



ML Strategies Update

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Africa Update

Leading the News

Burkina Faso

On January 15th, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) claimed responsibility for a string of attacks in Burkina Faso that took the lives of 29 civilians from at least seven countries. Islamist fighters attacked the Splendid Hotel in Ouagadougou, in addition to Cappuccino, a popular cafe across the street known for its European menu and free Wi-Fi. After nine hours of clashes, three attackers were cornered in the nearby Bush Taxi restaurant and shot dead. While it was not immediately clear if the attackers were part of a local cell or sent to Burkina Faso from Mali, authorities suspect the groups picked high profile targets to inflict maximum damage and to rattle the country's democratic transition. The attacks were described [here](#).

On January 16th, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon condemned the terrorist attacks carried out in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, which resulted in more than 29 deaths and many other people wounded. Secretary-General Ban also reiterated the full support of the United Nations (U.N.) to the authorities of Burkina Faso and said he stands in solidarity with the country and the region in the fight against terrorism. His remarks can be found [here](#).

On January 16th, the U.S. Department of State condemned the terrorist attacks in Burkina Faso that began on Friday. The State Department observed attacks on the Splendid Hotel, Cappuccino Cafe, and the Yibi Hotel killed more than 25 people, including one U.S. citizen, while another attack on a gendarmerie patrol near the town of Tinakoff left two gendarmerie dead. As U.S. Embassy personnel maintained contact with local authorities as part of ongoing efforts to assess the situation, the State Department reiterated it stands with the Burkinabe people against terrorism and extremism. A statement on the attacks was issued [here](#).

On January 17th, U.S. National Security Council (NSC) Spokesperson Ned Price issued a statement condemning the deadly terrorist attacks in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso and in the country's northern region. As U.S. personnel continued their efforts to account for all Americans in the country, the NSC also recognized the death of U.S. citizen Michael James Riddering in the violence. Spokesperson Price said the U.S. will remain a steadfast partner to the Government of Burkina Faso and others in the region fighting terrorist groups seeking to undermine peace and democracy in the Sahel and offered assistance in the investigations into the attacks. The full statement can be read [here](#).

On January 18th, following this week's AQIM terrorist attacks in Burkina Faso and the November AQIM attack in Mali, Burkinabe Prime Minister Paul Kaba Thieba and Malian Prime Minister Modibo Keita met in Ouagadougou to forge a new coalition to combat terrorism in the region. The leaders agreed the coalition would engage in

intelligence sharing and joint security patrols, modeled after the West African coalition launched to combat Boko Haram. Details were shared [here](#).

On January 18th, AQIM identified three fighters it says were responsible for attacks in Burkina Faso's capital Ouagadougou over the weekend. Gunmen from the Islamist militant group, including al-Batter al-Ansari, Abu Muhammad al Buqali, and Ahmed al-Fulani al-Ansari, stormed the Cappuccino restaurant and the Splendid Hotel on Friday night, reportedly singling out white people for slaughter. More information can be found [here](#).

On January 18th, following this week's terrorist attacks in Burkina Faso, *Defense One* called attention to Al Qaeda's ongoing efforts to exploit weak governments in West Africa. AQIM, the group claiming responsibility for the recent attacks in Ouagadougou, launched a similar attack in Mali in November, storming the Radisson Hotel, taking hostages, and killing 21 people. AQIM has also been active in Algeria and Niger, killing people and carrying out kidnappings for ransom, all targeted at eliminating Western influence in the region. Additional analysis was provided [here](#).

On January 20th, French Prime Minister Manuel Valls said at least three suspected Al Qaeda attackers involved in the attacks in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso last weekend remain at large. French security forces assisting Burkinabe forces in retaking the Splendid Hotel reported the involvement of at least six assailants, including three who were shot and killed on the scene. Some witnesses reported seeing even more attackers. Meanwhile, Burkinabe Foreign Minister Alpha Barry noted a number of arrests had been made in connection with the attacks, although some of those detained had already been cleared for release. Developments were noted [here](#).

On January 21st, *Reuters* reported hotels across West Africa have undertaken efforts to boost security since the January 15th attack against the Splendid Hotel in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, as well as last year's attack on the Radisson hotel in Bamako, Mali. In both instances, extremists targeted establishments popular with Westerners, including dozens who were taken hostages. Witnesses to the recent attack in Burkina Faso also noted that gunmen singled out white foreigners for execution. New security measures at hotels in West Africa were highlighted [here](#).

Burundi

On January 15th, U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein called attention to new worrisome trends in Burundi, including cases of sexual violence by security forces and a sharp increase in disappearances and torture cases. Noting the discovery of nine mass graves in Bujumbura in December, High Commissioner Zeid called for an investigation into this matter. His observations on the situation in Burundi were posted [here](#).

On January 19th, the U.S. Department of State expressed alarm for reports of serious human rights violations in Burundi, including eyewitness reports of mass graves, a sharp increase in alleged enforced disappearances and torture, and reports of sexual violence by security forces. The State Department underscored the urgent need for the Government of Burundi to allow for the immediate and full deployment and unimpeded access of African Union (AU) human rights observers to investigate these allegations. Additionally, the State Department reiterated its call on all parties in Burundi to reject violence and restated the only way to resolve the crisis in the country is through internationally-mediated, inclusive dialogue. A statement was issued [here](#).

On January 21st, U.N. Security Council ambassadors made their second trip to Burundi in less than a year to pressure to Burundian Government to engage in peace talks with the opposition. Over two days, the envoys will meet with President Pierre Nkurunziza, opposition leaders, and civil society groups in Bujumbura. While in Africa, members of the U.N. Security are also scheduled to travel to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia for meetings with AU representatives on the AU's proposal to send a peacekeeping force to Burundi, an offer that has previously been rejected by the Burundian government. Details were shared [here](#).

On January 21st, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield met with Burundi Senior Advisor to the President Willy Nyamitwe at the Department of State. Their meeting was included on the State Department's daily appointment schedule, which can be accessed [here](#).

Libya

On January 18th, *The New York Times* shed light on the challenges the Obama Administration is encountering in finding armed groups in Libya to ally with to counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). In December, U.S. Special Operations forces deployed to Al Watiya air base, where allied militia were stationed, but were forced to evacuate after facing threats from another militia. More broadly, U.S. officials have found that Libyan militias that could serve as potential allies are unaccountable, poorly organized, and divided by region and tribe. The full article was posted [here](#).

On January 18th, the U.N. Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) expressed regret over the decision of the country's Presidency Council to postpone the formation of a national unity government for 48 hours beyond the deadline set by a U.N.-facilitated political agreement, emphasizing that all efforts to combat and eliminate terrorist groups in the country must be led by the Libyan State. Details can be found [here](#).

On January 19th, the Unity Presidential Council, which was created by the U.N.-facilitated Libyan peace process, announced agreement on a 32-member cabinet made up of representatives from rival factions hailing from across the country. The head of the Council, Fayeze Sarraj, who is also supposed to serve as prime minister, has struggled to obtain consensus on the unity government. Upon the announcement of the agreement, Libya's internationally recognized House of Representatives (HOR) had ten days to approve the lineup. Details can be seen [here](#).

On January 19th, U.S. Department of State Spokesperson John Kirby welcomed the Libyan Presidency Council's announcement of the composition of the new Libyan Government of National Accord. Spokesperson Kirby said this is a significant step forward towards peace and stability, and urged all Libyans to continue moving forward with the implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement. He also noted the agreement calls on the HOR to endorse the new government within ten days and encouraged the HOR to act without delay. Spokesperson Kirby's comments were captured [here](#).

On January 20th, General Joseph Votel, the leader of U.S. Special Operations Command, said U.S. Special Forces are spending more time in Libya trying to keep the ISIL from expanding its presence and influence in the country. The U.S. military's focus in Libya has been on on-the-ground intelligence collection and analysis of ISIL networks. General Votel's comments were recorded [here](#).

On January 21st, ISIL militants set fire to oil storage tanks during a new assault on Libya's Ras Lanuf oil terminal. According to witnesses, the fighters drove into the oil storage farm early in the morning and fought with Petroleum Facilities Guards before retreating and firing from a distance. As the siege took place, ISIL fighters also released a new video threatening further attacks on the Es Sider, Brega, Tobruk, Es Serir, Jallo, and al-Kufra ports. An article on the latest developments can be read [here](#).

Nigeria

On January 14th, the relatives of the more than 200 schoolgirls captured from Chibok, Nigeria by Boko Haram met with President Muhammadu Buhari to renew calls for their release. According to reports from meeting participants, President Buhari asked for more time to rescue the 219 girls who remain missing. President Buhari told the demonstrators there was no reliable intelligence that would allow Nigerian authorities to meet their demands and rescue the girls immediately. President Buhari has recently expressed willingness to negotiate with any credible Boko Haram leaders to secure the girls' release. The meeting was summarized [here](#).

On January 19th, the U.N. refugee agency (UNHCR) appealed for urgent humanitarian assistance to help address acute shortages of shelter and provide food to an estimated 100,000 people in Niger that have been uprooted by Boko Haram. Those displaced include local villagers, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and Nigerian refugees. UNHCR's Niger operations are currently only half-funded at \$24.9 million of the \$51 million required. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On January 20th, during a visit to Abu Dhabi, Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari said telecom firms operating in Nigeria must put security above their profit concerns. President Buhari's comments come as Nigerian authorities have stepped up efforts to push telecom companies to verify the identities of their subscribers amid fears that unregistered SIM cards are being used by criminal gangs and potentially member of Boko Haram. President Buhari's comments were recorded [here](#).

West Africa Ebola Outbreak

On January 14th, Ranking Member of the U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee Eliot Engel (D-NY) released a statement on the World Health Organization's (WHO) declaration of the end of the Ebola outbreak. Congressman Engel praised the Obama Administration's response to the Ebola outbreak and thanked the partner governments and NGOs that also played a role in reaching the milestone of zero cases. While acknowledging that all known chains of Ebola transmission in West Africa had ceased, Congressman Engel warned that Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea still face serious risk of small outbreaks. His comments were captured [here](#).

On January 15th, just a day after the WHO announced the end of Ebola transmission in West Africa, government officials in Sierra Leone announced a woman who died this week tested positive for Ebola. It was not immediately clear how the woman became infected with Ebola, as all known chains of transmission in Sierra Leone were halted in November. The WHO also noted because the woman was not initially identified as a suspected Ebola case, she was not buried safely, raising the possibility for a wider Ebola outbreak. The country is now under a 90-day period of enhance surveillance. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On January 18th, International Monetary Fund (IMF) Resident Representative to Sierra Leone Iyabo Masha authored an op-ed on Sierra Leone's economy in the post-Ebola era. Representative Masha noted the country's economy was brought to a virtual standstill by the onslaught of Ebola, stretching already fragile public finances and eroding post-civil war gains in development. He also argued the end of Ebola opens a new window of opportunity to implement reforms and rebuild the economy. The op-ed was published [here](#).

On January 19th, *NPR* published an op-ed questioning if the world might have learned the wrong lessons from the Ebola outbreak. In particular, *NPR* highlighted the most recent case of Ebola in Sierra Leone, which was not confirmed until after the patient's death. Additionally, the health worker who treated the latest Ebola patient did not wear the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and take the right precautions to avoid further transmission of the virus. The op-ed can be read [here](#).

On January 20th, the WHO updated its statistics on the number of Ebola cases in West Africa after announcing what was potentially the end of the outbreak last week. While human-to-human transmission of the virus was declared to have ended in Sierra Leone in November, on January 14th a new confirmed case of Ebola was reported after a post-mortem swab was collected from a woman who died on January 12th and received an unsafe burial. Authorities in Sierra Leone are now monitoring more than 150 contacts, including at least 50 who have been deemed high risk for contracting the virus. Additional data was analyzed [here](#).

On January 21st, Sierra Leone's Health Ministry confirmed a new case of Ebola, marking the second case in the week since the WHO had previously declared the end of all known chains of transmission. The new patient is a 38-year-old relative who had been providing care to the earlier victim who died from the virus on January 12th and tested positive for Ebola posthumously. The new case of Ebola was reported [here](#).

World Economic Forum

On January 19th, ahead of the opening of the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, Switzerland, Oxfam published a new report titled, "An Economy for the One Percent." The report finds that 62 individuals own as much wealth as the poorest half of the world's population and that women are disproportionately affected by global inequality. The research also finds that inequality in South Africa is particularly staggering, with just two men owning the same amount of wealth as the poorest 50 percent of the population. The report also notes as much as 30 percent of all African financial wealth is estimated to be held offshore, costing an estimated \$14 billion in lost tax revenues every year. The report can be downloaded [here](#).

On January 20th, speaking at the WEF, Guinean President Alpha Conde called for Western governments to step up their intelligence sharing with West Africa in the wake of the last weekend's terrorist attacks in Burkina Faso. President Conde said Western engagement is particular important, especially as recent terrorist activities in the region have targeted foreigners in West African countries. President Conde's comments were captured [here](#).

United States – Africa Relations

State Department

On January 15th, State Department Spokesperson John Kirby condemned the Al Shabaab terrorist attack against Kenyan troops that were operating under the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and Somali national army troops that were stationed in the Gedo region. Beyond offering condolences, Spokesperson Kirby indicated the U.S. remains committed to providing assistance to the Government of Kenya, the Government of Somalia, and AMISOM in combating terrorism and violent extremism and to enhancing security in the region. His comments were transcribed [here](#).

On January 15th, State Department Spokesperson John Kirby said the State Department remains concerned about violent clashes between the Nigerian army and a Shiite group in Kaduna state. He noted the State Department has called on the Nigerian Government to investigate reports of human rights abuses and hold those responsible accountable. As a result, four separate investigations are underway. Spokesperson Kirby's remarks were recorded [here](#).

On January 15th, the State Department issued a statement expressing concern about the deterioration of Uganda's electoral environment in the run-up to national polls next month. The State Department observed numerous reports of the police using excessive force, obstruction and dispersal of opposition rallies, and intimidation and arrest of journalists. Further, the State Department registered particular concern regarding the disappearance of Christopher Aine, an opposition campaign aide, and called on all candidates and their campaigns to refrain from any inflammatory rhetoric that could incite violence. The full statement was published [here](#).

On January 17th-27th, U.S. Special Envoy for the Human Rights of LGBTI Persons Randy Berry will travel to Malawi, Namibia, Botswana, and South Africa. During his trip, Special Envoy Berry will participate in meetings with government officials, civil society representatives and members of business, academic, and faith-based communities. His travel was outlined [here](#).

Department of Defense

On January 13th, French soldiers, along with U.S. soldiers assigned to the Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA), completed phase two of the French Desert Survival Course near Arta Beach, Djibouti. The nearly month-long course for infantrymen consists of up to seven phases that teach participants combat lifesaving skills, field tactics, land navigation, weapons training, trap setting, survival cooking, and water source locating. Details can be seen [here](#).

On January 14th, nearly 100 Marines and sailors with Special-Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force – Crisis Response – Africa (SPMAGTF-CR-AF) established an evacuation control center (ECC) for an exercise at the naval air station in Sigonella, Italy. The exercise prepared the crisis response unit for a military departure mission. In July 2014, SPMAGTF-CR-AF evacuated U.S. citizens and embassy personnel from Tripoli, Libya. The exercise was highlighted [here](#).

On January 19th, CJTF-HOA reported more than ten U.S. service members based at Camp Lemonnier recently joined local students for an English language discussion group at the Diplomatic Institute in Djibouti. The CJTF-HOA members participated in the intermediate and advanced courses, helping students practice their language skills with native speakers. Their participation serves CJTF-HOA's mission of increasing the skills of the local populace in order to create an environment that allows for economic growth and sustained development. Details can be viewed [here](#).

Department of the Interior

On January 21st, Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell departed on overseas travel to Gabon, Kenya, and South Africa. While in Africa, Secretary Jewell will discuss U.S. leadership in combatting wildlife trafficking both in Africa and throughout the world. Secretary Jewell is scheduled to participate in meetings with government officials, NGOs, and conservation leaders to continue U.S. efforts to combat the illegal trade of wildlife products, including ivory, rhino horn, and other flora and fauna, in the U.S. and abroad. Her trip was outlined [here](#).

Central Intelligence Agency

On January 15th, the retired Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) officer in charge of the CIA's Benghazi base on the night of the September 2012 attack said a scene in the new "13 Hours" movie that shows the CIA operative ordering his security team to stand down rather than rush to rescue U.S. diplomats under attack at the U.S. Embassy in Libya is entirely untrue. Excerpts from an interview with the CIA operative, who chose to remain anonymous, were highlighted [here](#).

Overseas Private Investment Corporation

On January 19th, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) ran a blog post highlighted how OPIC-supported projects have improved lives by creating jobs. For example, OPIC has committed a \$10 million loan to One Acre Fund, which combines financing to small farmers in Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, and Tanzania with training on advanced farming techniques so they can increase food production and boost their incomes. OPIC has also committed a \$20 billion loan to Ghana's GN Bank to help it expand its network of bank branches and mobile banking services to reach more of the underserved population. The blog post can be accessed [here](#).

Congress

On January 14th, House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Ed Royce (R-CA) issued a statement marking the five-year anniversary of the popular uprising in Tunisia that ousted former President Zine el-Abedin Ben Ali, paving the way for the emergence of the region's first democratically elected government. Congressman Royce noted that five years after the uprising, Tunisia stands out as a model for peaceful democratizing developing after successfully completing free and fair elections for parliament and the presidency, instituting market-based economic reforms, and advancing civil liberties. He said Tunisia must continue on its democratic path by addressing the underlying social and economic issues that gave rise to the Arab Spring while remaining resilient to regional terrorism. Congressman Royce's full statement can be read [here](#).

On January 15th, Senator Tom Cotton (R-AR) stopped by Republican super-PACs American Rising and Future 45's screening of Michael Bay's new film on the September 2012 attacks on U.S. facilities in Benghazi, Libya, "13 Hours." While Bay claims the movie was intended to be apolitical, some have suggested its release is intended to derail former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign. More information can be found [here](#).

On January 17th, House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Ed Royce (R-CA) and Ranking Member Eliot Engel (D-NY) led a bipartisan delegation to Ethiopia to express support for strong cooperation between the U.S. and Ethiopia on countering regional threats, such as Al Shabaab. In a series of meetings held in Addis Ababa, the delegation also discussed development and economic growth and pressed Ethiopian authorities on human rights issues, including freedom of the press and greater opportunities for women. Beyond meetings with Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, AU Deputy Chairperson Erastus Mwencha, Ethiopian Speaker of the House of People's Representatives Abadula Gemedo, U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia Patricia Haslach, and U.S. Ambassador to the AU Susan Page, the delegation also visited Muya Ethiopia, an exporter of crafts, and AHOPE, a housing and community support program for HIV positive orphans. The trip was summarized [here](#).

On January 20th, the bipartisan congressional delegation to Africa led by House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Ed Royce (R-CA) and Ranking Member Eliot Engel (D-NY) concluded two days of meetings in Tanzania focused on economic development, health and human rights, conservation, and regional security. The group met with U.S. Ambassador to Tanzania Mark Childress, U.S. Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region of Africa Tom Perriello, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Tanzania Acting Mission Director Daniel Moore and Tanzania National Parks Director General Allan Kijazi. Members of the delegation also met with the Maasi Women Development Organization (MWEDO), a provider working with Power Africa to increase access to electricity in the Arusha area, and a local hospital receiving support from the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). Details can be seen [here](#).

North Africa

On January 13th, Amnesty International reported it had collected new evidence of torture and deaths of detainees in Tunisian police custody tied to authorities' aim to crackdown on terrorism. The human rights group claimed to have

proof that at least six people have died in detention since 2011 and that detainees held on suspected terrorism charges were tortured and mistreated. For details, click [here](#).

On January 15th, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announced the appointment of Major General Hassen Ebrahim Mussa of Ethiopia as Force Commander of the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA). The appointment was announced [here](#).

On January 15th, the Moroccan Interior Ministry detained Gelel Attar, a Belgian man of Moroccan descent with direct links to the ISIL fighters that carried out the terrorist attacks in Paris. According to Moroccan authorities, Attar was arrested in Mohammadiya after traveling to Morocco from Syria with one of the suspected Paris suicide bombers. Attar is thought to have fought in Syria with al-Nusra before joining ISIL. His arrest was reported [here](#).

On January 17th, the World Bank highlighted its Sudan Evidence Base and Data Literacy Capacity Development Program. Funded by UKAid, delivered by the World Bank, and drawing on expertise from both organizations, the program, the first of its kind in Sudan, is meant to improve development outcomes through stronger evidence-based policy-making, program design, and monitoring. The program was announced [here](#).

On January 18th, beverage maker SABMiller announced it will close its brewery outside of Juba, South Sudan because of a shortage of foreign currency needed to buy raw materials. The brewery, built in 2009 and operated by South Sudan Beverages, produced the country's de facto national beer, White Bull, and was expected to attract more foreign investment. According to SABMiller, moving forward the facility will likely be used as a warehouse for distributing beverages imported from Uganda. More information was posted [here](#).

On January 19th, Tunisia's main UGTT labor union and its largest industry association reached agreement to increase wages for about 1.5 million private sector workers, a decision that could avert strikes and protests. The agreement was announced [here](#).

On January 20th, U.N. Humanitarian Coordinator for South Sudan Eugene Owusu appealed for \$1.3 billion in humanitarian aid for South Sudan, noting that more than 10,000 people have been killed and 2.3 million displaced since the start of the country's civil war in December 2013. According to the U.N., \$1.3 billion would be the minimum amount needed to support 5.1 million people in the country facing life-threatening conditions, including more than 680,000 children believed to be malnourished. The situation was described [here](#).

On January 20th, Chinese President Xi Jinping paid an official visit to Egypt, which has been widely perceived as a vote of confidence in President Abdul Fattah al-Sisi's administration, despite Western criticism regarding human rights violations. During his visit to Cairo, President Xi signed investment and aid deals worth billions of dollars in support for infrastructure development in the country, as well as the National Bank of Egypt. President Xi's visit was summarized [here](#).

On January 20th, the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) held a discussion titled, "North Africa in Transition: The Struggle for Democracies and Institution." The event, moderated by IISS Executive Director Mark Fitzpatrick, included Ben Fishman, Editor of *North Africa in Transition*, Haim Malka, Program Director and Senior Fellow and the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Egypt and Maghreb Affairs John Desrocher. A recording of the discussion can be watched [here](#).

On January 21st, an Egyptian affiliate of ISIL claimed responsibility for an attack on a police checkpoint in the Sinai Peninsula. According to the Interior Ministry, the attack took place late Wednesday night in the city of el-Arish, leaving five policemen killed and three others wounded. The incident was detailed [here](#).

[East Africa](#)

On January 13th, the Board of Directors of the African Development Bank Group (AfDB) approved a loan of \$76.11 million from the AfDB financing window to Ethiopia for the implementation of the Four Towns Water Supply and Sanitation Improvement Program. More information can be found [here](#).

On January 14th, Uganda received approval of a \$1.5-million preparation grant from the Climate Investment Funds' Pilot Program for Climate Resilience (CIF PPCR) to develop a national Strategic Program for Climate Resilience

(SPCR). Once developed, the policy-based SPCR will pave the way for climate-resilient transformation in the country through a broad set of resilience projects to be implemented through a unique multi-stakeholder approach. The AfDB will support Uganda as the lead implementation agency for the SPCR. The grant was announced [here](#).

On January 14th, Somalia's controversial new media law went into effect. Under the legislation, Somali journalists will be required to register for classes that will result in a government pass permitting them to practice journalism. Journalists have expressed strong opposition to the law, which will require them to put their jobs on hold, claiming this is too harsh of regulation. The new law was detailed [here](#).

On January 15th, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon condemned the Al Shabaab terrorist attack against an AMISOM base in the Somali town of El Adde. As details of the incident were still being verified, Secretary-General Ban affirmed the attack will not diminish the resolve of the U.N. to work with the AU and AMISOM to support the people and the Government of Somalia. His reaction to the attack was recorded [here](#).

On January 15th, the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) presented a \$50 million plan to assist agriculture- and livestock-dependent households in Ethiopia and enhance their resilience. The worst El Nino-induced drought has sparked a sharp deterioration in food security and massive drop in agricultural and pastoral production. The plan was announced [here](#)

On January 15th, Kenya's Communications Authority issued a rule requiring all Internet users at cyber cafes to produce identification cards or birth certificates in order to access online content. While Kenyan authorities say the rule is intended to fight hacking and terrorism, the rule has come under criticism as a limitation on constitutionally guaranteed freedoms. The controversy surrounding the new regulations was discussed [here](#).

On January 18th, expressing concern over the impact on vital remittances from diaspora countries into Somalia caused by necessary but less considered counter-terrorism regulations, U.N. rights experts warned the measures may severely affect the human rights of Somali people. As a result, U.N. officials urged regulation-setting governments to guarantee the flow of such funds. More information was posted [here](#).

On January 18th, Tanzanian Minister of Information Nape Nnauye said the government will likely invoke the 1976 Newspaper Act to de-register weekly tabloid *Mawio* and restrict the publication from operating entirely, even on online platforms. According to Minister Nnauye, the newspaper has repeatedly published content threatening to the peace, stability, and security of the country. Meanwhile, journalists opposed Minister Nnauye's comments, arguing the government was seeking to weed out criticism. The situation was discussed [here](#).

On January 20th, the AfDB approved a \$76.7 million loan to finance the second phase of the Uganda Farm Income Enhancement and Forestry Conservation Programme (FIEFOC-2). The project was designed to support infrastructure and agribusiness development activities, as well as an integrated natural resources management scheme, in order to improve farm incomes, rural livelihoods, food security, and climate resilience. A press release was issued [here](#).

On January 21st, the International Criminal Court (ICC) held a confirmation of charges hearing for former Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) commander Dominic Ongwen. Prosecutors accused Ongwen of using rape and brutality to turn children abducted by the LRA into sex slaves or soldiers in its fight against the Ugandan Government. He is also accused of slaughtering civilians and ordering cannibalism. The 70 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity leveraged against Ongwen were outlined [here](#).

On January 21st, the World Bank highlighted the upcoming #Hack4Ag event that will be held in Kampala, Uganda this February. The hackathon event, which aims to help jumpstart agricultural innovation, will bring together nine teams to develop mobile app prototypes to address agricultural challenges identified during farmer field visits. The winning team's app will be implemented a component of the World Bank-financed project within Uganda's Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry, and Fisheries. Details were shared [here](#).

On January 21st, 60 local and international environmental groups joined together to oppose Uganda licensing an oil exploration block close to the Democratic Republic of Congo's (DRC) Virunga National Park. While 16 oil firms that are already operating in Uganda are competing for the blocks, environmental activists argue drilling would harm the park's ecosystem. The tensions over drilling along the border were discussed [here](#).

West Africa

On January 14th, U.N. Special Representative and head of the U.N. Office for West Africa (UNOWA) Mohamed Ibn Chambas provided the Security Council with an update on developments in the region related to elections and the threats posed by violent extremists. Special Representative Chambas highlighted Burkina Faso's presidential and legislative elections as a positive development for the region, along with other recent peaceful elections in Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, and Nigeria. However, he cautioned that while some progress has been made in the fight against Boko Haram, the terrorist group continues indiscriminate attacks against civilians in West Africa. The briefing was summarized [here](#).

On January 14th, the World Bank highlighted its support for Gabon's eGabon project, which is intended to use information technology to transform the country's public health services. Gabon already boasts a fairly sophisticated information and communications technology base. The eGabon project aims to strengthen the National Health Information System to improve access to and quality of care and to promote the development of content, apps, and services to support the delivery of health care online. The project was profiled [here](#).

On January 16th, welcoming positive political developments in West Africa, in particular the holding of peaceful elections in Nigeria, Togo, Burkina Faso, Guinea and Côte-d'Ivoire, members of the U.N. Security Council stressed the importance of the upcoming elections in Niger, Benin, Cabo Verde, Ghana and The Gambia to be free, fair, peaceful, inclusive and credible. Details were reported [here](#).

On January 18th, Senegalese President Macky Sall submitted a proposal to the constitutional council calling for limitations on presidential term limits. Under President Sall's proposal, presidents would be limited to two terms in office and a single term would be reduced from seven years to five years. In submitting his proposal, President Sall noted he was seeking a referendum to be held in May 2016 to determine the scheduling of the next presidential election. His proposal was outlined [here](#).

On January 18th, Nigerian Information Minister Lai Mohammed kicked off a corruption awareness campaign, appealing to all Nigerians to join in the fight against endemic corruption. Minister Mohamed said by the government's estimates, former governors, cabinet ministers, and government personnel stole roughly \$6.8 billion in federal funds over seven years. The embezzled funds include \$2.1 billion earmarked for purchasing weapons to fight Boko Haram. More information can be seen [here](#).

On January 18th, 15 former members of Guinea Bissau's leading party joined the opposition, handing Prime Minister Carlos Correia's opponents a majority in parliament and vowing to block his spending plan, a move which would bring down his government. The 15 members of parliament were expelled from the ruling African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) party last week after they opposed Prime Minister Correia's latest plan in late December. Details were reported [here](#).

On January 19th, Ghanaian President John Dramani Mahama appointed a former U.N. official as interior minister to reinforce domestic security after Friday's militant attacks in Burkina Faso and ahead of elections this year. Prosper Douglas Bani, President Mahama's former chief of staff who once coordinated the U.N.'s Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery in Africa, is expected to focus on security in the wake of an uptick in Islamist militant attacks in the region. The appointment was reported [here](#).

On January 20th, the U.N. Security Council voted to reduce the number of troops supporting the U.N. Operation in Cote d'Ivoire (UNCOI) by 1,500, citing considerable progress in consolidating peace and stability in the country. The drawdown will take place through March 31st. UNCOI was established in 2004 to help facilitate the peace agreement achieved at the end of Cote d'Ivoire's civil war. More information was posted [here](#).

On January 20th, the AfDB approved an \$87 million loan to finance the development of an Agricultural Value Chain Project (AVC-DP) in Cameroon. The project will be implemented in the Central Basin and focus on the elimination of constraints on the production of oil palm, plantain, and pineapple. The project is anticipated to create jobs and improve incomes in the targeted crop sectors. Details were posted [here](#).

On January 20th, proceedings began in the trial of former National Security Advisor Sambo Dasuki, accused of fraud over \$68 million of defense spending, part of a wider \$2.1 billion in arms deals under scrutiny. The trial is part of a larger anti-corruption campaign by Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari. Details were reported [here](#).

On January 20th, the Malian Defense Ministry confirmed three gendarmes were shot dead by gunmen in a raid near the town of Mopti. The identities of the assailants in the attack were not immediately known, although Islamist militant group Ansar Fine has claimed responsibility for other recent attacks in the region. Members of the Malian army suggested fighters from the Massina Liberation Front (FLM), another militant group based in the area, could also be responsible. More information can be accessed [here](#).

On January 20th, demonstrations were held across Ghana against increases in utility rates and fuel prices. Public workers participating in the protests also demanded the withdrawal of a new tax law passed late last year that would institute an extra tax on petroleum products. According to the Ghanaian Trades Union Congress (TUC), which organized the demonstrations, electricity rates increased by 59.2 percent, the water tariff has increased by 67.2 percent, and the prices of petroleum products have gone up by 28 cents. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On January 21st, Guinean authorities arrested Cheikh Ould Saleck, a Mauritanian death row fugitive with links to Al Qaeda along its border with Guinea Bissau. Ould Saleck was awaiting execution for his part in an alleged Al Qaeda plot to assassinate Mauritanian President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz when he escaped from prison three weeks ago. Following his capture, he was sent back to Mauritania. For details, click [here](#).

Sub-Saharan Africa

On January 14th, Zambian Minister of Energy Dora Siliya met with South African President Jacob Zuma to request up to 300 megawatts (MW) of emergency power to help meet electricity demand from mining companies that have already been impacted by the fall in global copper prices. Blackouts in Zambia occurred twice last month. Zambia has a huge potential for producing electricity from hydropower but supply tends to be erratic and dams have been affected by the recent drought throughout the region. The situation was described [here](#).

On January 15th, the U.N. reported that clashes between Mozambique Government forces and the opposition Mozambican National Resistance, or Renamo, have forced an increasing number of people to flee Mozambique and seek asylum in Malawi over the last few weeks. More information can be found [here](#).

On January 15th, the Executive Board of the IMF completed the fourth review of Rwanda's economic performance under a three-year program supported by the IMF's Policy Support Instrument. Mr. Min Zhu Deputy, Managing Director and Acting Chair, said Rwanda has a track record of strong policy performance that has led to sustained high growth, progress in reducing poverty, and a stable macroeconomic situation. His remarks were transcribed [here](#).

On January 17th, Oxford Economics published new research showing Johannesburg, South Africa will be the largest city on the continent in terms of gross domestic product (GDP) by 2030. Within the next 15 years, Johannesburg's GSP is expected to climb to \$196 billion. Separate U.N. data shows that Johannesburg's population is also expected to grow over the same timeframe, ultimately reaching 11.5 million. Additional data was analyzed [here](#).

On January 18th, with 14 million people facing hunger in southern Africa as the El Niño weather pattern, the worst in over three decades, exacerbates drought, the U.N. World Food Programme (WFP) warned that it faces critical funding challenges in scaling up food and cash-based aid. More information can be found [here](#).

On January 18th, South African Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries Senzeni Zokwana said drought conditions in the country remain critical and the situation requires the urgent import of maize. According to the government's projections, South Africa is due to run out of white and yellow maize by the end of May, requiring action before then. More than a billion dollars' worth of maize exports may be needed to avert hunger for humans and animals across the country. For details, click [here](#).

On January 19th, Amnesty International accused technology companies Apple, Samsung, and Sony of failing to run the appropriate checks on conflict minerals in their products to ensure minerals used in product companies are not

mined by children. While all three companies have a zero tolerance policy towards child labor, Amnesty produced research to show that the technology firms had failed to show where they source raw materials for their components, notably cobalt. The DRC produces at least 50 percent of the world's cobalt, and uses children as young as seven in mining operations. The full story is available [here](#).

On January 19th, DRC Government Spokesman Lambert Mende said the government has drafted new adoption legislation and reviewed cases pending since international adoptions were halted in 2013. Under the proposed legislation, international adoptions will only be allowed if both public and private solutions in the DRC are lacking. The new law also states those seeking to adopt must present themselves before a tribunal in the DRC and only adoptive parents from countries with good diplomatic relations with the DRC will be considered. The bill is expected to come up for a vote in March. The proposal was summarized [here](#).

On January 19th, the Society for International Development hosted a discussion on "The Potential for Climate Change Induced Conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa." Speakers included Jeffrey Stark of the Foundation for Environmental Security and Stability, Swathi Veeravalli of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and Robert Winterbottom of the World Resources Institute. The panel was moderated by Mark Ackley of USAID's Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation. Event logistics were posted [here](#).

On January 20th, the WFP and its partners revealed that half the population in the Central African Republic (CAR), or roughly 2.5 million people, face hunger. This figure has doubled over the past year due to persistent conflict and insecurity that have led to limited access and availability of food. These conditions have been exacerbated by poor harvests and high food prices. The situation was described [here](#).

On January 20th, Zambian President Edgar Lungu said Zambia will import maize from South America due to ongoing drought conditions that are projected to cut annual maize production by a third. President Lungu said Zambia's current maize stocks will only last through June. His remarks were captured [here](#).

On January 20th, Zimbabwe's Constitutional Court ruled that marriage before the age of 18 is illegal. The case was brought forward by two women who were married as girls and were seeking to move the legal age of marriage for both men and women to 18. Zimbabwe is one of the four countries in sub-Saharan Africa with the highest rates of child marriages among girls. The others are Malawi, Mozambique, and Zambia. The court ruling was highlighted [here](#).

On January 20th, the bodies of five children were discovered in an unused deep freezer in the rural agricultural town of Kakamas, South Africa. According to local police, foul play is not suspected. Instead, investigators believe the children may have accidentally been locked in the freezer as part of a game they were playing. Details can be seen [here](#).

On January 20th, Yasiin Bey, the American Rapper known as Mos Def, was charged with violating South African immigration laws after he was arrested last week trying to leave the country on a World Passport, a travel document that is not recognized in South Africa. Bey was released on bail and will appear in court on March 8th. The full story is available [here](#).

On January 21st, South African Minister of Justice Michael Masutha said the number of rhinos poached for their horns in the country fell in 2015 to 1,175 from 1,215 in 2014. This is the first decline South Africa has seen in rhino poaching since 2007. The reversal of the trend is attributed to higher rates of policing in the country's national parks. Additional statistics were analyzed [here](#).

On January 21st, Mozambique's opposition Renamo party canceled a rally after Manuel Bissopo, the party's secretary general, was shot and wounded by unknown assailants in Beira. Bissopo was shot just moments after he gave a news conference held to denounce attacks on Renamo members, actions he blamed on the Defense and Security Forces (FDS) acting at the behest of the ruling Frelimo party. For more information, click [here](#).

[General Africa News](#)

On January 19th, Twitter said its social network was suffering ongoing outages on computers and phones and it was working to resolve issues which have been widely reported across Europe, the Middle East, Africa and North America. Details were reported [here](#).

On January 20th, The Brookings Institution hosted a discussion on “Top Priorities for Africa in 2016.” The conversation was moderated by Mark Leon Goldberg of U.N. Dispatch. Speakers included Joshua Meltzer, Witney Schneidman, Eyerusalem Siba, and Amadou Sy of Brookings’ Africa Growth Initiative. A recording of the event was archived [here](#).

On January 21st, the U.S.-Africa Chamber of Commerce held a briefing on “The Future of Energy Investment in Africa.” The event included panels on the future of energy in Africa, privatization of energy, new energy technologies, and energy business climates, and featured representatives from the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), Export-Import (Ex-Im) Bank, Small Business Administration (SBA), East Africa Diaspora Business Council, and International Institute for Energy Conservation. A full agenda was posted [here](#).

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