



## ML Strategies Update

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## Africa Update

### Leading the News

#### **South Sudan**

On February 27<sup>th</sup>, United Nations (U.N.) Humanitarian Coordinator Toby Lanzer accompanied a World Health Organization (WHO) delegation on a visit to a teaching hospital in Malakal, South Sudan that is treating many victims of the recent violence. The delegation also visited the Christ the King Church, which had provided refuge to roughly 800 internally displaced persons (IDPs) before they were transferred to the U.N. Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) base in Malakal. More information can be found [here](#).

On February 28<sup>th</sup>, State Department Spokesperson Jen Psaki indicated that loyalists to South Sudanese President Salva Kiir and forces of former Deputy President Riek Machar continue to perpetuate violence in South Sudan, despite the fact that a cessation of hostilities agreement remains in place. Spokesperson Psaki also reiterated U.S. Government support for ongoing peace talks held under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Ethiopia. Comments from Spokesperson Psaki were transcribed [here](#).

On March 4<sup>th</sup>, the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) warned that new fighting in South Sudan could displace tens of thousands of additional people and make it even more difficult to provide humanitarian assistance to children. Approximately 900,000 people, nearly half of them children, have been forced out of their homes by violence. UNICEF also noted that renewed fighting occurs in violation of the cessation of hostilities agreement signed by the South Sudanese Government and opposition forces in January. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On March 4<sup>th</sup>, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) noted shortfalls in its \$1.27 billion funding request for support for displaced persons and refugees fleeing South Sudan. UNHCR estimates there are more than 739,000 people displaced internally within South Sudan and that another 196,921 have sought refuge in neighboring countries. UNHCR also urged that food security continues to be a challenge in South Sudan. More information can be seen [here](#).

On March 5<sup>th</sup>, a gunfight broke out at South Sudanese army barracks in Juba, leaving at least five soldiers dead. Allegedly, firefight broke out in response to a dispute over the new procedure for distributing salaries, which requires soldiers to receive their pay in person. The policy was implemented to ensure the South Sudanese Government was not paying "ghost soldiers." It is speculated that some of the soldiers involved were members of South Sudanese President Salva Kiir's presidential guard, the

Tiger Division. The incident was reported [here](#).

On March 5<sup>th</sup>, U.N. Humanitarian Coordinator Toby Lanzer was interviewed on developments in South Sudan. Coordinator Lanzer issued an extreme warning, expressing his concern that South Sudan could collapse by the end of the year if more is not done to address the ongoing crisis. In addition, Coordinator Lanzer expressed frustration that more progress has not been made in the past three months and noted that a real ceasefire agreement is needed and that peace talks in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, must be successful. Excerpts from the interview were posted [here](#).

### **Central African Republic**

On February 28<sup>th</sup>, the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) called for immediate and intensive mediation in the Central African Republic (CAR) where retaliatory killings continue between Christian and Muslim communities. Should mediation fail, OHCHR suggested religious groups may need to be evacuated to safer locations or secured passage to refugee sites in Cameroon or the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Details are available [here](#).

On March 4<sup>th</sup>, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon proposed a 12,000 strong peacekeeping force in the CAR that would be tasked with protecting civilians, disarming armed groups, and ensuring access for humanitarian assistance. Secretary-General Ban speculated this mission could be deployed within six months to complement 6,000 African Union (AU) troops and 2,000 French troops currently providing support in the CAR. The proposal was detailed [here](#).

On March 4<sup>th</sup>, UNHCR appealed for increased support to assist refugees fleeing violence in the CAR. According to UNHCR, 701,500 people are internally displaced in the CAR and an additional 290,801 have fled the country as refugees, many of them to Chad. In addition, UNHCR estimates half of the country's population is in need of humanitarian assistance. Feedback from UNHCR was shared [here](#).

### **Egypt**

On March 4<sup>th</sup>, the *New York Times* reported that Medea Benjamin, Founder of Code Pink, an organization that actively protests U.S. military actions, was detained and assaulted by Egyptian police at the airport in Cairo. The Egyptian Foreign Ministry denied Benjamin's account of the incident, noting that Benjamin, who was traveling to Gaza for a meeting, was stopped because the Gaza border crossing is closed. After refusing to board a return flight to the U.S., Benjamin was forced on to a flight destined for Istanbul, Turkey. The full story was reported [here](#).

On March 4<sup>th</sup>, State Department Spokesperson Jen Psaki responded to questions about Code Pink Founder Medea Benjamin's detention at the Cairo airport. Spokesperson Psaki said U.S. consular officers in Egypt are in contact with Benjamin and providing appropriate assistance. Spokesperson Psaki's comments are available [here](#).

On March 5<sup>th</sup>, six of 20 defendants in the Egyptian trial against *Al Jazeera* journalists accused of supporting deposed President Mohamed Morsi appeared for a hearing. Many of the defendants remain on the run or in hiding. During the hearing, the defendants said they had been tortured during their detention and denied medical care. Details were noted [here](#).

### **Libya**

On March 3<sup>rd</sup>, the U.N. Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) condemned the attacks that occurred Sunday against the Libyan General National Congress (GNC). Rioters and armed gunmen stormed the parliament building, killing a guard, setting furniture on fire, and wounding at least six lawmakers. Following the attack, the GNC's operations were moved to a hotel in Tripoli. The full story was shared [here](#).

On March 4<sup>th</sup>, the State Department issued a statement condemning the March 2<sup>nd</sup> attack on Libya's GNC headquarters. The State Department expressed support for Libyan efforts to bring the perpetrators of the attack to justice and pledged continued support for Libya's transition to democracy. The full statement can be seen [here](#).

On March 6<sup>th</sup>, Libyan Prime Minister Ali Zeidan's office issued a statement announcing that Niger had

extradited Saadi Gadhafi, the son of Muammar Gadhafi, to Libya, where he arrived on Thursday and is being held in prison in Tripoli. Gadhafi, who had fled to Libya following the uprising against his father, faces charges of alleged corruption and armed intimidation as head of the Libyan Football Federation. The full story can be viewed [here](#).

## **United States – Africa Relations**

### ***White House***

On February 28<sup>th</sup>, President Barack Obama notified Congress of his intent to extend the national emergency with respect to the Government of Zimbabwe and Zimbabwean individuals seeking to undermine Zimbabwe's democratic transition beyond March 6<sup>th</sup>. In his message to Congress, President Obama said certain actions and policies of the Zimbabwean Government continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the foreign policy of the U.S. President Obama's message to Congress can be seen [here](#). The *Federal Register* notice extending the national emergency with respect to Zimbabwe was published [here](#).

On March 4<sup>th</sup>, President Barack Obama unveiled his FY15 budget request. The budget request proposes significant investments to promote U.S. interests in Africa, including funding to support democratic transitions in North Africa, to put U.S. Government tools to use on energy infrastructure projects in sub-Saharan Africa through the Power Africa initiative, and to continue initiatives in Africa to build youth leadership and reduce poverty through economic growth. The full FY15 budget request can be downloaded [here](#).

### ***State Department***

On February 26<sup>th</sup> - March 5<sup>th</sup>, State Department Counselor Thomas Shannon was on foreign travel to Abuja and Lagos, Nigeria and to Monrovia, Liberia. While in Nigeria, Counselor Shannon led the U.S. delegation to Nigeria's Centenary, where he met with Nigerian Government officials and other world leaders. In Lagos, Counselor Shannon participated in events with Nigerian youth. Following his visit to Nigeria, Counselor Shannon traveled to Monrovia to open the second meeting of the U.S.-Liberia Partnership Dialogue. More information on Counselor Shannon's travel can be seen [here](#).

On February 27<sup>th</sup>, Secretary of State John Kerry spoke with Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni to express disappointment with the Ugandan Government's decision to enact the anti-homosexuality legislation. Secretary Kerry said the decision complicates the U.S. relationship with Uganda and poses a threat to Uganda's lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community. Secretary Kerry and President Museveni also discussed the law's impacts on public health, including HIV/AIDS initiatives, tourism, and foreign direct investment in Uganda. A readout of the call was shared [here](#).

On February 27<sup>th</sup>, the State Department issued its annual country report on human rights. In issuing the report, Secretary Kerry called attention to discriminatory laws and practices impacting members of the LGBT community, including in Nigeria and Uganda. Secretary Kerry also noted human rights violations in South Sudan and the CAR, which he said are rooted in cycles of violence stemming from past abuses and marginalization. A transcript of Secretary Kerry's remarks can be viewed [here](#).

On February 28<sup>th</sup>, Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Uzra Zeya met with President of Tunisia's Nahda Party Rached Ghannouchi at the Department of State. The meeting was included on the State Department's daily appointment schedule, which was posted [here](#).

On March 3<sup>rd</sup>, Secretary of State John Kerry issued a press statement in recognition of World Wildlife Day. Secretary Kerry addressed the need for conservation efforts to protect wild rhinos and elephants, especially those outlined in the National Strategy for Combating Wildlife Trafficking, released by President Barack Obama last month. Secretary Kerry also applauded Togolese authorities for seizing more than four tons of illegal ivory in February. Secretary Kerry's full statement can be read [here](#).

On March 4<sup>th</sup>, the State Department announced U.S. Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region of Africa and the DRC Russ Feingold's travel this week to Europe, Rwanda, and the DRC. In London and The Hague, Secretary Hagel was scheduled to meet with donor partners, including the Great Lakes Contact Group, to discuss next steps in supporting the Peace, Security, and Cooperation Framework

peace process, including Angola's facilitation of a regional dialogue during its chairmanship of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, implementation of the Nairobi Declarations, and Uganda's anti-homosexuality law. In Rwanda, Special Envoy Feingold will meet with government officials and Congolese refugees before traveling to the DRC for meetings focused on armed groups, community reconciliation and peacebuilding initiatives. Secretary Feingold's travel was announced [here](#).

On March 4<sup>th</sup>, Deputy Secretary of State Heather Higginbottom, joined by First Lady Michelle Obama, presented ten women with the 2014 Secretary of State's International Women of Courage Award. 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. Among this year's awardees were Fatimata Toure of Mali and Beatrice Mtetwa of Zimbabwe. Additional information on the honorees was shared [here](#). Remarks delivered at the awards ceremony were transcribed [here](#).

On March 4<sup>th</sup>, Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights Sarah Sewall delivered remarks to the U.N. Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland. In her remarks, Under Secretary Sewall called attention to examples of interreligious fighting in Africa, including in the CAR and Libya. She also discussed the importance of LGBT rights and noted U.S. opposition to anti-homosexuality laws in Nigeria and Uganda. Under Secretary Sewall's speech is available [here](#).

On March 5<sup>th</sup>, Secretary of State John Kerry issued a press statement in recognition of Ghana's National Day. Secretary Kerry said the U.S.-Ghana partnership is strong due to a shared commitment to democratic values, rule of law, and economic development. He also indicated the U.S. will continue to assist Ghana in meeting the millennium development goals (MDGs) through President Obama's Young African Leaders, Power Africa, and Partnership for Growth initiatives. Secretary Kerry's full statement was issued [here](#).

On March 6<sup>th</sup>, while on foreign travel to Rome, Italy, Secretary of State John Kerry met with Libyan Prime Minister Ali Zeidan and President of the Libyan GNC Abu Sahmain. Secretary Kerry then participated in a conference on International Support to Libya and attended a meeting with Heads of Delegations participating in the conference. Also in Italy, Secretary of State Kerry met separately with Egyptian Foreign Minister Nabil Fahmy. Secretary Kerry's appointments in Rome were outlined [here](#).

### ***U.S. Agency for International Development***

On February 28<sup>th</sup>, the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) Impact blog featured a post GE's involvement with the Power Africa initiative. As part of the initiative, GE is issuing more than 20 \$100,000 grants to African organizations with off-grid solutions that help power economic activity. GE's awards to Mibawa Suppliers of Kenya and to Green Village Energy (GVE) Group of Nigeria were detailed [here](#).

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

On March 2<sup>nd</sup>, the U.S. Navy's high-speed vessel USNS Spearhead departed Rota, Spain, for West Africa to participate in a series of training exercises with African partners in the region. For the remainder of its deployment, the Spearhead will support partnership-building and maritime security efforts off the coast of West Africa and in the Gulf of Guinea as part of Africa Partnership Station (APS). The goal of APS is to improve the interoperability of regional partners. More information on the Spearhead's deployment can be found [here](#).

On March 3<sup>rd</sup>, Joint Special Operations Task Force Trans Sahara Command Public Affairs reported on the Niger Armed Forces' participation in training exercises on airborne supply delivery as part of Flintock 2014. The goal of the exercise was to train the Nigerian forces to resupply themselves, which will allow them to forward stage to intercept the Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) movement. An article on the training exercises can be read [here](#).

On March 3<sup>rd</sup>, the North Dakota National Guard (NDNG) announced plans to broaden its participation in the National Guard's Bureau State Partnership Program (SPP) through new partnerships with Togo and Benin. Using these partnerships, the SPP promotes access, enhances military capabilities, and improves interoperability among ten different African partner nations. The new partnerships were

announced [here](#).

On March 3<sup>rd</sup>, U.S. Army Africa (USARAF) provided information on the recent deployment of USARFF medical personnel to Lesotho to conduct medical readiness training with the Lesotho Defense Forces. The medical exercise, MEDRETE 14, provided medical treatment for more than 400 patients in Lesotho and enhanced capabilities and interoperability on education, treatment, and management of infectious diseases. Details were provided [here](#).

On March 3<sup>rd</sup>, U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) announced the first nine graduates of recent civil affairs (CA) training conducted in Dakar, Senegal. The CA training was focused on preparing Senegalese forces to work with civilian populations and community leaders to support military operations, including medical and education needs. The recently completed CA training in Senegal was highlighted [here](#).

On March 4<sup>th</sup>, AFRICOM reported on the opening ceremonies that were recently held by U.S. military and U.S. Embassy personnel in Djibouti for the opening of a new health clinic in Sankal. The health clinic was created through collaboration between Djibouti's Ministry of Health, USAID, and the Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA). The \$322,000 facility includes a maternity center, living quarters for nurses, an incinerator, and three cisterns. The clinic will also be powered by solar energy. More information was shared [here](#).

On March 4<sup>th</sup>, as part of AFRICOM's guest speaker series, humanitarian activist and author Amanda Lindhout visited AFRICOM headquarters in Stuttgart, Germany. During her presentation to AFRICOM personnel, Lindhout recounted her experience being held as a captive in Somalia and how it inspired her to found her charitable organization, the Global Enrichment Foundation. Lindhout's story is available [here](#).

On March 5<sup>th</sup>, the Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS) published an article on a workshop recently held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, that brought together U.S. Government officials and African partners to discuss strategies for countering messaging from violent extremists in the Horn of Africa. Workshop participants discussed the drivers of extremism, face-to-face messaging, identifying credible voices, and crafting alternative communications to terrorist messages. The workshop was detailed [here](#).

On March 5<sup>th</sup>, the *New York Times* reported that rather than launching strikes against resurgent militant groups in Africa, such as Al Qaeda affiliates, Boko Haram, and Al Shabaab, the U.S. military is increasingly providing humanitarian and training assistance. Because of tight budgets at home, the Obama Administration is beginning to use military assets to focus on increasing the capabilities of African forces to meet their own security threats and to provide assistance to European allies that have deployed forces in Africa. The full article can be accessed [here](#).

### ***U.S. Trade and Development Agency***

On February 23<sup>rd</sup> – March 5<sup>th</sup>, the U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) hosted a delegation of 12 Libyan power sector officials on a visit to the U.S. to participate in the Natural Gas-Fired Power Generation Reverse Trade Mission (RTM). While in the U.S., delegates met with U.S. companies to gain exposure to U.S. technologies, equipment, and services that can support efforts to expand and modernize electricity generation in Libya. More information can be found [here](#).

### ***Department of Justice***

On March 5<sup>th</sup>, the Department of Justice (DOJ) announced a freeze on the assets of former Nigerian dictator Sani Abacha, including \$313 million in the Balliwick of Jersey and \$145 million in France. DOJ officials also indicated plans to pursue additional holdings, estimated to amount to \$100 million in the United Kingdom (U.K.). In November 2013, DOJ filed a lawsuit seeking the recovery of laundered money from overseas bank accounts. Details are available [here](#).

### ***Congress***

On February 27<sup>th</sup>, Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Robert Menendez (D-NJ) issued a statement on the annual Country Report on Human Rights issued by the State Department. Senator

Menendez expressed concern for the torture, killing, and abuse of civilians in South Sudan, the CAR, and the DRC by both rebels and government forces. He also noted restrictions placed on freedom of expression in Kenya and Ethiopia. Senator Menendez's full statement can be read [here](#).

On February 27<sup>th</sup>, House Foreign Affairs Africa Subcommittee Ranking Member Karen Bass (D-CA) released a statement following the House Foreign Affairs Committee's passage of the Electrify Africa Act of 2013. As an original co-sponsor of the bill, Representative Bass noted that two thirds of sub-Saharan Africa lacks access to electricity, with negative impacts on education and health care. She said the bill passed by the Committee will accelerate sub-Saharan Africa's economic growth, boost education, and alleviate poverty by providing first-time electricity access to at least 50 million people by 2020. Representative Bass's statement was released [here](#).

On March 2<sup>nd</sup>, Senate Foreign Relations African Affairs Subcommittee Chairman Chris Coons (D-DE) appeared on *MSNBC* to discuss actions the U.S. might take to combat the anti-LGBT law recently enacted by Uganda. Senator Coons suggested the U.S. may scale back assistance for police training, open up asylum for Ugandans fleeing oppression, and consider sanctions or visa denials for those who incite violence against the LGBT community in Uganda. The full interview can be watched [here](#).

On March 6<sup>th</sup>, the Senate Armed Services Committee held a hearing to review AFRICOM's FY15 budget request. AFRICOM Commander General David Rodriguez appeared before the Committee. An archived webcast of the hearing can be viewed [here](#).

### **North Africa**

On February 27<sup>th</sup>, U.N. Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery Gulnara Shahinian concluded a visit to Mauritania. While applauding the creation of a special tribunal to prosecute crimes of slavery in the country, Special Rapporteur Shahinian called on officials in Mauritania to more aggressively implement laws and policies previously passed to combat slavery. Additional observations from Special Rapporteur Shahinian's trip to Mauritania were noted [here](#).

On February 28<sup>th</sup>, the Embassy of Morocco in Washington, DC, held a discussion on challenges in Africa and how African countries are cooperating to confront them. Speakers included Ambassador of Gabon to the U.S. Michael Moussa-Adamo, Ambassador of Morocco to the U.S. Rachad Bouhlal, J. Peter Pham of the Atlantic Council, and Joe Grieboski of the Institute for Religion and Public Policy. Event details were shared [here](#).

On February 28<sup>th</sup>, following a World Bank delegation's visit to Tunisia to meet with government officials, the World Bank announced a new \$1.2 billion program to assist with the country's democratic transition. The program includes \$750 million to support economic reforms, \$300 million to build the capabilities of local governments, \$100 million that will be used to provide credit for small and medium sized enterprises in Tunisia, \$50 million for export promotion, and \$20 million for municipal planning activities. The new program was described [here](#).

On March 2<sup>nd</sup>, the World Bank provided information on the effectiveness of the Egypt Emergency Labor Intensive Investment Project. Intended to address waning tourism and growing unemployment in the Luxor region, the program has created about a quarter of a million person-days in jobs. More information is available [here](#).

On March 3<sup>rd</sup>, protests broke out in Mauritania's capital of Nouackchott after news spread that four unidentified men had entered a local mosque and proceeded in desecrating copies of the Koran. Violence escalated quickly, leading police forces to disperse tear gas to break up the mob. One person who was hit by an exploding tear gas canister was killed in the incident. A full report can be seen [here](#).

On March 3<sup>rd</sup>, the AU-U.N. Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) expressed concern for reports of looting, arson, and civilian casualties resulting from violence in Um Gunya. UNAMID also believes that fighting has increased the number of people seeking refuge at the Al Salam and Kalma camps. UNAMID also called for peacekeepers to have unhindered access to areas where fighting has been reported. Details were provided [here](#).

On March 4<sup>th</sup>, after calling for high voter turnout in upcoming elections, Algerian President Abdelaziz

Boutefilka registered his candidacy in April's presidential election with Algeria's Constitutional Council. In response to announcing his candidacy, opposition leaders in Algeria expressed concern that President Boutefilka, who recently turned 77 and suffered a stroke last year, is not well enough to govern for a fourth term. More information can be seen [here](#).

On March 5<sup>th</sup>, Moroccan King Mohammed VI arrived in Libreville, Gabon, as part of his visit to West and Central Africa. During his trip, King Mohammed has promoted Morocco's business and religious ties to other regions in Africa. He has along signed roughly 20 separate trade agreements, including with Mali and Algeria. An article on King Mohammed's travels can be read [here](#).

### **East Africa**

On February 27<sup>th</sup>, the U.N. Security Council condemned last week's terrorist attack in Mogadishu, Somalia, which killed at least 12 people and wounded several others. The Security Council also expressed deep concern for a number of terrorist attacks perpetrated by Al Shabaab and underscored their determination to support all international efforts aimed at ending the threat posed by the terrorist group. The Security Council's reaction to last week's attack was detailed [here](#).

On February 27<sup>th</sup>, OHCHR criticized a tabloid newspaper in Uganda for publishing the names and photos of the country's 200 top homosexuals. OHCHR said the move violated the basic rights to privacy and dignity of those who appeared on the list and could encourage harassment. Additionally, OHCHR called on other media outlets to refrain from similar actions. Feedback from OHCHR was highlighted [here](#).

On February 28<sup>th</sup>, in response to Uganda's enactment of anti-homosexuality legislation, the World Bank suspended a planned \$90 million loan to Uganda that was to be used to strengthen the country's health care system. World Bank officials said the loan is on hold until it can be determined how the new law will impact development objectives. In response to the World Bank's decisions, as well as announcements that Denmark, the Netherlands, and Norway will also limit aid to Uganda, Ugandan Government Spokesman Ofwono Opondo said Uganda can make do without Western aid. The full story is available [here](#).

On March 2<sup>nd</sup>, Kenyan actress Lupita Nyong'o won the Oscar for best supporting actress for her portrayal of Patsy in "12 Years a Slave." In her acceptance speech, Nyong'o, who is Kenyan born and Yale educated, said the award should remind every child that no matter where they come from, their dreams are valid. Excerpts from Nyong'o's speech can be seen [here](#).

On March 3<sup>rd</sup>, U.N. Special Representative to Somalia Nicholas Kay urged all parties to exercise restraint following the conclusion of a federal state-building conference in Baidoa, Somalia. Special Representative Kay suggested stakeholders to pursue inclusive political dialogue and noted the situation in Baidoa demonstrates the need to accelerate the federal state-building process in Somalia. Comments from Special Representative Kay were shared [here](#).

On March 5<sup>th</sup>, the U.N. Security Council reached a unanimous agreement to extend a partial arms embargo on Somalia through October 25<sup>th</sup>. In the resolution, the Security Council acknowledged concerns that Al Shabaab and other armed groups in Somalia have been successfully diverted arms intended to reach Somali Government forces. The arms embargo, initially implemented in 1992, was partially lifted last year with the goal of building the capacity of Somali forces to counter Al Shabaab. Information on the arms embargo can be viewed [here](#).

### **West Africa**

On February 26<sup>th</sup>, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) issued a summary of a recent IMF mission to Contou, Benin. The IMF team met with President Boni Yayi, Minister of Economy and Finance Jonas Gbiam, and Minister of Economic Analysis, Development, and Planning Marcel de Souza. The IMF delegation found that 2013 gross domestic product (GDP) growth was strong, with a growth rate of 5.6%. The IMF also forecast strong macroeconomic growth in 2014 and encouraged Benin to address its energy and transportation infrastructure deficits and to improve public financial management. The delegation's trip was summarized [here](#).

On February 28<sup>th</sup>, U.N. Independent Expert on human rights in Mali Suliman Baldo concluded a trip to Mali, where he met with senior government officials, including the Minister of Justice, the Attorney General, and the General staff of the armies of Mali. Independent Expert Baldo observed shortcomings in Mali's justice system, and called on the international community to help Mali strengthen institutions to prosecute crimes committed in 2012. Independent Expert Baldo's findings can be viewed [here](#).

On February 28<sup>th</sup>, U.N. Independent Expert on minority issues in Nigeria Rita Iszak said that strong and inclusive governance is important for ensuring protection of minority rights and peaceful coexistence in Nigeria. Nigeria is home to more than 250 ethnic groups and languages. Independent Expert Iszak called on the Nigerian Government to pursue measures that fully implement Nigerians' constitutional rights to equality, unity, and belonging. Comments from Independent Iszak can be found [here](#).

On February 28<sup>th</sup>, U.N. Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights Magdalena Sepulveda concluded her first visit to Guinea-Bissau. Special Rapporteur Sepulveda called on officials in Guinea-Bissau to focus on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable individuals in the country. She also highlighted that women in Guinea-Bissau are disproportionately challenged by lack of access to health care and education. More information on Special Rapporteur Sepulveda's visit to Guinea-Bissau was posted [here](#).

On March 2<sup>nd</sup>, an advisor to Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan said that President Jonathan is looking to collaborate with Nigeria's neighbors and the international community to exchange intelligence and combat the terrorist threat posed by Boko Haram. President Jonathan's office also expressed its commitment to holding negotiations with Boko Haram in hopes of ending the violence. Comments from President Jonathan's advisor, Reuben Abati, can be seen [here](#).

On March 2<sup>nd</sup>, after Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan suspended him from his position as Central Bank Governor, Lamido Sunusi began to publically discuss allegations of corruption within President Jonathan's Administration. Sunusi warned that Nigeria will never achieve its full potential as long as corruption continues and called for Nigerians to question their government officials are fulfilling their duties. The full story was reported [here](#).

On March 4<sup>th</sup>, the U.N. Office for West Africa (UNOWA) released a statement condemning attacks carried out by unidentified armed groups in Nigeria's Borno state over the weekend and demanding an end to attacks against innocent civilians. The attacks left at least 80 people dead in a region that continues to be prone to violent attacks launched by extremist group Boko Haram. More information can be seen [here](#).

On March 5<sup>th</sup>, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon appeared in Freetown, Sierra Leone with Sierra Leonean President Ernest Bai Koroma to mark the transition of the U.N. Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) into a development-focused U.N. presence, as opposed to a political mission. Secretary-General Ban noted the transition is recognition that Sierra Leone has made significant progress towards peace and stability in its post-conflict era. Details are available [here](#).

### **Sub-Saharan Africa**

On February 27<sup>th</sup>, ahead of the upcoming April 7<sup>th</sup> observance of the Rwandan genocide, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon welcomed the launch of Kwibuka 20, a series of events to commemorate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the tragedy. In launching the program, Secretary-General Ban urged the international community to continue to implement the lessons learned when 800,000 people were killed during the genocide. The Kwibuka 20 initiative was described [here](#).

On February 27<sup>th</sup>, the World Bank's Board of Executive Directors approved additional emergency financing to help address the food insecurity facing more than 13 million people as a result of locust infestation and drought. The International Development Association (IDA) approved a \$65 million credit to assist those in Madagascar working in the agricultural sector. Under the Emergency Support to Critical Education, Health, and Nutrition Services project, the World Bank also approved a new \$10 million credit to expand nutrition services for 2.6 million people. The new emergency funding was announced [here](#).

On February 27<sup>th</sup>, the IMF completed the fourth review under the Extended Credit Facility (ECF)



arrangement for Burundi and approved a disbursement of \$7.7 million. The IMF observed that economic recovery in Burundi is continuing to achieve momentum following food and fuel shocks and forecasted economic growth at a rate of 4.7% in 2014. More information can be found [here](#).

On February 28<sup>th</sup>, after having only received close to 4% of a \$48.5 million funding request for food assistance in the DRC, the U.N. World Food Programme (WFP) announced it will need to ration food assistance in the country. Assistance will be scaled back to internally displaced persons in North Kivu province so that limited resources can be focused on the most acutely insecure, conflict-affected areas. The WFP's rationing of food assistance in the DRC was detailed [here](#).

On March 1<sup>st</sup>, executives from Disney, Paramount, Warner Bros, and the Producers Guild completed a visit to South Africa for meetings with government officials and industry stakeholders focused on the potential for future filmmaking opportunities in the country. The delegation also visited the set of the new "Avengers" movie, which is currently filming in Johannesburg. An article on the interest in filmmaking in South Africa can be read [here](#).

On March 2<sup>nd</sup>, the *Christian Science Monitor* reported that Zambia is beginning to push back against investments from Chinese and Indian firms that have ignored safety standards and labor laws and operated without transparency. The World Bank ranks Zambia as the seventh most attractive African country to do business with, especially as Zambia has implemented a number of policy to promote foreign investment, such as tax holidays. The full report can be accessed [here](#).

On March 3<sup>rd</sup>, South African Olympian Oscar Pistorius pleaded not guilty to charges that he murdered his girlfriend, Reeve Steenkamp, last year. While Pistorius and his legal team plan to argue that Pistorius shot Steenkamp because he thought she was an intruder, the prosecution intends to make the case that Pistorius shot Steenkamp during an argument. The start of the trial was noted [here](#).

On March 3<sup>rd</sup>, following its participation in a mission with DRC defense forces targeting the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) in the DRC over the weekend, the U.N. Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) called on the armed group to lay down its weapons. U.N. Special Representative to the DRC Martin Kobler said there must be an end to ADF's attacks against innocent civilians in the DRC. Comments on ADF can be seen [here](#).

On March 4<sup>th</sup>, *USA Today* reported that former U.S. Congressman Mel Reynolds (D-IL) is hiding in South Africa after being deported from Zimbabwe for violating the country's immigration laws. Congressman Reynolds claims that he is being chased by a Zimbabwean death squad because of information he retains on U.S. businessmen who were conducting illegal deals with Zimbabwe. The full story was reported [here](#).

### **General Africa News**

On February 28<sup>th</sup>, W Hospitality Group unveiled new research on the future of the hospitality industry in Africa. According to the research, at least 136,000 jobs will be created in Africa's hospitality sector this year. In North Africa, it is projected 115,000 jobs will be created in five countries over the next three years. In sub-Saharan Africa, job growth is anticipated to reach 165,000 across 23 countries. Additional statistics are available [here](#).

On March 3<sup>rd</sup>, Executive Director of the U.N. Environment Programme (UNEP) Achim Steiner issued a statement in recognition of Africa Environment Day. In his comments, Executive Director Steiner urged African nations to focus on their transition to the green economy as a means to address food insecurity. In particular, he highlighted opportunities for solar power in Algeria and Tunisia, as well as investments in green funds in sub-Saharan Africa. Executive Director Steiner's remarks were posted [here](#).

On March 3<sup>rd</sup>, Facebook expressed interest in purchasing Titan Aerospace, a manufacturer of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), for \$60 million as part of its effort to deploy technologies that can bring Internet access to five billion people who lack Internet connectivity around the world. Facebook officials indicated if the acquisition goes through, Facebook would prioritize deploying UAVs to Africa to increase Internet access. More information can be found [here](#).

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