



## ML Strategies Update

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## Africa Update

### **Leading the News**

#### ***Nigeria***

On March 6<sup>th</sup>, Boko Haram militants killed at least 45 people during an attack on the remote Nigerian village of Njaba. According to witnesses, the insurgents started shooting into houses around dawn. The attack was not immediately known to Nigerian officials because of the remoteness of the village. Njaba is close to the town of Damboa and located south of the Borno state capital of Maiduguri. The attack was reported [here](#).

On March 7<sup>th</sup>, Nigerian terrorist group Boko Haram posted an audio message on Twitter pledging allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). In the recording, a man claiming to be Boko Haram leader Abu Bakr Shekau offered the group's support and said Boko Haram militants will hear and obey ISIL in times of difficulty and prosperity. Nigerian Government Spokesman Mike Omeri said the audio message confirmed the government's previous concerns about Boko Haram's international ties. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On March 9<sup>th</sup>, Chadian General Zakaria Ngobongue confirmed Chad and Niger had launched a second military offensive against Boko Haram in northeastern Nigeria. According to reports, local residents said hundreds of Chadian and Nigerian troops and 200 military vehicles crossed the border from Niger into Nigeria on Saturday. The deployment was met by loud detonations as Boko Haram militants sought to stop the advance. More information can be found [here](#).

On March 9<sup>th</sup>, military sources confirmed about ten Chadian soldiers had been killed and 30 other Chadian and Nigerian troops wounded in an offensive launched against Boko Haram aimed at retaking the towns of Malam Fatouri and Damasak, Nigeria. According to Nigerian military officials, Boko Haram was kicked out of both towns and roughly 300 Boko Haram militants were killed. Nigerian and Chadian officials indicated the offensive was launched with permission from Nigeria. Accounts of the offensive can be seen [here](#).

On March 9<sup>th</sup>, State Department Spokesperson Jen Psaki noted U.S. government officials were

assessing the validity of reports that Boko Haram pledged allegiance to ISIL. Spokesperson Psaki noted Boko Haram has previously pledged allegiance to both Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the core of Al Qaeda, but those pledges were assessed to be pledges of solidarity rather than any indication that its leadership planned to take orders from or allow these groups to usurp control. Her comments were recorded [here](#).

On March 9<sup>th</sup>, U.S. Special Operations forces concluded three weeks of training with regional partners in western Africa who are confronting the growing threat posed by Boko Haram as part of the annual Flintock exercise. During closing ceremonies in Ndjamena, Chad, U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) Commander General David Rodriguez noted how this year's exercise was uniquely designed to work on a range of tactics to be deployed in fighting Boko Haram. Details on Flintock were shared [here](#).

On March 11<sup>th</sup>, suspected Boko Haram militants attacked the town of Ngamdu in Borno state, Nigeria. According to witnesses, at least 12 people were killed in the attacks, many of them bus and truck drivers. Reportedly, the attackers rode in on horseback and began firing at civilians. Ngamdu, which is located near a road that is a major transport artery between Borno and Yobe states, has been repeatedly attacked by Boko Haram. The raid on Ngamdu was noted [here](#).

On March 10<sup>th</sup>, explosions went off in the market area of Maiduguri, Nigeria, resulting in several casualties and injuries. While authorities had yet to release details on the death toll, witnesses suggested as many as a dozen people may have been killed. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack, but suspicion fell on Boko Haram militants who have previously tried to seize control of Maiduguri and are known for attacking public areas. The blasts were reported [here](#).

On March 11<sup>th</sup>, Nigerian Government Spokesman Mike Omeri said Nigeria's military had retaken 36 towns from Boko Haram control. The towns were recaptured across three states in northeastern Nigeria in a campaign that stretched from last Friday into this week. Spokesman Omeri noted that troops from Niger and Chad also crossed in Niger to assist in ridding the towns of Boko Haram militants. His comments were recorded [here](#).

On March 11<sup>th</sup>, French Defense Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian announced France will bolster its counterinsurgency force supporting the regional forces fighting Nigerian militant group Boko Haram. France has headquartered its more than 3,000-strong Sahel counter-insurgency force in N'Djamena, Chad. Minister Le Drian declined to provide details on the size of the troop increase and noted French troops will not take part in the fighting. The troop increase was announced [here](#).

On March 10<sup>th</sup>, at the request of U.S. Naval Forces Africa, CNA Corporation delivered a report recommending an approach the U.S. Government should pursue to counter Nigerian militant group Boko Haram. CNA acknowledged the U.S. Government has been working with the Government of Nigeria to defeat Boko Haram, but the two governments have taken divergent approaches and efforts to date have been ineffective. As a result of the political situation in Nigeria, CNA proposed the U.S. Government and other supporting partners focus on assisting Chad, Niger, and Cameroon in preventing Boko Haram from infiltrating their borders until the conditions become more favorable for the U.S. to provide direct assistance to the Government of Nigeria. The report can be downloaded [here](#).

On March 11<sup>th</sup>, the Atlantic Council's Africa Center hosted a briefing titled, "Update on Security in Nigeria and the Campaign Against Boko Haram." As part of the event, Director-General of Nigeria's National Intelligence Agency Ambassador Ayodele Oke and Nigeria's Chief of Defense Intelligence Rear Admiral Gabriel Okoi provided an update on the offensive against Boko Haram and assessed the current security situation in Nigeria in view of the upcoming elections. Event details were posted [here](#).

On March 12<sup>th</sup>, *The Daily Star* reported U.N. Security Council diplomats are drafting a resolution to shore up a regional force fighting Boko Haram with financial backing and logistical support needed for the mission to succeed. Under the measure, the Security Council would also consider sanctions against financiers and other supporters of Boko Haram. The draft resolution also welcomes plans for a donors' conference to be held next month to unlock financing for the effort. According to diplomats, a formal draft resolution could be presented to the Security Council as soon as next week and a vote is expected before the end of the month. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On March 12<sup>th</sup>, during a visit to Yaoundé, Cameroon, U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Africa Affairs Amanda Dory said the U.S. is providing diplomatic support in terms of engagement in the U.N. Security Council for the awaited resolution authorizing the deployment of a Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) by the AU against Boko Haram. If approved, the new force will receive U.N. Funding and will likely result in a bigger and better resources operation than the offensive currently underway supported by regional partners. Assistant Secretary Dory's comments were captured [here](#).

On March 12<sup>th</sup>, *Reuters* observed Nigeria has brought in hundreds of mercenaries from South Africa and the former Soviet Union to help boost the regional offensive against Boko Haram before the March 28<sup>th</sup> presidential election. In confirming the presence of hundreds of foreign military contractors on the ground, including in Maiduguri, security and diplomatic sources put the total much higher than the hundred or so previously reported. More information was reported [here](#).

## **Libya**

On March 5<sup>th</sup>, the U.N. Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution extending the mandate of the U.N. Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL). The Security Council agreed UNSMIL will stay under the leadership of Special Representative Bernardino Leon and remain in full accordance with the principles of Libyan national ownership. UNSMIL's mandate is to support Libyan Government efforts to ensure the transition to democracy, promote the rule of law and monitor and protect human rights, control unsecured arms and related material in Libya and counter their proliferation, and build governance capacity. More information was shared [here](#).

On March 5<sup>th</sup>, Libya's warring factions held U.N.-backed peace talks in Skhirate, Morocco, aimed at ending the conflict between two rival governments. Air strikes between rival forces intensified before the restart of negotiations. U.N. Special Representative for Libya Bernardino Leon, who is leading the talks, said the parties appeared to believe a deal is possible, representing a positive shift in the dialogue. The restart of peace talks was noted [here](#).

On March 7<sup>th</sup>, UNSMIL reported the country's political dialogue was progressing in a positive atmosphere, with participants agreeing important progress had been made so far. While acknowledging that security arrangements and proposals for developing a national unity government are key to the negotiations, UNSMIL said the engaged parties seemed determined to bridge their differences. An update was provided [here](#).

On March 9<sup>th</sup>, UNSMIL released a statement on the conclusion of the latest-round of three-day peace talks between Libyan factions in Morocco. UNSMIL confirmed the Libyan parties involved in the U.N.-facilitated process had concluded the talks while remaining focused on addressing the formation of a government of national unity. The talks were scheduled to resume on March 11<sup>th</sup> after all of the participants had time to consult with their constituencies on the latest deliberations. An update on the peace process was issued [here](#).

On March 9<sup>th</sup>, warplanes from Libya's internationally recognized government attacked Mitiga airport, the last functioning airport in Tripoli. The attack coincided with the swearing-in of General Khalifa Hiftar as army commander for the internationally recognized Libyan Government. Following the attack, airport spokesman Abdulsalam Buarmond said flights were only suspended for an hour before the airport resumed normal operations. The airstrikes were discussed [here](#).

On March 9<sup>th</sup>, Austria's Foreign Ministry reported that ISIL militants in Libya seized a group of foreigners at the al-Ghani oilfield last week. According to Austrian officials, the nine oil workers from Austria, the Czech Republic, Bangladesh, the Philippines, and at least one Africa country that went missing have not been heard from since. Oilfield management company Value Added Oilfield Services (VAOS) indicated it did not know which militant group was responsible for the kidnappings or where its employees had been taken. The kidnappings were reported [here](#).

On March 11<sup>th</sup>, several Libyan political parties concluded a two-day meeting in Algiers, Algeria. During the discussions, U.N. Special Representative for Libya and head of UNSMIL Bernardino Leon provided an overview of the progress and challenges facing the Libyan political dialogue process. At the close of the meeting, UNSMIL noted positive suggestions and ideas were shared on the path forward and

participants expressed their full conviction that a political solution can be reached. The participating parties also called for an immediate end to all violence to create an atmosphere conducive to the talks. The meeting was summarized [here](#).

On March 11<sup>th</sup>, Libya's elected parliament asked the U.N. to postpone the resumption of peace talks for one week in order to allow more time for discussion of a proposal to form a national unity government. In particular, parliament spokesman Farraj Hashem said the delay would allow more time for consideration of a road map for the next government, its competences, timeframe, and relationship with the House of Representatives. UNSMIL planned to host another round of talks beginning on Wednesday. The request was noted [here](#).

On March 12<sup>th</sup>, ISIL militants claimed responsibility for a bomb attack on a police station located near the Foreign Ministry. The group posted a statement and photos of the scene on Twitter to announce their involvement. According to Libyan security sources, one officer was slightly wounded by the blast. An article on the incident can be accessed [here](#).

### **South Sudan**

On March 6<sup>th</sup>, peace talks aimed at resolving the political conflict in South Sudan broke up without a deal or an agreement to continue negotiations, with mediators reporting they were unsuccessful in persuading either South Sudanese President Salva Kiir or former Vice President Riek Machar to compromise. Ethiopian Prime Minister and Chairman of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Hailemariam Desalegn expressed frustration with the lack of progress in South Sudan and said he would continue to press both parties to keep to an earlier agreement to share power in a transitional government by July. The breakdown of the peace talks was reported [here](#).

On March 6<sup>th</sup>, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon expressed disappointment after the unsuccessful conclusion of peace talks in South Sudan and the failure of South Sudanese President Salva Kiir and opposition leader Riek Machar to reach a power-sharing deal. Led by IGAD, peace talks had set March 5<sup>th</sup> as the deadline for negotiations between the two parties. In light of the missed deadline, Secretary-General Ban encouraged the continuation of negotiations and urged both parties to refrain from any attempt to escalate the conflict. Secretary-General Ban's reaction can be seen [here](#).

On March 6<sup>th</sup>, an African Union (AU) inquiry was released calling for South Sudanese President Salva Kiir and former Vice President Riek Machar to be barred from a transitional government and for South Sudan to effectively be placed under AU control. The recommendations are at odds with the recent negotiations around a peace deal held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The most recent dialogue on a potential agreement indicated an emerging deal would retain President Kiir and appoint Machar as deputy. For details, click [here](#).

On March 6<sup>th</sup>, the U.S. Department of State acknowledged that South Sudanese President Salva Kiir and former Vice President Riek Machar failed the people of South Sudan by refusing to make the compromises necessary for peace. The State Department condemned the lack of political leadership to resolve the man-made conflict in South Sudan, which has continued over the past 15 months. U.S. officials pledged to continue to work closely with IGAD in its efforts to bring an end to the conflict. The full statement was posted [here](#).

On March 10<sup>th</sup>, following a visit to Malakal, South Sudan, U.N. Special Representative for South Sudan and head of the U.N. Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) Ellen Margrethe Loj said she was appalled by the level of destruction she witnessed in the main market and teaching hospital of the Upper Nile state capital amid reports of child abductions in the nearby community of Wau Shilluk. She said individuals responsible for the recruitment of child soldiers in South Sudan must be held accountable for violating international law. Special Representative Loj's comments were highlighted [here](#).

### **Mali**

On March 6<sup>th</sup>, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon commended Malian stakeholders for the progress made towards an inclusive peace deal in Mali and urged full engagement to reach a final settlement. Secretary-General Ban expressed his gratitude to Algeria for hosting the peace process and to members

of the international community for their support. Additionally, Secretary-General Ban announced the appointment of Major General Michael Lollesgard as the new U.N. Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) Force Commander. The situation in Mali was described [here](#).

On March 6<sup>th</sup>, Mali's Ministry of Territorial Administration announced the postponement of local and regional elections scheduled for next month because insecurity in the northern party of the country has held up the revision of voter rolls. This decision represents the second postponement of the elections. While there is no precise date for rescheduling the vote, Ministry Spokesman Alhousseiny Toure said the elections will be held on October 25<sup>th</sup> at the latest. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On March 7<sup>th</sup>, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon condemned a terrorist attack in Bamako, Mali that killed five civilians and wounded seven others. Among those injured were two international experts working for the U.N. Secretary-General Ban joined the U.N. Security Council in calling on the Government of Mali to swiftly investigate the attack and bring the perpetrators to justice. He also expressed appreciation for the prompt response by Malian law enforcement institutions and commended MINUSMA for supporting the investigation. Secretary-General Ban's feedback can be seen [here](#).

On March 8<sup>th</sup>, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the U.N. Security Council condemned an attack in Kidal, Mali, that killed two Malian children and a Chadian peacekeeper with MINUSMA. Eleven additional peacekeepers and three more civilians were wounded in the attack. U.N. officials said the incident was a flagrant attempt to obstruct progress at a critical moment in the Malian peace process and urged against any action that jeopardizes prospects for peace. The U.N. also reiterated its readiness to consider sanctions against those who resume hostilities and violate the ceasefire. More information can be found [here](#).

On March 10<sup>th</sup>, upon concluding his fourth visit to Mali, U.N. Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Mali Suliman Baldo condemned recent attacks on civilians and U.N. peacekeepers and facilities in Mali. He expressed concern that massive violations of the most basic rights continue to plague populations in areas of Mali that continue to be affected by fighting. Independent Expert Baldo also noted the fragility of the cessation of hostility agreement signed in Algeria on February 10<sup>th</sup> and said that extremist armed groups that are not signatories to the agreement have an obvious interest in sabotaging the peace process in Mali. His comments were highlighted [here](#).

On March 10<sup>th</sup>, hundreds of people gathered in Kidal, Mali, to protest the peace agreement brokered by the U.N. The deal, signed by the Malian Government on March 1<sup>st</sup>, has not yet been accepted by Taureg rebel groups in the north. The rebels have demanded more time to discuss the deal with their supporters. The protest was noted [here](#).

### ***West Africa Ebola Outbreak***

On March 4<sup>th</sup>, in response to the lawsuit filed last week by Ebola survivor Nina Pham, Texas Health Resources Chief Executive Barclay Berden said the Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital had followed government privacy rules in sharing information on Pham's condition and obtained her consent. In the lawsuit, Pham not only claims that the hospital lacked the training and equipment needed to treat Ebola patients, but that the hospital had violated her privacy by releasing a video without her permission. The full story is available [here](#).

On March 5<sup>th</sup>, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced Rear Admiral Stephen Redd will serve as the CDC's new Director of Public Health Preparedness and Response. Rear Admiral Redd most recently served in the CDC's Influenza Coordination Division. In his new role, Rear Admiral Redd will coordinate the response to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. Rear Admiral Redd said defeating Ebola will be a marathon and preparedness means maintaining the physical and mental readiness to sprint. Rear Admirals new role was described [here](#).

On March 10<sup>th</sup>, the U.N. World Health Organization (WHO) commissioned a panel of experts to evaluate the organization's response to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. Criticized as having a slow and poorly coordinated response at the outset, WHO Director-General Dr. Margaret Chan is making good on a promise to allow an independent investigation, now that the crisis has been brought under control. For more details, click [here](#).

On March 10<sup>th</sup>, the World Bank highlighted its \$518 million in International Development Association (IDA) funding to support Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone in reaching and staying at zero Ebola cases while also rebuilding from the crisis. The World Bank assistance is funding care delivery and treatment, deployment of health workers, contact tracing, food delivery, and efforts to help reopen schools. More information can be viewed [here](#).

On March 10<sup>th</sup>, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) announced Chief Information Officer Steven VanRoekel and Executive Director of the U.S. Global Development Lab Ann Mei Change will deliver a presentation at South by Southwest (SXSW) on March 13<sup>th</sup>. Their presentation will provide an overview of how USAID has mobilized science, technology, and innovation in the fight against Ebola and will feature a live demonstration of a new protective health care worker suit, a winner of USAID's Fighting Ebola: A Grand Challenge for Development. The presentation was announced [here](#).

On March 11<sup>th</sup>, the WHO released new statistics on the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. For the week ending on March 8<sup>th</sup>, a total of 116 new confirmed cases of Ebola were reported, compared to 132 new cases reported last week. Liberia reported no new confirmed cases for the second consecutive week. Guinea and Sierra Leone each reported 58 new cases. The latest data suggests disease transmission occurred in a geographically contiguous arc around Conakry and Freetown, which is viewed as a positive development because it enables response efforts to focus on a smaller area. Additional analysis can be seen [here](#).

On March 11<sup>th</sup>, the WHO and the World Food Programme (WFP) announced the launch of a new partnership intended to bring the Ebola outbreak down to zero in West Africa. The two agencies agreed to combine their expertise in joint operations in more than 60 priority districts and prefectures on the ground in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone to reach, monitor, and respond to the needs of people affected by Ebola. An article on the partnership can be read [here](#).

On March 11<sup>th</sup>, Public Health England confirmed that a British military health care worker in Sierra Leone tested positive for Ebola. At the time of the announcement, medical experts were still trying to determine whether or not to evacuate the infected individual to the United Kingdom (U.K.) for treatment. While it was also unclear how the patient was exposed to the virus, authorities indicated they had begun tracing those who had recently come into contact with the diagnosed worker. Details were shared [here](#).

## **United States – Africa Relations**

### ***White House***

On March 6<sup>th</sup>, National Security Adviser Susan Rice announced that Philip Gordon, Special Assistant to the President and White House Coordinator for the Middle East, North Africa, and the Gulf region, will be stepping down. He will be succeeded by Rob Malley, who currently serves as National Security Council (NSC) Director for Iran, Iraq, Syria, and the Gulf States. Malley will assume his new position on April 6<sup>th</sup>. A press release was published [here](#).

### ***State Department***

On March 6<sup>th</sup>, Secretary of State John Kerry issued a press statement congratulating the people of Ghana on their celebration of 58 years of independence. Secretary Kerry said the U.S. has stood by Ghana's side ever since the country peacefully achieved its independence and today Ghana and the U.S. remain united in their commitment to democracy, human rights, free enterprise, and peace and security. In addition, Secretary Kerry highlighted how the U.S. and Ghana have reinforced their partnership through joint efforts to stop the spread of Ebola in West Africa. Secretary Kerry's full statement can be read [here](#).

On March 6<sup>th</sup>, Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources Heather Higginbottom and Ambassador-At-Large for Global Women's Issues Catherine Russell presented the Secretary of State's International Women of Courage Award to ten recipients from ten countries. The annual award recognizes women around the globe who have demonstrated exceptional courage and leadership in advocating for peace, justice, human rights, gender equality, and women's empowerment, often at

personal risk. Among the recipients were President of Foundation Voix du Coeur Beatrice Epaye of the Central African Republic (CAR) and nurse, Ebola survivor, and activist Marie Claire Tchecola of Guinea. For more information, click [here](#).

On March 6<sup>th</sup>, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield met with 2015 Women of Courage awardees Beatrice Epaye and Marie Claire Tchecola at the Department of State. She also attended the Annual Historically Black Colleges and Universities Conference at the State Department, as well as a reception in honor of Ghana's 58<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Independence at the Embassy of Ghana. Assistant Secretary Thomas-Greenfield's schedule was outlined [here](#).

On March 8<sup>th</sup>, Secretary of State John Kerry published a statement on International Women's Day, celebrating the courage and contributions of women and girls around the world. Secretary Kerry also applauded the recipients of the International Women of Courage award and highlighted one award winner who worked as a nurse treating Ebola patients in West Africa. He also reflected on meeting Haleta Giday at last year's Summit of the Washington Fellowship for Young Africa Leaders. Giday began a campaign to educate Ethiopian women on their legal and financial rights. Secretary Kerry's full statement can be seen [here](#).

On March 9<sup>th</sup>, Secretary of State John Kerry delivered remarks at a luncheon of the inaugural Goldman Sachs 10,000 Women/U.S. State Department Entrepreneurship Program, along with Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs Evan Ryan and Goldman Sachs CEO Lloyd Blankfein. This recently launched public-private partnership provides 29 women entrepreneurs engaged in business, media and nonprofit sectors from the Middle East and North Africa with a two-week program focused on entrepreneurship, leadership training, mentoring, and networking. This year's participants include women from Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia. More information can be found [here](#). Secretary Kerry's remarks were transcribed [here](#).

On March 9<sup>th</sup>, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield met with South African Ambassador to the U.S. Mninwa Johannes Mahlangu at the Department of State. The meeting was noticed [here](#).

On March 9<sup>th</sup>, the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs announced plans to conduct eight Connect Camps in Tanzania, Namibia, Rwanda, and Cote d'Ivoire during 2015-2016, supporting alumni from the Mandela Washington Fellowship (MWF) for Young African Leaders and their chosen mentees. The Connect Camps offer an opportunity for MWF alumni to share the professional skills and networks they acquired from the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) with other African leaders in rural communities, with the goal of spurring economic growth and enhanced peace and security on the continent. For more information, click [here](#).

On March 12<sup>th</sup>, Secretary of State John Kerry traveled to Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, to attend the Egypt Economic Development Conference. While in Sharm el-Sheikh, Secretary Kerry will meet with Egyptian President Abdul Fattah Al-Sisi and other senior Egyptian leaders to discuss a range of bilateral and global issues, including coalition efforts against ISIL, the situation in Libya, and the ongoing crisis in Syria. Secretary Kerry's travel to Egypt was announced [here](#).

On March 12<sup>th</sup>, Secretary of State John Kerry issued a statement congratulating the people of Mauritius as they celebrate their 47<sup>th</sup> anniversary of independence. Secretary Kerry said Mauritius is an example to other nations in the region, especially as the country's most recent election demonstrates a legacy of peaceful democratic transitions, good governance, and the power of the vote. He also noted how the U.S. and Mauritius have worked together to advance regional security, enhance trade and investment, and defend human rights. Secretary Kerry's statement can be read [here](#).

On March 12<sup>th</sup>, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield met with South Sudanese Ambassador to the U.S. Garang Diing Akoung at the Department of State. The meeting was included on the State Department's daily appointment schedule, which can be accessed [here](#).

### ***Department of Defense***

On March 5<sup>th</sup>, the Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) profiled U.S. Army 2<sup>nd</sup>

Lieutenant Komi Afestse, a U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command Soldier deployed to Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, who recently earned his commission through the Army Reserve Officer Accession Program. Born in Togo, Lieutenant Afestse immigrated to the U.S. to pursue a better life. The full story is available [here](#).

On March 7<sup>th</sup>, the USNS Spearhead concluded a full schedule of weapons and tactics training alongside the Angolan military in Luanda as part of Africa Partnership Station 2015. Additionally, the Spearhead hosted several engagements aboard the ship, including an embassy function attended by U.S. Ambassador to Angola Helen Meagher La Lime. Additional information was shared [here](#).

### ***Department of Commerce***

On March 5<sup>th</sup>, the Department of Commerce highlighted Secretary Penny Pritzker's recent trip to Tunisia to demonstrate the U.S. commitment to Tunisia's transition to democracy, and to underscore the reforms needed to attract investment, generate economic growth, and create local jobs. While in Tunisia, Secretary Pritzker offered a keynote address at the Investment and Entrepreneurship Conference, hosted by the Partnership for New Beginnings and the American Chamber of Commerce in Tunisia. She also met with Tunisian government officials, business leaders, and entrepreneurs to better understand the challenges and opportunities facing the country's economy. Secretary Pritzker's visit to Tunisia was summarized [here](#).

On March 10<sup>th</sup>, the U.S. Commercial Service reported it has doubled its presence in Africa over the past year to boost trade with some of the world's fastest growing economies. The agency opened offices in Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Tanzania in the past 12 months and is planning its biggest-ever trade mission to sub-Saharan Africa in September. The U.S. Commercial Service has had offices in South Africa, Ghana, Kenya, and Nigeria for more than two decades and also supports embassies in 21 African countries where it does not have offices. More information can be seen [here](#).

### ***Overseas Private Investment Corporation***

On March 4<sup>th</sup>, at the Investment and Entrepreneurship conference in Tunis, Tunisia, Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) President and CEO Elizabeth Littlefield announced support for the Tunisia Credit Guarantee Facility (TCGF) in partnership with leading Tunisian financial institutions. President Littlefield signed agreements with the partner banks, including Amen Bank and ATBandAttijari Bank. OPIC support with guarantee up to \$50 million of lending through the TCGF. A press release was issued [here](#).

### ***Congress***

On March 4<sup>th</sup>, House Select Committee on Benghazi Communications Director Jamal Ware issued a statement regarding the issuance of a subpoena for former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's emails. Communications Director Ware noted the Committee issued subpoenas for all communications of former Secretary Clinton related to Libya and to the State Department for other individuals who have information pertinent to the Committee's investigation of the September 2012 Benghazi attacks. He also noted the Committee has issued preservation letters to internet firms informing them of their legal obligation to protect all relevant documents. The statement was posted [here](#).

On March 10<sup>th</sup>, House Select Committee on Benghazi Chairman Trey Gowdy (R-SC) released a statement in response to a press conference held by former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Chairman Gowdy expressed his belief that the press conference left more questions than answers related to Secretary Clinton's use of personal email to conduct official business while serving as Secretary of State. As a result, he said the Committee will call on Secretary Clinton to appear twice; once on her use of personal issue and a second time to answer questions specifically regarding the Benghazi terrorist attacks. Chairman Gowdy's full statement can be read [here](#).

### **North Africa**

On March 6<sup>th</sup>, Egypt's Ministry of Health announced a crash between a train and a bus carrying school children northeast of Cairo killed at least seven people and injured 24 others. The accident occurred at



an unauthorized railroad crossing. The train was not damaged and continued its journey. Egypt's roads and railways have a poor safety record and Egyptians have long complained the government has failed to enforce basic safeguards. The incident was reported [here](#).

On March 8<sup>th</sup>, an Egyptian court adjourned the trial of *Al Jazeera* journalists Mohamed Fahmy and Baher Mohamed until March 19<sup>th</sup>. The pair are charged with aiding the Muslim Brotherhood, who Egyptian authorities have come to view as a terrorist organization. The court released both defendants on bail last month after more than a year in detention. An update on the case was provided [here](#).

On March 9<sup>th</sup>, a roadside bomb killed three Egyptian soldiers and wounded one other in the Sinai peninsula. The attack, which targeted a military vehicle, came just days ahead of investment conference to be held in Sharm el-Sheikh. It was widely speculated that Sinai Province, the group formerly known as Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis, was responsible for the attack. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On March 10<sup>th</sup>, the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) expressed deep concern over judicial proceedings under way in Mauritania against members of two civil society groups, including the anti-slavery Initiative for the Resurgence of the Abolitionist Movement (IRA), who have been held since November last year after holding a demonstration. OHCHR noted three men, including former presidential candidate Biram Dah Abeid, are serving out two-year sentences on charges that include illegal assembly, refusal to carry out orders given by administrative authorities, and belonging to an unregistered organization. OHCHR's concern was articulated [here](#).

On March 10<sup>th</sup>, two people were killed and more than 30 others wounded in the latest attacks executed in North Sinai. In one attack, a suicide bomber tried to drive a water tanker into police barracks in al-Arish, Egypt, killing one civilian and wounding 30 police officers. In another attack, a bomb exploded near a checkpoint in Arish, killing one army officer and wounding three more. It was not immediately clear who was responsible for the attacks. For details on both attacks, click [here](#).

On March 10<sup>th</sup>, the Interior Ministry of Spain announced the arrest of two suspects and confirmed they had neutralized a militant Islamic cell in Ceuta, along the Moroccan coastline. According to the Ministry, the cell was operational and prepared to attack Spain or other targets in Europe. The arrests were announced [here](#).

On March 11<sup>th</sup>, U.N. Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Herve Ladsous acknowledged the U.N.-AU Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) has been failing in fulfilling its mandate of protecting civilians in Darfur. While Under-Secretary-General Ladsous said it is unlikely the mission will simply pull out of Darfur, he said U.N. officials have initiated discussions with the Government of Sudan on an eventual exit strategy as efforts to make the force more efficient proceed. The full story is available [here](#).

On March 11<sup>th</sup>, Ilan Berman, Vice President of the American Foreign Policy Council, wrote an op-ed for *Forbes* on Morocco's counterterrorism strategy. Berman argued U.S. policymakers could learn from the soft power strategy Morocco has executed against Islamic radicalism over the past decade. According to Berman, Morocco's strategy is grounded in religious legitimacy. The op-ed can be accessed [here](#).

On March 12<sup>th</sup>, Morocco recalled its ambassador to Nigeria amidst accusations that Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan is trying to use King Mohamed VI to win over Muslim voters before Nigeria's March 28<sup>th</sup> presidential election. Last week, the Moroccan royal palace said the king had declined a request for a telephone conversation with President Jonathan. Meanwhile, the Nigerian Foreign Ministry reported the two leaders had spoken extensively. Details were shared [here](#).

## **East Africa**

On March 6<sup>th</sup>, a three-day colloquium on forest management issues came to an end in Kenya's Rift Valley. Hosted by the Government of Kenya and facilitated by the World Bank, the colloquium provided an opportunity for forest-dependent communities to engage constructively with the government and other stakeholders on challenges in the management and sharing of forest resources. The discussions resulted in a proposal to form a multi-sectoral steering committee on Indigenous Forest Peoples' issues. The colloquium was summarized [here](#).

On March 7<sup>th</sup>, during an official visit to Kismayo, U.N. Special Representative for Somalia Nicholas Kay welcomed the Interim Juba Administration's (IJA) progress towards forming a regional assembly. Following meetings with IJA leader Ahmed Madobe and IGAD Special Envoy for Somalia Mohamed Abdi Affey, Special Representative Kay also urged the IJA to focus on accelerating federalism, the constitutional review, and democratization ahead of the end of the Federal Government's term in 2016. Special Representative Kay's visit to Kismayo was outlined [here](#).

On March 9<sup>th</sup>, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) provided additional information on last month's launch of the Somalia Trust Fund. The new Fund aims to improve macroeconomic institutions, policies, and data systems and will provide over \$9 million worth of technical assistance and training to Somalia over the next three years. The Fund will support works plans focused on improving Somalia's fiscal operations, central banking, and statistical systems. A press release was published [here](#).

On March 9<sup>th</sup>, the *Washington Post* reported the Ethiopian Government appears to be using Internet spying tools to eavesdrop on journalists based in suburban Washington. The journalists, who work for Ethiopian Satellite Television in Alexandria, Virginia, provide one of the few independent news sources to their homeland through regular television and radio feeds. While the Ethiopian Government has accused the journalists of terrorism, security researchers say the security intrusions are a threat to human rights and press freedoms. An article on the situation can be read [here](#).

On March 9<sup>th</sup>, Zemedeneh Negatu, Managing Partner at Ernst & Young Ethiopia, highlighted the importance of the Grand Renaissance Dam being entirely funded by Ethiopia. He said the project will serve as a lesson for other African countries that want to embark on such large infrastructure projects, and desire the flexibility to do it themselves. Ethiopia funded the \$5 billion project through a combination of bond offerings to Ethiopians and tax collection. When finished, the Grand Renaissance Dam will generate 6,000 megawatts (MW) of electricity for domestic use and export. The project was detailed [here](#).

On March 10<sup>th</sup>, U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein expressed concern for the spike in attacks against people with albinism in several East African countries, where in the past six months at least 15 albinos were abducted, wounded, or killed, including three incidents last week. In particular, High Commissioner Zeid noted children have been targeted in such attacks in Malawi and Tanzania. He expressed concern that the recent assaults, murders, and kidnappings have left people with albinism living in fear. High Commissioner Zeid's remarks were captured [here](#).

On March 10<sup>th</sup>, mobile money service M-Pesa announced users in Kenya and Tanzania will now be able to send and receive money between the two countries. The service is being provided by the two largest telecom companies in the region, Vodacom Tanzania Limited and Safaricom in Kenya. The new service will allow for safe, secure, and convenient money transfers across the border. The launch of the service was noted [here](#).

On March 11<sup>th</sup>, at least 41 people were killed and 23 others injured when a bus and a truck collided in southwest Tanzania. Officers on the scene said the accident occurred when a passenger bus carrying more than 60 passengers crashed head-on with a container truck. Many of the victims were killed when the container on the truck fell on the bus after impact. Traffic accidents are common in Tanzania and critics often blame authorities for failing to enforce basic traffic regulations. The situation was described [here](#).

On March 11<sup>th</sup>, the Kenya Tea Development Agency, which represents 500,000 small-scale farmers who produce approximately 60 percent of the country's tea output, said drought in recent weeks is driving down tea output. As a result, processing factories are receiving fewer deliveries from fields each week. If below-average rainfall continues, the agency warned there could be a major shortage of tea in the coming months. For more information, click [here](#).

On March 12<sup>th</sup>, Al Shabaab militants detonated a car bomb outside of regional government headquarters in Baido and stormed the compound, killing six Somali police officers. In the aftermath of the attack, Al Shabaab confirmed three of its fighters were killed. In addition, Al Shabaab claimed responsibility for the killing of 12 Ethiopian soldiers with the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). The full story can be read

[here](#).

On March 12<sup>th</sup>, Girma Seifu, Deputy President of the Unity for Democracy and Justice (UDJ) and the only opposition member of Ethiopia's parliament, announced he would not run in the May election and his party will not field candidates because of state meddling in the party's leadership. In 2005, 174 opposition politicians won seats in the 547-member parliament, but many opted not to serve because they felt the vote was rigged. Girma was the only opposition member elected in 2010. More information was posted [here](#).

### **West Africa**

On March 5<sup>th</sup>, an IMF mission completed a visit to Lome, Togo. The team discussed economic policy priorities with senior government officials, including President Faure Gnassingbe, and the donor community, and assessed macroeconomic developments. IMF staff found Togo's economic growth remained strong at about five percent and inflation was close to zero in 2014. The mission and authorities also had constructive discussions on key reform priorities, including revenue administration and public financial management. Additional information was provided [here](#).

On March 8<sup>th</sup>, in recognition of International Women's Day, the African Development Bank's Women's Network (AfDBWN) announced the first laureate of its Women's Scholarship Fund (WSF), Jeanne Dina Kitoko of Chad. The scholarship funding will allow Kitoko to continue her studies at the Department of Geography at the University of Moundou, which will help Kitoko achieve her goal of becoming a meteorologist. A press release was published [here](#).

On March 10<sup>th</sup>, Simone Gbagbo, Ivory Coast's former first lady, was sentenced to 20 years in prison on charges of undermining state security. Gbagbo's lawyer has already indicated they will appeal. Her husband, former President Laurent Gbagbo, currently awaits trial before the International Criminal Court (ICC) for charges that include murder, rape, and persecution. For details on the trial, click [here](#).

On March 11<sup>th</sup>, U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein urged the Government of Cote d'Ivoire to ensure justice for victims of serious human rights abuses that occurred prior to and during the 2011 conflict in the country. High Commissioner Zeid's plea came as guilty verdicts against numerous supporters of former President Laurent Gbagbo for offense against the state and its institutions were filed. Cote d'Ivoire's 2010 presidential election resulted in months of violence, which included several thousand deaths and numerous human rights violations. Feedback from the U.N. was posted [here](#).

On March 11<sup>th</sup>, Guinea's Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) announced the country will hold its first round of presidential elections on October 11<sup>th</sup>. Incumbent President Alpha Conde is largely viewed as the frontrunner in the presidential contest. According to the CENI, the decision on the date for the presidential election means that local council elections will be pushed back until next year. Opposition parties said the move breaks an agreement that local council elections would be held before the presidential vote. The elections news was shared [here](#).

### **Sub-Saharan Africa**

On March 5<sup>th</sup>, IMF First Deputy Managing Director David Lipton delivered remarks at the University of Cape Town on South Africa's Challenges and Opportunities for Reform. Despite global economic challenges, Deputy Managing Director Lipton said there is reason to remain hopeful about sub-Saharan Africa, which remains the second fastest growing region after developing Asia. Even with the reduced demand for commodities and slower growth among emerging markets, Deputy Managing Director Lipton said most countries in the region are expected to maintain high growth rates in 2015. His remarks were transcribed [here](#).

On March 6<sup>th</sup>, IMF First Deputy Managing Director David Lipton concluded his visit to South Africa. Deputy Managing Director reported on his meetings with Finance Minister Nhlanhla Nene, Minister for Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs Pravin Gordhan, and South Africa Reserve Bank Governor Lesetja Kganyago. He observed South Africa holds great promise and opportunity, but at the same time faces challenges in accelerating job growth, creating jobs, and reducing inequality. Deputy

Managing Director Lipton's remarks on his visit to South Africa were transcribed [here](#).

On March 7<sup>th</sup>, IMF First Deputy Managing Director David Lipton ended his trip to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). During his visit to the DRC, Deputy Managing Director Lipton met with Prime Minister Augustin Matata Ponyo Mapon, Minister of Finance Henri Yav Muland, Governor of the Central Bank Deogratias Mutombo Mwana Nyembo, members of parliament, and representatives of business and civil society. He also met with faculty and students at the Protestant University in Congo, visited the Kimbondo Orphanage, and spoke with students at the Gombe public school. Upon concluding his trip, Deputy Managing Director Lipton reiterated the IMF's commitment to assisting the DRC in meeting its development goals. His trip to the DRC was detailed [here](#).

On March 8<sup>th</sup>, Zambian President Edgar Lungu collapsed after delivering a speech at an International Women's Day event in Lusaka. President Lungu was rushed to a military hospital and his staff released a statement saying he was receiving treatment for malaria. However, on Monday, President Lungu's assistant, Amos Chandra, said medical tests ruled out a full malaria infection and suggested instead that low sugar levels had led to his collapse. President Lungu has a history of a condition that narrows his esophagus, leading to low sugar levels. He is expected to receive treatment abroad for his condition. The full story is available [here](#).

On March 9<sup>th</sup>, the IMF highlighted the first annual Presidential Lecture Series that recently featured Mauritian President Rajkeswur Purryag and IMF African Department Director Antoinette Sayeh. The lecture brought together policymakers from frontier emerging market countries, including Gabon, Ghana, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritius, Nigeria, Swaziland, and Zambia. Participants addressed a range of issues, including foreign exchange intervention policy, benefits of and pre-conditions for greater exchange rate flexibility, select aspects of prudential regulation and supervision, and transmission mechanisms of monetary policy in underdeveloped financial markets. The lecture was highlighted [here](#).

On March 9<sup>th</sup>, an IMF mission completed a visit to Zimbabwe to conduct the first review under the 15-month Staff Monitored Program (SMP) approved in November 2014. The mission reached a staff-level agreement on policies for the completion of the first review and will submit a report for IMF management approval in April. In general, IMF staff observed that despite substantial economic and financial activities, Zimbabwean authorities have made progress in implementing their reform program and have taken important steps toward reengaging with international financial institutions. A press release was issued [here](#).

On March 10<sup>th</sup>, the ruling coalition in the Republic of Congo (ROC) announced it will seek a constitutional reform that would allow current President Denis Sassou Nguesso to seek another term in next year's election. Currently, the 2002 constitution limits presidential terms to two, and does not allow any candidates over the age of 70 to run for election. President Nguesso is 71 and will soon complete his second term in office. More information can be found [here](#).

On March 10<sup>th</sup>, Zambian President Edgar Lungu, elected in January, announced plans to travel to South Africa for additional medical tests. President Lungu became sick over the weekend after a suspected narrowing of his esophagus. For details, click [here](#).

On March 10<sup>th</sup>, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) in South Africa announced it would submit its wage demands for the coal and gold sector by the end of the month. With the two-year agreement expiring in June, the NUM is assembling this week to draft demands and seek member approval before submitting a final version. An article on the upcoming wage negotiations can be read [here](#).

On March 11<sup>th</sup>, a U.N. Security Council delegation traveled to the CAR to assess the progress made in stabilizing the country and the first months of operation of the U.N. peacekeeping operation, the U.N. Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the CAR (MINUSCA) set up last year. The delegation was scheduled to meet with transitional authorities, including President Catherine Samba-Panza, as well as representatives of civil society and the diplomatic corps. The delegation's trip to the CAR was outlined [here](#).

On March 11<sup>th</sup>, Vuyo Mvoko of South Africa's national broadcaster SABC, one of the country's best known television journalists, was mugged on camera as he waited to go on air. Mvoko was outside of a

Johannesburg hospital to report on the arrival of Zambian President Edgar Lungu for treatment when he was attacked by two muggers, including one who threatened him with a gun when he did not want to give up his mobile phone. Police reported the robbers took laptops and mobile phones and that officers were investigating the incident. The full story is available [here](#).

On March 11<sup>th</sup>, South Africa's Sibanye Gold said 11 workers at its Beatrix mine faced arrest after an investigation by the mine's security services and police into a conflict between rival unions in February. The Beatrix mine was closed for two days following clashes between the NUM and the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU). Six workers have been charged with attempted murder, while five others were charged with assault. The findings of the investigation were announced [here](#).

On March 12<sup>th</sup>, South African President Jacob Zuma resisted demands by his political opposition that he pay back some of the money used in a \$23 million state-funded security upgrade to his home. According to President Zuma, the government had yet to decide whether he should do so. Public Prosecutor Thuli Madonsela indicated the police would determine exactly how much money President Zuma should refund. In addition, President Zuma continued to deflect criticism surrounding the security upgrades to his home, arguing they were necessary to protect South Africa's head of state. For details, click [here](#).

On March 12<sup>th</sup>, Zimbabwean Minister of Mines Walter Chidhakwa told a committee of parliament that all diamond mining companies, including the local unit of Rio Tinto, will be merged into one big firm in which the state will own half of the shares. The government had previously said it wanted to merge some of the diamond companies operating in the Marange area to enhance transparency. Minister Chidhakwa said the government plans to use the value of the companies' equipment to determine their shareholding. More information can be seen [here](#).

### **General Africa News**

On March 10<sup>th</sup>, the Airport Service Quality (ASQ) Awards were announced, identifying the best airports in Africa based on key services areas, including how easy it is to access the airport, the check-in experience, security, airport facilities, food and drink options, and shopping availability. Mauritius' Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport in Port Louis took top honors, followed by the Durban, Cape Town, and Johannesburg airports in South Africa, and the airport in Nairobi, Kenya. More information was shared [here](#).

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