in West Africa to disseminate information to help contain the spread of Ebola virus. The campaign is using text messages, radio shows, television programs, and door-to-door visits to increase understanding of the disease and to share information to keep it from spreading. More information on the campaign can be found [here](#).

On April 11th, *Reuters* reported that the gold rush in Ivory Coast and Ghana is threatening West African cocoa farms, which produce 60% of the global supply. The gold rush is building on a number of other challenges for cocoa plantations, including aging farmers, the phase out of subsidies for fertilizers and pesticide treatments, and new government efforts to expel farmers from plantations that were illegally established during political crises. More information can be seen [here](#).

On April 11th, *Bloomberg* provided insights on the impacts the Ebola outbreak in West Africa has had on tourism in the region. While the World Health Organization (WHO) has said it does not recommend travel restrictions and border closures, Senegal has already closed a border and Ivory Coast has barred the entry of buses from Liberia and Guinea. The outbreak is also thought to be the cause for an 80%

increase in hotel reservation cancelations, and is expected to slow economic growth in the countries impacted by Ebola virus. Details are available [here](#).

On April 12th, Sierra Leonean President Ernest Bai Koroma visited the Addaz Bioenergy Plant located outside the town of Makeni. The bioenergy plant, which is the first of its kind in Africa, was constructed by a workforce that was 80% sourced from Sierra Leone. Next week, the plant will begin processing ethanol from sugar cane. President Kormoa's visit to the plant was detailed [here](#).

On April 12th, *The Economist* ran an article suggesting that Nigeria has now surpassed South Africa as the continent's largest economy due to a change in how the economy is measured, giving much more weight to the largest sectors of the economy, including telecommunications, banking, and the film industry. While Nigeria has demonstrated strong economic growth, at a rate of approximately 7% per year, the country is still relatively poor in global terms, ranking 153rd out of 187 countries on the U.N.'s Human Development Index. The full article can be read [here](#).

On April 14th, global financial rating firm Moody's forecast exponential future growth of Nigeria's GDP that will result in a \$4.5 trillion economy by 2050. If the Nigerian economy grows as projected, by 2050 the country will be within the top 15 largest economies around the goal and a rival to European economies. The forecast for Nigeria's economy can be found [here](#).

On April 15th, in light of the recent bombing attack in Abuja, Nigerian Finance Minister Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala announced that a massive security operation is underway to prepare for the World Economic Forum (WEF) Africa meeting that will be held May 7th-9th in the capital. More than 6,000 police and Army personnel will be tasked with guarding next month's WEF meeting. Security precautions in advance of the WEF meeting were described [here](#).

On April 17th, health officials in Equatorial Guinea expressed concern about the reemergence of polio in the country. After being free of polio for almost 15 years, two cases of the disease have recently been reported in distant parts of the country. The disease, which can be traced to Cameroon, could be especially dangerous due to the fact that Equatorial Guinea has the lowest polio vaccination rate in the world at just 39%. There is also concern that the disease could spread to other conflict regions, such as the CAR. Additional information can be viewed [here](#).

Sub-Saharan Africa

On April 10th, U.N. officials called on the Government of Burundi to take action to address human rights violations occurring as a result of inter-ethnic fighting between Hutus and Tutsis. If no action is taken, U.N. officials warned that individuals in Burundi who are responsible for manipulating youth affiliated political parties to instigate violence would be liable for international prosecution. The U.N. warning on the situation in Burundi was issued [here](#).

On April 11th, Malawian President Joyce Banda issued a lengthy press release criticizing singer Madonna's recent trip to Malawi. Frustrated with the unexpectedness of Madonna's visit, as well as Madonna's complaints about having to check in at the airport in Lilongwe, President Banda issued a public statement lecturing Madonna on the meaning of kindness, accusing her of blackmail and bullying, lamenting her failure to perform decent music, and comparing her unfavorably to Chuck Norris, Bono, and English soccer players. The full statement was published [here](#).

On April 12th, *Ventures* reported that the real estate business is on the rise in Mozambique. Mozambique's tropical climate, strong economic growth, and relatively efficient health care system have made the acquisition of property in the country attractive for Europeans, as well as African companies looking to expand on the continent. While real estate in Mozambique is becoming more valuable, the rising costs may inadvertently be forcing out locals. The full story is available [here](#).

On April 13th, *The Economist* reported that while South Africa remains one of the most violent places in the world, with one in 3,300 citizens murdered each year, the rates of violence in South Africa are improving. Statistics show that murders have fallen by more than one third since 2000 and have fallen even more steeply for women victims. Additional statistics were shared [here](#).

On April 14th, *Voice of America* suggested that South African President Jacob Zuma is experiencing

campaign problems related to the scandal over the large-scale improvements he made to his private Nkandla estate using public funds. President Zuma is running for his second term as head of the African National Congress (ANC), which has held power in South Africa since the first post-apartheid elections in 1994. Presidential elections in South Africa are scheduled for May 7th. The campaign was discussed [here](#).

On April 16th, the U.N. Security Council marked the 20th anniversary of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda by passing a new resolution calling for Member nations to learn from the genocide. During a special Security Council meeting held to commemorate the genocide, the Security Council observed that, similar to the genocide in Rwanda, current conflicts in South Sudan and the CAR are predicated on divisions based on religion, ethnicity, and language. Details on the Security Council meeting on Rwanda were posted [here](#).

On April 16th, Director-General of the U.N. Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Irina Bokova condemned the attack against the chief warden of the DRC's Virunga National Park Emmanuel de Merode. Merode was injured when his vehicle came under fire travelling between Goma and Rumangabo. Director-General Bokova urged for greater protection of World Heritage sites, such as Virunga National Park, as well as the individuals responsible for guarding them. More information can be seen [here](#).

On April 16th, W Hospitality Group unveiled new research finding that, for the first time since 2009, international and regional hotel chains are signing more deals in sub-Saharan Africa than in North Africa. The number of branded hotel rooms planned for sub-Saharan Africa has risen consistently since 2011, especially relative to North Africa, where unrest in places such as Egypt and Libya have resulted in project suspensions or cancellations. The trend was described [here](#).

On April 17th, *France 24* speculated that chief warden of the DRC's Virunga National Park Emmanuel de Merode may have been attacked because he had been travelling to Goma to file a negative report on British oil company Soco's activities in the DRC's North Kivu province. While Soco had obtained a license to conduct oil exploration in parts of the park in 2010, since then the U.N. and other international entities have criticized Congolese authorities for allowing oil exploration on site. The full story is available [here](#).

On April 17th, *Reuters* reported that at least four satellites will be launched from sub-Saharan Africa this year in order to help bring Internet connectivity to landlocked countries, such as Zambia, South Sudan, and Rwanda, who have not benefitted from the submarine cables that have been laid to Africa over the past five years. The forthcoming satellite launches were noted [here](#).

On April 17th, the trial for South African Olympian Oscar Pistorius in the murder of his girlfriend, model Reeva Steenkamp, entered into its 25th day of proceedings. Roger Dixon, a forensic consultant for the defense, provided testimony that contradicted Pistorius' version of the events that occurred the night of the murder, which he continues to allege was an accident because he thought Steenkamp was an intruder. Developments in the trial can be viewed [here](#).

General Africa News

On April 11th, the U.N. Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the African Union (AU) jointly released this year's *Economic Report on Africa*. Focusing on the status of industrialization in Africa, this year's report finds that despite economic growth, more credible policies and institutions are needed to really achieve industrial transportation. The report also encourages policy makers to thoroughly engage stakeholders in the policy development process. The full report can be downloaded [here](#).

On April 14th, despite African and international efforts to combat wildlife trafficking, the Born Free Foundation unveiled new researching funding that current rates of poaching could lead to the extinction of the black rhino by 2020. Last year, 1,004 rhinos were poached, leaving just 20,000 white rhino and 5,000 black rhino left in wild. More information can be found [here](#).

On April 15th, AfDB President Donald Kaberuka discussed the findings of a recent AfDB report that finds bank managers in the most fragile states of Africa often do not take political and security risks into consideration when making development decisions. President Kaberuka concluded that fragility,

including bad elections, security challenges, and corruption, presents a significant risk to Africa's prosperity. Excerpts of the report were highlighted [here](#).

On April 15th, *Business Day Live* reported that doing business in Africa is becoming increasingly expensive as African governments seek to introduce higher and more withholding taxes on services in an effort to protect their tax base. While withholding taxes differ from country to country, the rates fluctuate to as high as 30%. The full article can be read [here](#).

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