



ML Strategies Update

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Africa Update

Leading the News

Burundi

On January 29th, Burundian authorities released a British and a French journalist who were arrested during a sweep for rebels in flashpoint districts in Bujumbura. The U.S. and European nations have criticized the government's clampdown on media, including the shuttering of private radio stations and expelling foreign journalists. More information can be found [here](#).

On January 29th, Amnesty International announced it had found five possible mass graves near Burundi's capital, where security forces are accused of killing scores of people in December. According to Amnesty International, satellite images show disturbed earth at sites in the Buringa area on the edge of Bujumbura that are consistent with witness reports of mass graves. Details can be seen [here](#).

On January 29th, U.S. Department of State Spokesperson John Kirby expressed alarm over recent reports of the discovery of mass graves in Burundi. Spokesperson Kirby called on the Government of Burundi to publicly commit to allowing the immediate deployment and unimpeded access of African Union (AU) human rights monitors to investigate these allegations and other reports of serious human rights abuses, and to hold perpetrators accountable. Additionally, Spokesperson Kirby expressed concern for the arrest of independent journalists in Burundi and the confiscation of their equipment by Burundian authorities. Spokesperson Kirby's comments were recorded [here](#).

On January 31st, in his closing remarks at the AU Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, United Nations (U.N.) Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said the Government and people of Burundi should resolve the country's months-long political crisis through inclusive dialogue. He warned the deteriorating situation in Burundi is a source of great concern, not only in the region, but to the continent and the world. Secretary-General Ban's remarks were recorded [here](#).

On February 1st, the AU announced it will send a team to Burundi to try to convince the government to accept a peacekeeping force that it had rejected, backing away from an earlier plan to send a team of peacekeepers with or without authorities' consent. The shift in the AU's position was reported [here](#).

On February 2nd, at least one person was killed in a grenade attack on a bar in Burundi. The attack is the latest violence since the AU backed away from sending in peacekeepers without the government's consent. The grenades went off in the Butere neighborhood of the capital Bujumbura. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On February 4th, a group of independent U.N. experts presented a confidential report to the U.N. Security Council on the situation in Burundi. The sanctions monitors pointed to evidence that allegedly shows the Government of Rwanda has been recruiting and training Burundian refugees with the objective of toppling Burundian President Pierre Nkurunziza. Excerpts from the report were highlighted [here](#).

Libya

On January 28th, U.N. Special Representative for Libya and head of the U.N. Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) Martin Kobler condemned the abduction of a member of the House of Representatives (HOR), just days after a significant step was taken in the quest to end the country's political divisions and armed conflict. Mohamed al-Ra'id was abducted on his way to the airport after participating in a HOR session in Tobruk. Special Representative Kobler's feedback was posted [here](#).

On January 28th, the World Health Organization (WHO) warned some \$50 million is urgently needed to meet the life-saving needs of nearly two million people in Libya. The WHO noted health care needs are rapidly increasing as the conflict in the country lingers and the yearlong peace process has again hit stumbling block. The WHO's appeal for funding was issued [here](#).

On January 28th, U.S. President Barack Obama convened the National Security Council (NSC) to discuss the intensification of the U.S. campaign to degrade and destroy the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). During the meeting, President Obama directed his national security team to continue efforts to strengthen governance and support ongoing counterterrorism efforts in Libya and other countries where ISIL has sought to establish a presence. The meeting was summarized [here](#).

On January 28th, U.S. Department of State Deputy Spokesperson Mark Toner observed the ability of ISIL and ISIL-affiliated groups to gain a foothold in Libya highlighted the need for a unified national government that can partner with the international community to address this threat. He said the State Department has been focused on moving the Libyan political process forward, getting a government in place, and seeking ways to cooperate more decisively with the new Libyan Government to fight ISIL. His comments were transcribed [here](#).

On February 1st, U.N. Humanitarian Coordinator for Libya Ali Al-Za'tari warned that almost two months after its launch, a humanitarian appeal to aid 1.3 million vulnerable people in conflict-torn Libya is 99 percent unfunded. As a result, Coordinator Al-Za'tari warned that vulnerable populations in Libya will continue to suffer as the winter continues. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On February 2nd, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry participated in a ministerial meeting held in Rome, Italy on the fight against ISIL. During the meeting, both Secretary Kerry and Italian Foreign Minister Paolo Gentiloni observed ISIL is expanding its presence in Libya and using positions in Libya to recruit new fighters. Participants in the coalition fighting ISIL agreed to continue to closely monitor developments in the country and support the Libyan Government of National Accord in boosting security. While Secretary Kerry ruled out military intervention in Libya by the U.S. in the near future, he said that could change if there was a turn of events. Secretary Kerry's comments were recorded [here](#).

On February 2nd, Ranking Member of the U.S. House Intelligence Committee Adam Schiff (D-CA) called for more aggressive steps to address ISIL's growing presence in Libya. Congressman Schiff argued the U.S. must keep the pressure on parties in Libya to implement the U.N.-brokered peace agreement and launch a government of national unity. He also called for more precise targeting of ISIL's leadership in Sirte to prevent the militants from gaining an even stronger foothold in the country. Congressman Schiff's recommendations were outlined [here](#).

On February 4th, White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest told reporters U.S. President Barack Obama will continue to be updated on the risks and the spread of ISIL in Libya, and the U.S. will take unilateral action to protect the American people, if necessary. While Press Secretary Earnest declined to comment on whether President Obama had made any decisions on the possibility of sending ground troops into Libya, he said the president has demonstrated a willingness to take decisive action. His comments were captured [here](#).

Central African Republic

On January 29th, hundreds of people marched through Bangui, Central African Republic (CAR), blowing whistles, denouncing fraud, and demanding the first round of last month's presidential election be annulled. The protesters, mostly young supporters of losing candidates, say hundreds of thousands of ballot papers were wrongly invalidated and argued for polling to start again from scratch. The protests were reported [here](#).

On January 29th, additional reports surfaced documenting more allegations of sexual abuse committed by foreign soldiers serving as peacekeepers in the CAR. The alleged acts of abuse, committed in 2014, involved six children. The soldiers who perpetrated acts of sexual abuse are believed to be from Georgia, France, and the European Union (EU). The new accusations were described [here](#).

On February 2nd, the U.N. announced the Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF) in the CAR has released \$9 million for life-saving assistance to 2.3 million people who need urgent support, including those displaced by violence, returnees, refugees, and vulnerable host communities. The new assistance was outlined [here](#).

On February 4th, the U.N. Mission in the CAR (MINUSCA) reported it has identified seven new possible victims of sexual exploitation and abuse in the town of Bambari, just days after the U.N. revealed which countries' troops have been accused of abusing minors. The soldiers implicated in the new cases are from the Republic of Congo (ROC) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), whose governments have been asked to launch formal investigations. The new cases of sexual abuse in the CAR were revealed [here](#).

Nigeria

On January 30th, officials said at least 86 people were killed in the latest attack by Nigeria's homegrown Boko Haram Islamic extremists. The attack took place in Dalori village and two nearby camps housing 25,000 refugees, just outside of Maiduguri, the birthplace of Boko Haram and the biggest city in Nigeria's northeast. Details on the attack were reported [here](#).

On January 30th, a crude oil pipeline in Nigeria's southern state of Bayelsa operated by the local subsidiary of Italy's Eni was attacked. This is the second major attack on the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) member's installations since an arrest warrant was issued this month for former militant leader Government Ekpemupolo, known as Tompolo. The full story is available [here](#).

On February 1st, multiple bombings of Agip oil pipelines caused thousands of barrels of oil to pollute waterways, farms, and fishing grounds in Nigeria's southern Bayelsa state. Oil flowed unchecked for two days, according to fishermen who complained that cleanup has not yet started. More information can be found [here](#).

On February 1st, U.S. Department of State Spokesperson John Kirby condemned the January 29th and 30th terrorist attacks in Gombe and Dalori, Nigeria, where Boko Haram extremists bombed a market, attacked a village, fire-bombed huts burning to death dozens of innocent victims, including children, and wounding many more. Spokesperson Kirby offered condolences to the victims and indicated the U.S. remains committed to supporting Nigeria and its Lake Chad Basin partners in fighting terrorism. His comments were transcribed [here](#).

On February 2nd, the U.N. Security Council condemned Saturday's terrorist attacks in northeastern Nigeria attributed to Boko Haram. Noting the attacks resulted in a large number of dead and wounded, the Security Council called on all U.N. member States to aid Nigerian authorities in bringing the perpetrators of the attacks to justice. The Security Council's response to the attacks was articulated [here](#).

On February 3rd, the AU said funding for a multinational force to combat Boko Haram's deadly Islamist insurgency in West and Central Africa remains well short of its target. To date, donors have made roughly \$250 million in commitments, but the 8,700-strong Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF) requires a budget of \$700 million. More information can be seen [here](#).

On February 3rd, the Nigerian Air Force announced it had conducted the first attack by an unmanned combat aerial vehicle on a Boko Haram position north of the Sambisa Forest. According to the Air Force, the drone strike triggered multiple explosions, suggesting it hit an ammunition and fuel depot. The Nigerian Air Force has conducted 286 aerial missions over the Sambisa Forest in the past month. An article on the drone strike was published [here](#).

On February 8th, U.S. Congresswoman Karen Bass (D-CA), Ranking Member of the House Foreign Affairs Africa Subcommittee, will hold an event in Washington, D.C. on Boko Haram and its regional impact in 2016. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield will deliver keynote remarks. Event details are available [here](#).

West Africa Ebola Outbreak

On February 3rd, the WHO updated its statistics on the number of Ebola cases in West Africa. The WHO reported that 112 contacts associated with Sierra Leone's most recent Ebola case remain under surveillance. The highest risk contacts were recently transferred to voluntary quarantine facilities (VQFs) for the duration of their 21-day follow up period. Human-to-human transmission of Ebola linked to the most recent cluster of Liberia was declared to have ended on January 14th, while Guinea was declared Ebola-free on December 29th. Additional data was analyzed [here](#).

African Union Summit

On January 29th, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, in an address to the AU Peace and Security Council, spotlighted three topics high on the regional body's agenda, including counterterrorism, and the ongoing crises in both South Sudan and Burundi. Secretary-General Ban argued all these challenges require urgent attention at the continental-level and from the wider international community. Excerpts from Secretary-General Ban's remarks were highlighted [here](#).

On January 29th-31st, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Administrator Gayle Smith led the U.S. delegation to the 26th Annual AU Summit. The delegation included Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield, Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Tom Malinowski, National Security Council (NSC) Senior Director for Africa Cathy Byrne, USAID Assistant Administrator for Africa Linda Etim, U.S. Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan Donald Booth, and U.S. Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region of Africa Thomas Perriello. For details, click [here](#).

On January 30th, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon concluded his visit to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to participate in the AU Summit. At the end of his visit, Secretary-General Ban hailed the commitments the AU has made on human rights and women's rights, and encouraged the continent's leaders to move forward with policy implementation, institution-building, and investment in real change. Secretary-General Ban's participation in the AU Summit was summarized [here](#).

On January 31st, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said the international community must stand with the people of Ethiopia in their time of need. He urged donors gathered in Addis Ababa for the AU Summit to step up assistance to the country before heading to the drought-stricken region of Oromia where he witnessed first-hand efforts under way to battle the effects of one of the most powerful El Nino events in recorded history. Secretary-General Ban's comments were transcribed [here](#).

On January 31st, a report compiled by the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC), which was made public at the AU Summit, reported that at least 50 people suffocated to death when they were shoved into metal containers in sweltering conditions by troops belonging to South Sudan. Details of the report can be seen [here](#).

On February 1st, ENCA summarized the main highlights of the AU Summit. During the meeting, the AU adopted a roadmap for the withdrawal of African nations from the Rome Statute, which governs the International Criminal Court (ICC). The AU decided not to deploy troops to Burundi in spite of opposition from Burundian authorities, and established a five-country task force to develop recommendations on addressing challenges in Libya. Chadian President Idriss Deby also assumed the chairmanship of the AU from Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe. Additional highlights were noted [here](#).

On February 3rd, African Development Bank (AfDB) President Akinwumi Adesina addressed the issues of youth employment and migration in a speech delivered before the 34th session of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Heads of State and Government Orientation Committee, held in conjunction with the AU Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. His remarks can be viewed [here](#).

United States – Africa Relations

White House

On February 3rd, President Barack Obama notified Congress of his decision to continue the national emergency with respect to the situation in Cote d'Ivoire beyond February 7th. In his message to Congress, President Obama said the Government of Cote d'Ivoire and its people continue to make significant progress in promoting democratic, social, and economic development. Despite these developments, President Obama asserted the situation in the country continues to pose an extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the U.S., making it necessary to continue the measures blocking the property of the persons contributing to the conflict in Cote d'Ivoire. President Obama's notification to Congress can be read [here](#).

Office of the U.S. Trade Representative

On January 28th, U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) Ambassador Michael Froman delivered remarks at a hearing sponsored by USTR on expanding trade and investment in Africa beyond the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). Ambassador Froman pushed to expand existing trade agreements with African countries, maintaining that after surmounting obstacles like poor infrastructure, trade agreements could help open new markets for U.S. goods. His prepared remarks were posted [here](#).

On February 1st-5th, Assistant USTR for Africa Florie Liser and Assistant USTR for Agricultural Affairs Sharon Bomer Lauritsen traveled to South Africa for bilateral meetings in Johannesburg and Cape Town. Their trip to South Africa was listed [here](#).

On February 2nd, U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission Christopher Wilson presented at the World Trade Organization (WTO) Policy Review of Morocco. Deputy Chief of Mission Wilson noted Morocco's economic progress has been impressive, with a doubling of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2014. He also commended Morocco for the successful execution of its strategy for economic diversification and its pursuit of economic reforms and liberalization. His remarks were transcribed [here](#).

State Department

On January 27th-February 2nd, Ambassador-At-Large for Global Women's Issues Catherine Russel traveled to Tunisia and Egypt. In Tunisia, Ambassador Russel's meetings with government officials, members of Parliament, entrepreneurs, and members of civil society focused on women's roles in peace, security, and politics, as well as gender-based violence and women's economic empowerment. In Egypt, Ambassador Russell met with government officials, members of civil society, business leaders and entrepreneurs to discuss gender-based violence, women's economic and political participation, and adolescent girls' education. Her trip was announced [here](#).

On January 29th, Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Rose Gottemoeller was on travel to Stuttgart, Germany to visit U.S. European Command (EUCOM) and U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), and to meet with her military counterparts to discuss European and African security, missile defense, and defense cooperation. Her trip was noticed [here](#).

On January 29th, the State Department issued a statement expressing regret at the Zanzibar Electoral Commission's decision to announce a date for a new election on Zanzibar without achieving an inclusive, negotiated agreement on the way forward. The State Department called on the Government of Tanzania to fully engage all parties to reach a prompt, peaceful, and inclusive solution, which would be necessary to allow U.S. observation of any electoral process. The full statement can be read [here](#).

On February 3rd, State Department Spokesman John Kirby welcomed the recent announcement that the Government of the DRC and the U.N. Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) have signed an agreement to permit resumed cooperation against illegal armed groups. His statement can be seen [here](#).

U.S. Agency for International Development

On January 28th, as part of its participation in the Powering Africa Summit, USAID and Power Africa partners launched a roadmap to meet President Barack Obama's goals of adding 30,000 megawatts (MW) and 60 million connections across sub-Saharan Africa by 2030. The roadmap puts forth a plan for the U.S. Government to maximize value from existing transactions, advance new opportunities for deal flow, and increase the efficiency of existing generation. It also highlights how Power Africa will add new connections by scaling up grid roll-out programs and intensifying Beyond the Grid Efforts. More information can be found [here](#).

On January 31st, USAID Administrator Gayle Smith announced an additional \$97 million in emergency assistance for Ethiopia to address the ongoing humanitarian crisis resulting from the impacts of the El Nino phenomenon. This additional contribution includes more than 176,000 metric tons of food to be distributed to over four million Ethiopians and refugees. The new funding will help Catholic Relief Services and the U.N. World Food Programme (WFP) to extend food delivery programs through July 2016. A press release was issued [here](#).

On February 1st, USAID's Office of American Schools and Hospitals Abroad announced \$23 million in funding to U.S. organizations and their overseas partners to support construction projects and to purchase equipment for 15 hospitals and clinics, six secondary schools, 16 universities, and one library. As part of the awards, USAID is continuing to grow its partnership with the Horn of Africa Education Development Fund, which will construct a science building, expand its auditorium, and make other campus improvements at the Abaarso School of Science and Technology in Somaliland. For more information, click [here](#).

Department of Defense

On January 26th, senior leaders from AFRICOM and U.S. Army Africa joined National Guard leaders, hosted by the North Carolina National Guard, to discuss the future of the State Partnership Program in Raleigh, North Carolina. Through the State Partnership Program, the National Guard strengthens relationships with and bolsters the capacity of partner nations in Africa. More information can be found [here](#).

On January 28th, U.S. Army Africa provided insights into the initial planning for the African Readiness Training 2016 (ART16). The Training is currently scheduled to take place in July and will include soldiers from the U.S. and Senegalese armies. ART16 is a combined multilateral training exercise that will focus on enhancing the capacity of African partners while achieving U.S. Army readiness, crisis response proficiency, and joint interoperability with partner nations. Details were shared [here](#).

On January 29th, the U.S. Marine Corps noted the recent quick-response training held at Naval Station Rota in Spain to test the Special-Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force Crisis Response – Africa's (SPMAGTF-AF) capabilities. As part of the training, Marines had six hours to respond to a variety of simulated crisis response missions in Africa, including embassy reinforcement and a quick-response force of tactical recovery of aircraft and personnel. The training was highlighted [here](#).

On February 4th, AFRICOM highlighted exercise Allied Spirit IV, taking place January 10th – February 4th at the U.S. Army's Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Hohenfels, Germany. The event brought together U.S. and South African military chaplains, with the goal of building relationships between the two forces. Allied Spirit IV was designed to prepare forces in Europe to operate together by exercising tactical interoperability and testing secure communications with NATO alliance members and partner nations. More information can be accessed [here](#).

On February 8th, North and West African partner nations will begin the Flintock joint military exercise, which is scheduled to take place in Senegal with outstations in Mauritania. Flintock is African-planned, coordinated, and executed Special Operations Forces exercise that focuses on multi-national cooperation and capacity building. More information can be found [here](#).

Department of the Interior

On January 29th, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell, Co-chair of President Barack Obama's Task Force on Wildlife Trafficking, concluded an official visit to Africa with a final stop in South Africa, where she met with senior government officials to discuss ways the U.S. and the African country can work together to combat the world's growing illegal trade in wildlife that is driving several species toward extinction. Her trip was summarized [here](#).

U.S. Trade and Development Agency

On February 3rd, the U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) awarded a grant to Ethiopian Electric Power (EEP), Ethiopia's national power generation and transmission company, to provide technical assistance under the Global Procurement Initiative: Understanding Bid Value (GPI). The grant will fund a senior procurement advisor to help EEP achieve value for money in publicly funded energy projects, including those that support President Barack Obama's Power Africa initiative. A press release was issued [here](#).

Overseas Private Investment Corporation

On January 29th, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) highlighted Ghanaian women's use of clean cookstoves made by OPIC partner Envirofit International to prepare food. OPIC has committed \$4 million in financing to help Envirofit introduce more cookstoves in Africa, as well as in developing countries in Asia and Latin America. Envirofit's stoves cook food faster than on open fires or rudimentary stoves, while also reducing fuel use, smoke, and toxic emissions. The technology was highlighted [here](#).

On February 2nd, Bayport Management Ltd (BML) announced the closing of a \$250 million senior debt facility with OPIC. The long-term loan will support the group's financial inclusions and growth across its operations, including in Africa. BLM is currently operational in Ghana, where its "My Money" product offering is a low-cost bank account that enables customers to save, transact, obtain insurance, and gain access to credit. More information was shared [here](#).

Millennium Challenge Corporation

On January 29th, the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) called attention to the Innovation Grants Program, which is engaging non-governmental partners in Zambia to develop and implement innovative approaches to improve services for the poor. The program, launched in 2014, empowers community organizations, entrepreneurs, NGOs, and businesses to propose innovations that will improve access to drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, and solid waste management services in Lusaka. The Program is accepting proposals through February 5th. Details were posted [here](#).

U.S. African Development Foundation

On January 27th, the U.S. African Development Foundation (USADF) announced it has reached its goal of 50 grants awarded to African energy entrepreneurs. The Power Africa Off-Grid Energy Challenge, now in its third year, has awarded \$5 million to 50 African owned and managed energy companies in nine countries, including Ethiopia, Ghana, Liberia, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. A press release was published [here](#).

Congress

On January 28th, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Bob Corker (R-TN) sent a letter to Treasury Secretary Jack Lew urging the Obama Administration to use U.S. influence to prevent new international lending to Zimbabwe absent meaningful progress by the government to restore the rule of law and improve human rights. The letter can be downloaded [here](#).

On January 29th, House Select Committee on Benghazi Press Secretary Matt Wolking released a statement regarding Committee Democrats spending more than \$2 million in taxpayer money on what he categorized as politically-motivated efforts to undermine and obstruct the investigation into a terrorist attack that killed four Americans. His statement can be read [here](#).

On February 1st, House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Ed Royce (R-CA) praised the passage of the Electrify Africa Act. Congressman Royce said the Committee's work on the legislation was a direct response to the fact that today 70 percent of the population in sub-Saharan Africa, or the equivalent of roughly 600 million people, does not have access to reliable electricity. His statement can be read [here](#).

On February 1st, House Foreign Affairs Committee Ranking Member Eliot Engel (D-NY) applauded House passage of the Electrify Africa Act of 2015. The bill, which passed the Senate in December, seeks to reduce energy poverty across sub-Saharan Africa. Congressman Engel's comments were posted [here](#).

On February 2nd, House Foreign Affairs Africa Subcommittee Ranking Member Congresswoman Karen Bass (D-CA) released a statement praising House passage of the Electrify Africa Act. Noting the bill will help address the absence of electrical power for at least 50 million people in sub-Saharan Africa by 2020, Congresswoman Bass said the legislation will be good for the global economy and common humanity. Her statement can be seen [here](#).

On February 2nd, House Select Committee on Benghazi Chairman Trey Gowdy (R-SC) released a statement announcing a private interview with Under Secretary of State for Management Patrick Kennedy regarding the September 2012 terrorist attacks in Benghazi, Libya. Under Secretary Kennedy's testimony was announced [here](#).

On February 3rd, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs held a hearing titled, "Assistance to Combat Wildlife Trafficking." The Subcommittee received testimony from Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement William Brownfield and USAID Associate Administrator Eric Postel. A webcast of the hearing can be watched [here](#).

[North Africa](#)

On January 27th, the Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) completed the third and last review of Morocco's economic performance under a program supported by a two-year Precautionary and Liquidity Line (PLL) arrangement, and reaffirmed Morocco's continued qualification to access PLL resources. The IMF observed that Morocco's overall economic performance has continued to improve and noted Moroccan authorities only plan to draw on the PLL should they experience actual balance of payments needs. More information can be found [here](#).

On January 27th, government officials reported that renewable energy currently makes up 35 percent of Morocco's energy generation and that the country is on track to achieve a 43 percent renewable share by 2020. If achieved, this would put the country far ahead of regional neighbors in alternative energy contributions. Additional data was analyzed [here](#).

On January 29th, sources close to the investigation of the downing of a Russian passenger jet in Egypt in late October indicated an EgyptAir mechanic whose cousin joined ISIL in Syria is suspected of planting the bomb that brought down the plane. Allegedly, the mechanic, along with two airport police officers and a baggage handler suspected of helping him put the bomb on board, have been detained. However, the airline has repeatedly denied the involvement of any of its employees, while the Interior Ministry also said there had been no arrests. Developments were reported [here](#).

On January 29th, *Reuters* reported Egypt has lost hundreds of millions of dollars since last year's bombing of a Russian passenger plane led to an immediate dip in tourism. According to South Sinai Governor Khaled Fouda, hotel occupancy at the resort cities of Sharm el-Sheikh and Hurghada have dropped by 20 percent, resulting in a loss of more than \$250 million in revenue each month. His comments were recorded [here](#).

On January 31st, Islam Gawish, a popular Egyptian satirical cartoonist, was arrested. According to the Egyptian Interior Ministry, Gawish was detained on charges of running a website without a license. His arrest is the latest escalation of a campaign the opposition has argued is intended to silence the government's online critics. The arrest was reported [here](#).

On February 3rd, Egyptian security forces killed two suspected ISIL militants during clashes in the upscale Cairo district of Maadi. Egypt is trying to clamp down on Islamist militants who stepped up attacks after the army toppled President Mohammed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood in 2013. For details on the latest efforts to improve security in Egypt, click [here](#).

On February 4th, World Bank President Jim Yong Kim announced the World Bank will be tripling its commitment to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region in the next five years to nearly \$20 billion to address the consequences of conflict and to help countries recover and rebuild. As part of its renewed focus on the MENA

region, the World Bank will work with partners in seeking to address the root causes of instability. The announcement was captured [here](#).

On February 4th, Morocco launched the first phase of the largest concentrated solar power (CSP) plant in the world at the three-plant Noo-Ouarzazate complex. The project was inaugurated by King Mohammed VI, who noted it marks the country's determination to reduce its dependence on fossil fuels. By 2018, the CSP plant is expected to achieve over 500 MW of installed capacity, ultimately providing power to more than one million people. The project was highlighted [here](#).

East Africa

On January 27th, the Executive Board of the IMF approved an extension of both Kenya's Stand-By Arrangement (SBA) and Arrangement under the Standby Credit Facility (SCF) to March 15, 2016. This extension will provide time for authorities to finalize fiscal measures for 2015/2016 and implement structural measures under the program. The extension was announced [here](#).

On January 28th, U.N. Special Representative for Somalia Michael Keating briefed the U.N. Security Council on developments in the country. Special Representative Keating asserted that success in the country this year will depend upon managing threats, notably those posed by the terrorist groups Al-Shabaab, while announcing a breakthrough political achievement. Excerpts from the briefing were highlighted [here](#).

On January 29th, the main opposition party in Tanzania's semi-autonomous Zanzibar islands called for a boycott of a planned re-run of disputed presidential, parliamentary and municipal elections on the Indian Ocean archipelago on March 20th. Zanzibar's electoral body annulled a previous ballot on October 25th on grounds of fraud. The boycott was announced [here](#).

On January 31st, Ethiopia urged international donors to offer aid promptly for relief operations to support 10.2 million people critically short of food, and said it was committed to allocating as much of its own funds as necessary. Ethiopia's plea came as Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonen took U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon on a tour of an area where one of the worst droughts in decades has caused much damage. Deputy Prime Minister Mekonen's comments were recorded [here](#).

On January 31st, Ugandan military forces detained David Sejusa, a general known as a long-time critic of President Yoweri Museveni. Observers believe the move is likely to raise tensions in the country in the weeks leading up to the February 18th presidential election. The race is anticipated to be one of the toughest electoral challenges President Museveni has seen. Additional analysis was provided [here](#).

On January 31st, authorities in Tanzania launched a search after poachers shot down a helicopter and its British pilot during an operation to track down elephant killers. British pilot Roger Gower was tracking poachers in the Maswa game reserve when he died after his helicopter crashed after being hit by an AK-47 rifle fired from the ground. The incident was described [here](#).

On February 1st, a previously unknown population of at least 100 lions was reported to have been discovered by a wildlife charity in a remote park in north-western Ethiopia. The area is thought to have lost all its lions in the 20th century because of hunting and habitat destruction. The full story is available [here](#).

On February 1st, a solar-powered bus described by its Ugandan makers as the first in Africa was driven in public. Kiira Motors' Kayoola prototype electric bus was shown off at a stadium in Uganda's capital, Kampala. Details can be accessed [here](#).

On February 2nd, Kenyan military personnel killed four suspected Al Shabaab fighters after a fierce shootout in a forest on the north coast. Monday's shooting between the security forces and the Somali Islamist militia occurred in Kenya's Boni Forest in Lamu County, near the border with Somalia. The offensive against the Al Shabaab fighters was detailed [here](#).

On February 2nd, following his arrest, Uganda's former intelligence chief, General David Sejusa was charged with insubordination at a military court. According to local media, General Sejusa is accused of going to political rallies against the orders of the chief of defense forces. More information can be found [here](#).

On February 1st, a solar-powered bus described by its Ugandan makers as the first in Africa was driven in public. Kiira Motors' Kayoola prototype electric bus was shown off at a stadium in Uganda's capital, Kampala. Details can be accessed [here](#).

On February 2nd, it was reported that a crippling drought and a collapsing water supply system have seen sales of bottled water soar in the Zimbabwean capital of Harare. According to Finance Minister Patrick Chinamasa, imports of bottled water have reached an unprecedented high to meet demand. For more information, click [here](#).

February 2nd, unverified images of a damaged car said to belong to an Uber driver who was reportedly ambushed by taxi drivers along Valley Arcade in Nairobi while picking up a passenger by the local taxi drivers went viral on social media. U.S. online taxi service firm Uber is facing its share of Kenyan backlash as reports of killed Uber drivers and damaged cars make rounds on social media. The situation was described [here](#).

On February 3rd, Kenyan authorities said they are holding three trucks carrying food aid on behalf the WFP at the border with Somalia because of suspicions the supplies could fall into the hands of militants with Al Shabaab. More information can be found [here](#).

On February 3rd, a man was killed in an explosion on a Daallo Airlines Airbus A321 that made a hole in the fuselage and forced the plane to return to the Somali capital of Mogadishu to make an emergency landing. While the incident remains under investigation and there was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack, investigators believe Al Shabaab was likely responsible for the blast. Details were posted [here](#).

On February 4th, Maureen Kyalya, the one female candidate in Uganda's presidential contest, expressed concerns about security in the country ahead of the February 18th vote. According to Kyalya, incumbent President Yoweri Museveni had demonstrated force and intimidate as part of his efforts to cling to power. Meanwhile, candidates on all sides have raised fears of violence, with accusations of police brutality and claims that opposition groups are forming militias. The electoral environment was discussed [here](#).

On February 4th, Somali Central Bank Governor Bashir Issa Ali called for Somalia to pursue a new currency to help rebuild the country's economy in the wake of decades of conflict perpetrated by Islamist fighters and armed groups. This is likely to be a challenge for Somalia, as the new currency must be accessible by Somalis who do not have mobile phones and must win back those who no longer use the shilling by choice. Details can be viewed [here](#).

[West Africa](#)

On January 27th, the AfDB conducted a high-level, three-day mission to engage in policy dialogue with the Government of Nigeria in order to ascertain its key development priorities. Recent economic challenges and headwinds have created an opportunity to address current and emerging development priorities and improve the business climate towards a stronger economy. The visit was reported [here](#).

On January 28th, the AfDB and representatives of the Central and West African economic communities launched a major project to improve the safety, security, and efficiency of air transport in the sub-region. The West and Central African Air Transport Safety and Security Program (WCAATSSP) follows the rapid growth of air transport in Africa. The project was announced [here](#).

On January 28th, airport operator Aeria said Ivory Coast's Felix Houphouet-Boigny International Airport in the commercial capital, Abidjan, will get a \$67 million makeover to boost its image as a regional hub. The Airport is expecting to welcome a record 1.75 million travelers this year. The project was outlined [here](#).

On January 28th, Senegal hailed the discovery of offshore gas reserves estimated at 450 billion cubic meters as a game changer for the West African nation. U.S. firm Kosmos said its Guembeul-1 exploration well, located in the northern part of the Saint Louis Offshore Profond license area in Senegal, had made a significant gas discovery. The discovery was reported [here](#).

On January 30th, the office of Nigeria's former Vice President Namadi Sambo was raided by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). Vice President Sambo served under President Goodluck Jonathan, and is the latest high-profile official to be investigated for the corruption that flourished under that administration. The raid was reported [here](#).

On February 1st, Nigerian Finance Minister Kemi Adeosun indicated the Nigerian Government is in talks with the World Bank to help it fund a forecasted \$11 billion budget deficit. Finance Minister Adeosun clarified Nigeria is not applying for an emergency loan, but roughly \$3.5 billion in other assistance from the World Bank and the AfDB. Minister Adeosun's comments were recorded [here](#).

On February 1st, former Ivorian President Laurent Gbagbo, appearing before the International Criminal Court (ICC) on charges of fomenting a 2010 crisis that led to 3,000 deaths, argued he tried to resolve the deadlock that plunged the country into civil war. President Gbagbo, the highest ranking politician ever to appear before the ICC, stands accused of stoking the ethnic strife that sparked a four-month civil war after he refused to step down following his failed bid to be reelected president in 2010. The case was detailed [here](#).

On February 1st, TV reports on the ICC's trial for crimes against humanity committed by former Ivory Coast leader Laurent Gbagbo were banned on Equatorial Guinea's state broadcaster, the RTNGE network. According to the government, the decision was made to keep the trial off the air because of Equatorial Guinea's belief in non-intervention in another country's affairs. The news was reported [here](#).

On February 2nd, the Government of Nigeria approached the AfDB requesting a Budget Support Loan of \$1 billion. The loan, if approved, will provide a good platform for policy dialogue to support the implementation of critical macroeconomic and sectoral reforms. Details were posted [here](#).

On February 1st, it was reported that Sierra Leone's President, Ernest Bai Koroma, has still not signed recently-passed abortion legislation into law. Campaigners are now worried his courage to change the status quo is faltering in the face of pressure from anti-abortion groups. More information can be found [here](#).

On February 3rd, the Government of Ghana, the IMF, and the U.K. Department for International Development (DFID) hosted one of the largest regional conferences on the importance of data for better macroeconomic policies was concluded in Accra, Ghana. The conference brought together participants from more than 40 countries to focus on the importance of the use of accurate economic data in policymaking. For more information, click [here](#).

On February 3rd, Nigerian telecommunications operator MTN hired former U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder to assist in the company's multi-billion dollar lawsuit over fines imposed by the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC). MTN has brought the case to a court in Lagos and has until mid-March to reach a settlement. Nigerian Communications Minister Adebayo Shittu has urged MTN to drop the lawsuit in order to foster a settlement. An update on the case was provided [here](#).

Sub-Saharan Africa

On January 27th, the Government of Rwanda and the AfDB signed a \$1 million emergency assistance grant to Burundian refugees in Rwanda. The main objective of the assistance is to help procure wood to meet the needs of refugees and to increase the usage of energy-efficient charcoal stoves to reduce deforestation. The grant was announced [here](#).

On January 29th, the U.N. refugee agency (UNHCR) reported the cycle of misery is continuing in eastern DRC three years after a major rebel offensive was defeated by U.N. and Government forces in North Kivu. According to UNHCR, armed militia and rebel groups are again targeting the region, putting thousands of civilians on the run. UNHCR's feedback was articulated [here](#).

On January 29th, the Executive Board of the IMF concluded the Article IV consultation with the Kingdom of Lesotho, and considered and endorsed the staff appraisal on a lapse-of-time basis. In conducting the review, the IMF observed a dip in real growth in GDP due to weaknesses in the manufacturing and construction sectors, and expressed concern for high unemployment. Additional observations were noted [here](#).

On January 29th, the Governor of the Bank of Botswana and the Deputy Managing Director of the IMF hosted in Gaborone a regional conference titled “Small Middle-Income Countries in Sub-Saharan Africa: Raising the Bar.” Delegates included senior officials from a number of countries representatives of the private sector, academia, the Executive Board of the IMF and IMF staff. Details on the conference were shared [here](#).

On January 29th, Zimbabwean health officials said they have detected several recent cases of typhoid fever, adding to fears that a water crisis will fuel the spread of infectious diseases. In Harare, health officials indicated six cases of typhoid had been confirmed, with more expected to emerge. More information can be found [here](#).

On January 31st, with support from the World Bank and other development partners, the Government of Zimbabwe presented a budget based on results rather than inputs. Results-based budgeting is expected to increase the value of public spending and ensure a more effective use of the country’s resources, and align with the country’s development goals. Details can be seen [here](#).

On February 1st, two South African men who beat and stabbed a Mozambican man to death during a wave xenophobic violence in April last year were sentenced to 17 and 10 years in prison. More information was reported [here](#).

On February 2nd, the World Bank released its South Africa Economic Update, which forecasts real GDP growth at 0.8 percent in 2016, down from 1.3 percent in 2015, and the lowest rate of growth since 2009, weighed by a combination of external and internal factors. Additional economic data was analyzed [here](#).

On February 3rd, the World Bank launched the first edition of its Zimbabwe Economic Update (ZEU), titled “Changing Growth Patterns: Improving Health Outcomes.” The ZEU aims to provide a new perspective on the macroeconomic issues facing the nation, and focuses on key developments in a particular sector. The report can be downloaded [here](#).

On February 3rd, South African President Jacob Zuma proposed footing part of the bill for state-funded improvements to his rural home, some of which anti-graft authorities said benefited him personally in a report that triggered a political scandal. President Zuma’s proposal was outlined [here](#).

On February 3rd, scientists warned that Madagascar must wipe out an invasive, toxic toad immediately to save the country’s unique wildlife from disaster. The Asian toad is spreading unchecked through the eastern part of the island, and poses a direct threat not only to the country’s biodiversity, but to human health and the economy. More information can be found [here](#).

On February 3rd, South African power utility Eskom said it does not expect to implement electricity cuts for the rest of the southern hemisphere summer and winter seasons. The state utility has recently had to impose blackouts in light of its inability to meet power demand. Details can be accessed [here](#).

On February 3rd, South Africa's Grain SA lowered its estimate for imports of maize to 3.8 million tons from a previous estimate of 5 million tons after the government's maize forecast was higher than expected. The country continues to suffer from drier than normal weather patterns. An article on maize imports can be read [here](#).

On February 4th, DRC forces and U.N. peacekeepers intervened to break up clashes between Hutu and Nande villagers in the town of Lufo in the eastern party of the country. At least six civilians were killed in violence along the DRC’s border with Uganda as tensions have been on the rise. For details, click [here](#).

On February 4th, Riah Phiyega, South Africa’s national police chief at the time of the Marikana massacre, objected to demands that she should face criminal charges related to her role in the 2012 killing of 34 striking miners at the Lonmin Marikana mine. While Phiyega was suspended from her position pending an investigation, she claimed the tragedy has been used as a witch hunt against her. For details, click [here](#).

[General Africa News](#)

On January 29th, the AfDB announced the departure of a number of senior officials as part of a refocusing of strategy. The officials leaving the AfDB include Vice President for Agriculture, Water, Human Development, Governance and Natural Resources Aly Abou-Sabaa, Secretary General and Vice President Cecilia Akintomide, Vice President for Infrastructure, Private Sector, and Regional Integration, Solomon Asamoah, General Counsel and Director of Legal Services Kalidou Gadio, and Director of Communications and External Relations Joel Serunkuma Kibazo. The changes were announced [here](#).

On February 1st, the WHO declared the Zika virus linked to a microcephaly outbreak in Latin America an international emergency. The WHO warned the disease could spread to Africa and Asia, which have the world's highest birth rates. More information can be found [here](#).

On February 1st, UNITAID and non-profit group IVCC announced a new \$65 million initiative to boost malaria control and combat resistance to insecticides by improving access to new, low-cost anti-mosquito sprays across Africa. The initiative will be rolled out over four years with a goal of protecting as many as 50 million people in 16 African countries. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On February 1st, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's (USCC) U.S.-Africa Business Center held a discussion on the "African Energy Initiative." The event examined efforts to increase access to energy on the continent as part of the "Akon Lighting Africa" project, which has already successfully impacted communities in 15 countries. Speakers included international music star Akon, entrepreneur Samba Bathily, and youth leader Thione Niang. For more information, click [here](#).

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