



## ML Strategies Update

David Leiter, [djleiter@mlstrategies.com](mailto:djleiter@mlstrategies.com)  
Georgette Spanjich, [gmspanjich@mlstrategies.com](mailto:gmspanjich@mlstrategies.com)  
Nora West, [nawest@mlstrategies.com](mailto:nawest@mlstrategies.com)

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ML Strategies, LLC  
701 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20004 USA  
202 296 3622  
202 434 7400 fax  
[www.mlstrategies.com](http://www.mlstrategies.com)

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## Africa Update

### Leading the News

#### **Libya**

On June 18<sup>th</sup>, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations (U.N.) Samantha Power reported on the U.S. action to capture Ahmed Abu Khattalah in a letter to the President of the U.N. Security Council, Vitaly Churkin. Ambassador Power explained that Khattalah would face trial in the U.S. Federal Court system. She also justified the U.S. action as in accordance with the U.S.'s inherent right to self-defense. The full text of the letter can be read [here](#).

On June 21<sup>st</sup>, the *Washington Post* reported that the prosecution of captured terrorist Ahmed Abu Khattalah will serve as a landmark case for the U.S. Attorney's Office in Washington. The office has relatively little experience in trying terrorism suspects, with authorities in New York and Virginia typically handling some of the most high profile cases. Meanwhile, the U.S. Attorney's Office in Washington indicated that it has filed more cases against suspected terrorists in the past three years than any of their counterparts nationwide, although many of those cases remain sealed. More information was reported [here](#).

On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, the U.N. Security Council released a statement emphasizing the importance of free and fair parliamentary elections to Libya's transition to a stable democracy. They also expressed concern for the worsening the security situation and recommended that all divisions be resolved through the political process. Libya's parliamentary elections were held on June 25<sup>th</sup>. The full text of the statement can be read [here](#).

On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, senior American officials reported that Ahmed Abu Khattalah was cooperating with Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) questioning. The officials also confirmed that, as of the afternoon of June 19<sup>th</sup>, Khattalah had not been read his Miranda rights. The interrogation accentuates the FBI's increasing focus on information gathering rather than court-admissible evidence. The full story can be read [here](#).

On June 25<sup>th</sup>, Libya held parliamentary elections to select the 200-member Council of Representatives to succeed the General National Congress (GNC). As the polls opened, U.N. Special Representative to Libya and head of the U.N. Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) Tarek Mitri commended the High National Elections Commission for its organization of the vote and called on all Libyans to express their

will by casting their ballots. More information on the opening of the polls can be found [here](#).

## **Nigeria**

On June 19<sup>th</sup>, a U.S. congressional delegation (CODEL) just returning from Nigeria held a press conference on their visit to Chibok for briefings related to the ongoing threat of Boko Haram throughout the region. Participants included Congressman Steve Stockman (R-TX), Congresswoman Frederica Wilson (D-FL), Congresswoman Sheila Jackson-Lee (D-TX), Congresswoman Lois Frankel (D-FL), and Congressman Louie Gohmert (R-TX). The delegation met with survivors of attempted Boko Haram kidnappings and the parents of the girls who remain missing. Information on the trip is available [here](#).

On June 21<sup>st</sup>, approximately 60 girls and women and 30 boys were abducted from the village of Kummabza, Nigeria. Witnesses in the area said that Boko Haram was responsible for the kidnappings. Nigerian authorities did not immediately confirm the abduction. The kidnapping took place in the same region as the April Boko Haram kidnapping of more than 200 schoolgirls. Details were reported [here](#).

On June 21<sup>st</sup>, armed men attacked the Kwaranglum village in northeastern Nigeria, burning homes and killing civilians. The attack occurred in the same district where more than 270 schoolgirls were kidnapped in April. After the attack, the fighters escaped to the village of Ntsiha. More information is available [here](#).

On June 21<sup>st</sup>, Ekiti State, Nigeria, held its gubernatorial elections. The U.S. Embassy and international observers determined that the election was fair and credible. Mr. Ayo Fayose won the election and the incumbent, Governor Kayode Fayemi, has agreed to aid Governor-Elect Fayose in the transition period. The U.S. Department of State issued a statement congratulating Governor-Elect Fayose and all Nigerians for a fair and free election. The full statement can be viewed [here](#).

On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, a Nigerian Medical school in Kano was bombed, resulting in the deaths of at least eight people. Although no group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack, the terrorist group Boko Haram has attacked other targets in the area. The Kano State police confirmed that one suspect was detained. More information was shared [here](#).

On June 24<sup>th</sup>, *Stars and Stripes* suggested that U.S. Special Operations forces have not engaged in a rescue attempt to free the more than 200 schoolgirls kidnapped by Boko Haram in Nigeria for a number of political, practical, logistical, and organizational reasons. While acknowledging that there would be a humanitarian benefit to such a rescue attempt, U.S. officials are wary of the ways that such an operation could go wrong and that it might instigate Boko Haram to target U.S. interests. The full article can be found [here](#).

On June 25<sup>th</sup>, an explosion at the taxi stand in front of EMAB Plaza, a shopping mall in Abuja, Nigeria, killed 21 people and wounded 17 others. Nigerian soldiers immediately responded to the scene and gunned down a suspect that was carrying another explosives-laden bag on a power bike that was later defused by an anti-bomb squad. Two additional suspects were arrested in conjunction with the attack and are being held at a military facility. The incident was described [here](#).

On June 25<sup>th</sup>, following the U.N.'s decision last month to add Boko Haram to the U.N. Al Qaeda sanctions lists, the U.N. Security Council moved to sanction the leader of Boko Haram in Nigeria, Abubakar Shekau, as an individual, as well as Boko Haram splinter group Ansaru. Shekau and Ansaru will be banned from international travel and their assets will be frozen. More information can be seen [here](#).

On June 26<sup>th</sup>, *The Hill* reported that the Government of Nigeria has hired Washington-based public relations and lobbying firm Levick to assist in the Government's efforts to mobilize international support in fighting Boko Haram as part of the global war on terror. The \$1.2 million engagement is also aimed to address public perceptions in the U.S. that Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan has not done enough to combat Boko Haram and to rescue the schoolgirls who were abducted in April. More information was posted [here](#).

## **Egypt**

On June 22<sup>nd</sup>, Secretary of State John Kerry traveled to Cairo, Egypt, as part of his broader trip to the

Middle East and Europe. During his previously unannounced trip to Egypt, Secretary Kerry met with Egyptian President General Abdul Fattah Al-Sisi, Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry, and Arab League head Nabil Elaraby, and facilitated a roundtable discussion with a group of civil society members. Secretary Kerry was joined by National Security Staff (NSS) Senior Director for Middle East and North Africa Prem Kumar, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Egypt and Maghreb Affairs William Roebuck, State Department Spokesperson Jen Psaki, and Vice Admiral Kurt Tidd of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS). Notably, during his trip to Cairo, Secretary Kerry said he is confident that Egypt will receive its Apache helicopters soon, following the recent release of \$572 million in U.S. aid. A background briefing on Secretary Kerry's trip to Egypt was provided [here](#). Secretary Kerry's remarks with Foreign Minister Shoukry after their meeting were transcribed [here](#).

On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, an Egyptian Court sentenced *Al Jazeera* journalists Peter Greste and Mohamed Fahmy to seven years in prison and Baher Mohamed to ten years in prison for reporting false news and aiding the Muslim Brotherhood. In addition to the sentencing of the three journalists, Egypt also convicted 16 Egyptians accused of being Muslim Brotherhood members, some of whom were tried in absentia and who now face up to 25 years in prison. Also on Monday, a separate Egyptian court sentenced another 80 Muslim Brotherhood supporters to life in prison on charges ranging from murder, to hindering police, and blocking streets. The full story is available [here](#).

On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon expressed deep concern about recent Egyptian court decisions, particularly the death sentences for 183 people and the sentencing of journalists. Secretary-General Ban also emphasized that the proceedings are likely to undermine the prospects for long-term stability in Egypt. A statement issued by Secretary-General Ban's office can be read [here](#).

On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, the Office of the White House Press Secretary issued a statement condemning the verdicts rendered against three *Al Jazeera* journalists and 15 other defendants in Egypt. The White House called on the Egyptian Government to pardon these individuals or commute their sentences so they can be released immediately, and grant clemency for all politically motivated sentences. In addition, the White House urged Egyptian President Abdul Fattah Al-Sisi to provide protections for free expression and assembly. The full statement can be accessed [here](#).

On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, following a call with Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry issued a press statement on the conviction of three *Al Jazeera* journalists and 15 others in a Cairo Criminal Court trial, which U.S. officials believe lacked due process. Secretary Kerry said the long term success of Egypt and its people depends on the protection of universal human rights and that the verdict flies in the face of the essential role of civil society, a free press, and rule of law. Secretary Kerry's statement on the sentencing can be viewed [here](#).

On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, a court in Minya, Egypt, convicted a Christian reporter, Bishoy Armia, of promoting sectarianism. He was sentenced to five years in prison. Egyptian newspaper *Al Ahram* reported that Armia contacted an American television station to depict Christians as victims of persecution. The full story can be viewed [here](#).

On June 24<sup>th</sup>, Egyptian President Abdul Fattah Al-Sisi said that he will not interfere in the judicial rulings against journalists in Egypt. President Sisi called on critics to respect the judicial rulings and not to criticize them even if they do not completely understand. Without political intervention, the lengthy appeals process for the recent verdicts may not begin until October. Developments related to the recent court rulings were noted [here](#).

On June 24<sup>th</sup>, Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Patrick Leahy (D-VT) issued a statement in response to the sentencing of several journalists in Egypt. Senator Leahy said that the U.S. should withhold any further aid to Egypt until it demonstrates a basic commitment to justice and human rights. Senator Leahy's statement can be read [here](#).

On June 24<sup>th</sup>, the *Washington Post* Editorial Board ran an op-ed criticizing Secretary of State John Kerry's recent trip to Egypt to visit with President Abdul Fattah Al-Sisi. The article suggests that Egypt's sentencing of journalists to long prison sentences immediately after Secretary Kerry's visit shows that the U.S. has failed to obtain Egypt's real commitment to protecting human rights. The full op-ed can be accessed [here](#).

## **Sudan**

On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, Meriam Yahya Ibrahim Ishag, a Christian woman in Sudan, was released from prison and had her death sentence overturned after a successful appeal of her apostasy conviction. Sudan's penal code criminalizes the conversion of Muslims to other religions. The full story is available [here](#).

On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry issued a press statement welcoming the decision by the Sudanese Appeals Court to order the release of Meriam Yahya Ibrahim Ishag. Secretary Kerry also reiterated calls for the Government of Sudan to repeal its laws that are inconsistent with its 2005 Interim Constitution, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Secretary Kerry's statement can be seen [here](#).

On June 24<sup>th</sup>, following reports that Meriam Yahya Ibrahim Ishag and her family has been detained at the airport in Khartoum, U.S. State Department Deputy Spokesperson Marie Harf confirmed that the State Department had been informed by the Sudanese Government that Ishag and her family had been temporarily detained for several hours for questioning over issues related to their travel documents. The Sudanese Government assured U.S. Government officials of their safety. Deputy Spokesperson Harf added that the U.S. Embassy will remain highly engaged with Ibrahim, her family, and Sudanese Government officials to ensure their safe passage out of Sudan. Deputy Spokesperson Harf's comments were transcribed [here](#).

## **Central African Republic**

On June 17<sup>th</sup> -21<sup>st</sup>, U.S. Special Representative for the Central African Republic (CAR), W. Stuart Symington traveled to Bangui, CAR. In Bangui, Special Representative Symington met with officials from the transitional government, the Transitional National Council, the U.N., the African Union (AU), the European Union (EU), the Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA), and the U.N. Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the CAR (MINUSCA). Special Representative Symington highlighted U.S. support for all efforts that seek to restore stability and security through the promotion of accountability, reconciliation, and democratic governance. A travel summary can be found [here](#).

On June 18<sup>th</sup>, CAR President Catherine Samba-Panza requested that the International Criminal Court (ICC) open an investigation into the inter-communal violence that has taken place in the CAR since mid-2012. The ICC announced in February that it would be investigating crimes committed in the CAR since September 2012. ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda said that a decision on whether cases will be brought to the world court would be issued soon. More information on the ICC investigation can be read [here](#).

On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, the U.S. announced \$51 million in additional humanitarian aid to support refugees in the CAR. The funding will respond to immediate needs for clean water, food, and emergency health services of the most vulnerable refugee populations. In total, the U.S. has contributed \$118 million of aid to the CAR in FY14. In the funding announcement, the State Department underscored a commitment to ending human suffering in the CAR. The full State Department announcement can be viewed [here](#).

On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 22 people were killed in fighting between Muslim ex-Seleka and Christian anti-Balaka elements. The fighting broke out after a group of ex-Seleka rebels encountered a Christian mob that was attempting to block their attack. A local security official also reported that 127 homes were burned. Full details on the clashes can be seen [here](#).

On June 24<sup>th</sup>, head of U.N. Women Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka reported to the U.N. Security Council on her recently completed mission to the CAR with AU Special Envoy for Women, Peace, and Security Bineta Diop. She expressed concern for widespread reports of rape, sexual slavery, and forced marriages perpetrated by armed groups and urged the U.N. to take actions to help restore rule of law. She also called on U.N. entities to help increase women's participation, leadership, and protection. Excerpts from the briefing were highlighted [here](#).

## **Kenya**

On June 18<sup>th</sup>, Kenyan security forces killed five suspects in last week's Mbeketoni attacks. A senior

Kenyan military official reported that other suspects with the five who were killed escaped. The full story is available [here](#).

On June 20<sup>th</sup>, the U.S. issued an updated travel warning for Kenya, warning U.S. citizens of the risks of travel to the country. In addition, the State Department indicated it may move some staff from the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi to U.S. diplomatic posts in other countries following the recent string of attacks along Kenya's coast. More information is available [here](#).

On June 21<sup>st</sup>, U.S. Ambassador to Kenya Robert Godec issued a press statement on security in Kenya in response to the State Department's decision to modify its travel warning for Kenya. Ambassador Godec clarified that the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi is not closing and noted that only modest staffing changes are being made that will not affect the U.S. commitment or assistance to Kenya. In addition, Ambassador Godec said that American citizens have been advised about the security situation in Kenya, but no travel ban has been imposed. Comments from Ambassador Godec can be seen [here](#).

On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, Kenyan fighter jets attacked Al Shabaab bases and killed at least 80 Al Shabaab fighters. Meanwhile, Al Shabaab denied that any of its fighters were killed. The airstrikes were in response to recent Al Shabaab attacks near Lamos Island. No civilians were injured in the strikes. Details can be read [here](#).

On June 24<sup>th</sup>, five people were killed by unknown attackers in the Taa village near Mbeketoni, Kenya, the village where 65 people were killed last week. No one has claimed responsibility for the attack. Witnesses report that unlike the attack in Mbeketoni, the attackers did not use guns, but rather machetes and other crude weapons. More information can be seen [here](#).

## **United States – Africa Relations**

### ***White House***

On June 19<sup>th</sup>, the White House announced the U.S. is cutting aide to Uganda, imposing visa restrictions, and canceling a regional military exercise in response to Uganda's enactment of its controversial anti-homosexuality law. The decision means a stop on \$2.4 million of U.S. support for a Ugandan community policing program, \$3 million for a planned national public health institute, and a shift in some funding that had been used to finance the salaries and travel of some Ugandan Health Ministry officials. The decision was announced [here](#).

On June 20<sup>th</sup>, President Barack Obama issued a press statement in recognition of World Refugee Day. President Obama noted that there are now more refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced persons than at any time since World War II, and in particular said that recent conflicts in the CAR and South Sudan have each forced over a million people to flee. In addition, President Obama highlighted that the U.S. provides more overseas humanitarian assistance and admits more refugees for permanent resettlement than any other nation. President Obama's full statement on World Refugee Day was posted [here](#).

On June 20<sup>th</sup>, the White House announced the release of the U.S. Counter Piracy and Maritime Security Action Plan. The Office of the White House Press Secretary noted that the U.S. has organized and led the international effort that has seen successful pirate attacks decline off the coast of Somalia dramatically. The full plan can be downloaded [here](#).

On June 24<sup>th</sup>, the Office of the Vice President announced that Dr. Jill Biden will travel to Zambia, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Sierra Leone from June 30<sup>th</sup>-July 7<sup>th</sup>, with U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Administrator Rajiv Shah and U.S. Ambassador-At-Large for Global Women's Issues Catherine Russell. During their travel, Dr. Biden, Administrator Shah, and Ambassador Russell will highlight how girls' education and women's participation in government, the economy, and civil society can accelerate economic development, improve health and education outcomes, strengthen democratic governance, and foster peace and security. The White House announcement was shared [here](#).

### ***State Department***

On June 16<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup>, Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources Heather Higginbottom was on foreign travel to Senegal, Kenya, and Liberia. While in Dakar, Deputy Secretary Higginbottom met with senior Senegalese officials, including Prime Minister Aminata Toure and Minister of Economy and Finance Amadou Ba. In Nairobi, Deputy Secretary Higginbottom met with senior Kenyan Government officials to discuss a range of issues of mutual interest in the U.S.-Kenya partnership, such as health, wildlife conservation, economic development and commercial ties, and security. During her last stop in Monrovia, Deputy Secretary Higginbottom met with President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and other Liberian officials. Deputy Secretary Higginbottom's complete travel itinerary was released [here](#).

On June 18<sup>th</sup>, Secretary of State John Kerry spoke at the World Food Prize Ceremony. Secretary Kerry specifically mentioned the potential for the Feed the Future initiative and the New Alliance initiatives to aid agricultural productivity in Africa. He also mentioned the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit being planned for the first week of August, which will include discussions on agricultural productivity and malnutrition. The Secretary's full remarks can be seen [here](#).

On June 18<sup>th</sup>, the International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law (IJJ) began its inaugural session. The IJJ will provide counter-terrorism training and support for collective efforts in North, West, and East Africa and the Middle East. The IJJ already has a training workshop scheduled for the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) U.N. initiative designed to build a judicial cooperation network for the investigation and prosecution of counter-terrorism cases in the Sahel and Maghreb regions. More information can be read [here](#).

On June 19<sup>th</sup>, Acting U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. for Special Political Affairs David Dunn gave the U.N. Security Council a briefing on peace and security in Africa. Ambassador Dunn focused on issues in the Sahel and the need to address extremist issues with international coordination. In particular, he said the ongoing work of the Ministerial Coordination Platform must be supported. Ambassador Dunn also said that humanitarian issues need to be addressed in order to stop the recruitment of young men and women to terrorist groups, and long-term solutions are needed for nutrition, education, and employment problems. Ambassador Dunn's full remarks can be seen [here](#).

On June 20<sup>th</sup>, Secretary of State John Kerry issued a press statement in recognition of World Refugee Day. Noting that the number of refugees and asylum seekers worldwide now totals 51 million people, Secretary Kerry specifically called attention to the dire situations for refugees in South Sudan and the CAR, as well as the assistance the U.S. has provided for humanitarian operations. Secretary Kerry's remarks on World Refugee Day were transcribed [here](#).

On June 20<sup>th</sup>, the State Department's Bureau of Public Affairs released a fact sheet for World Refugee Day. The fact sheet highlighted the level three U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) emergencies. Level three emergencies have been declared in South Sudan and the CAR. The fact sheet is available [here](#).

On June 20<sup>th</sup>, the State Department released the 2014 Trafficking in Persons Report. Secretary of State John Kerry delivered remarks in conjunction with the release of the report, which was also attended by Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights Sarah Sewall, Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs Evan Ryan, and Ambassador-At-Large to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons Luis CdeBaca. In a briefing on the report, Ambassador CdeBaca specifically mentioned the Sudanese enactment of a human trafficking law and Chad's efforts to stop the recruitment and use of child soldiers. Ambassador CdeBaca also said that the U.S. is closely examining mining practices in North Africa. Secretary Kerry's remarks were posted [here](#). Ambassador CdeBaca's remarks were shared [here](#).

On June 20<sup>th</sup>, Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and International and Environmental and Scientific Affairs Judith Garber met with a Tanzanian Delegation headed by Member of Parliament from Mafia Island and Vice Chairman of the Tanzania Tourist Board Abdulkarim Shah, at the Department of State. The meeting was listed [here](#).

On June 20<sup>th</sup>, the State Department issued a media note on the completion of a government-wide Counter Piracy and Maritime Security Action Plan. Since 2009, the U.S. has pioneered the international effort to counter pirate attacks off the coast of Somalia. The recently completed Counter Piracy and maritime Security Action Plan focuses on prevention of attacks, response to acts of maritime crime,

enhancing maritime security and governance, and providing specific frameworks for the Horn of Africa and the Gulf of Guinea. The Plan's objectives were further outlined [here](#).

On June 20<sup>th</sup>, State Department Spokesperson Jen Psaki issued a press statement condemning the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) aerial bombardment in Southern Kordofan and reiterating calls for the Government of Sudan to stop engaging in violence against its own citizens. The State Department noted that increased military activity in Southern Kordofan since May has killed, wounded, and displaced civilians and damaged public and humanitarian infrastructure, including schools and medical facilities. The full statement can be read [here](#).

On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield participated in a briefing hosted by the Women's Foreign Policy Group. The discussion centered on U.S. foreign policy challenges and opportunities in Africa. Event logistics can be accessed [here](#).

On June 24<sup>th</sup>, State Department Counselor Tom Shannon met with United Kingdom (U.K.) Ambassador-designate to Egypt John Casson at the Department of State. The meeting was included on the State Department's daily appointed schedule, which can be found [here](#).

On June 24<sup>th</sup>, Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs Charles Rivkin delivered the keynote address at the American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham) Annual U.S.-Egypt Business Council Doorknock Mission in Washington, DC. As part of the Mission, AmCham delegations met with U.S. Administration officials, congressional members, think tanks, and media representatives in order to communicate Egypt's economic reform process, real GDP growth, and success story as an emerging economy. More information can be viewed [here](#).

On June 24<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield was on foreign travel to Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, to lead the U.S. delegation's participation in the 23<sup>rd</sup> AU Summit. While in Malabo, the delegation will engage African leaders on a number of issues of mutual concern and update leaders on preparations for the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit to be hosted by President Barack Obama in Washington, DC, on August 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>. Assistant Secretary Thomas-Greenfield's travel was noted [here](#).

On June 25<sup>th</sup>, Secretary of State John Kerry issued a press statement congratulating Mozambique on the celebration of its national day. Secretary Kerry noted that his wife was born and raised in Maputo, where her father worked as a doctor treating sick children from poor families. In addition, Secretary Kerry recognized Mozambique as a longstanding partner of the U.S. in working to ensure peace, progress, and prosperity, and to strengthen democracy, promote economic growth, and combat wildlife trafficking and other transnational crimes. Secretary Kerry's statement can be found [here](#).

On June 25<sup>th</sup>, Secretary of State John Kerry provided remarks acknowledging Madagascar's independence day and noting that this year's anniversary is the first since Madagascar's return to democratic rule. Secretary Kerry encouraged the newly elected government to show its commitment to the Malagasy people by governing with transparency and respect for human rights and rule of law. Secretary Kerry's comments were issued [here](#).

On June 26<sup>th</sup>, State Department Counselor Tom Shannon attended a reception in honor of the National Day of Egypt, held in Washington, DC. Counselor Shannon's participation in the celebration was noted [here](#).

On June 26<sup>th</sup>, the State Department published over 80 Investment Climate Statements for 2014. The Statements are intended to provide U.S. companies with country, region, and economy-specific information and assessments of investments laws, measures, and other factors that are helpful in making international business decisions. Investment Climate Statements for Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, the DRC, the Republic of Congo (ROC), Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, the Gambia, Ghana, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mauritania, Mozambique, and Tunisia can be accessed [here](#).

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

On June 17<sup>th</sup>, USAID announced 17 new coastal programs at the Our Ocean 2014 conference. The

coastal programs will support local communities, promote sound and equitable economics, and conserve critical ecosystem goods and services for long term use and human well-being. Ghana will receive funding for the reduction of the over-exploitation of marine resources and the Feed the Future Initiative. More information on the programs can be seen [here](#).

On June 19<sup>th</sup>, USAID Senior Advisor for International Education Christie Vilsack authored a post for USAID's *Impact Blog* on her recent visit to Lusaka, Zambia. While in Zambia, Senior Advisor Vilsack visited the Lubuto Library, which, thanks to assistance from the USAID All Children Reading Grand Challenge, has been able to implement new literacy programs that are aligned with the new Zambian reading curriculum. The blog post is available [here](#).

On June 24<sup>th</sup>, Director of the USAID Office of Food for Peace Dina Esposito and Director of the USAID Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Jeremy Konyndyk detailed USAID's efforts to help combat food insecurity now that hunger season has arrived in the Sahel region of West Africa. Building on lessons learned from the 2012 Sahel crisis, USAID has undertaken new efforts to build resilient communities, provide access to banking services, educate the public on health and sanitation, utilize innovative food aid tools, and prevent child malnutrition. Details were posted [here](#).

On June 25<sup>th</sup>, USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah attended the "Acting on the Call: Ending Preventable Child and Maternal Deaths" forum co-hosted in Washington, DC, by the Governments of Ethiopia and India, in collaboration with the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. At the forum, Administrator Shah announced the realignment of \$2.9 billion of USAID resources to help save as many as 50 million children from preventable deaths by the end of 2015. In addition, Administrator Shah unveiled a new action plan for addressing child and maternal deaths, as well as \$600 million in public-private partnerships and awards with 26 partners and representatives from the governments of all 24 priority countries. The new initiatives were detailed [here](#).

On June 25<sup>th</sup>, Communications Advisor in USAID's Bureau for Global Health Chris Thomas posted on USAID's *Impact Blog* about the importance of granting girls access to health care, nutrition, education, and jobs skills training around the world. He noted that the recent kidnapping of Nigerian schoolgirls by Boko Haram has helped to focus global attention on the significance of girls' education, and described the goal of USAID's Let Girls Learn initiative to elevate conversations about the need to support all girls in their pursuit of quality education. In addition, USAID has announced more than \$230 million for new programs to support education around the globe. More information can be seen [here](#).

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

On June 19<sup>th</sup>, *Stars and Stripes* reported on the return of the African Partnership Flight exercise, held this year in Senegal. While the inaugural event was held in Ghana in March 2012, further exchanges were delayed until this year as a result of sequestration. This year's event has attracted approximately 150 participants from Senegal, Togo, Ghana, Benin, Mauritania, Nigeria, Nigeria, and Burkina Faso. U.S. African Partnership Flight, developed by Air Force Africa (AFAFRICA), is meant to strengthen U.S. Africa Command's (AFRICOM) security cooperation programs by growing relationships among countries with air forces of varying capabilities operating in Africa. The full article can be read [here](#).

On June 19<sup>th</sup>, *Defense News* ran an article describing the pivot of the Department of Defense's (DOD) counterterrorism mission toward Africa and the focus on intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) to address challenges on the continent. This is especially the case as U.S. Special Operations forces are being deployed to more austere environments and are expected to collaborate with African allies that are limited in their communications and surveillance capabilities. More information was shared [here](#).

On June 19<sup>th</sup>, AFRICOM Commander General David Rodriguez met with AFRICOM component commanders for the annual AFRICOM Component Commanders' Conference held at AFRICOM headquarters in Stuttgart, Germany. The event was attended by commanders, deputy commanders, and command senior enlisted leaders from U.S. Naval Forces Africa, U.S. Marine Forces Africa, U.S. Army Africa, U.S. Air Forces Africa, Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA), and Special Operations Command Africa. The leaders discussed current issues in Africa, future challenges, and existing programs focused on building partner capabilities on the continent. Details were provided [here](#).



On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, U.S. Army Africa reported on the recently completed Medical Readiness Training Exercise 14-5 held at the Hospital Military D'Instruction (HMI) in N'Djamena, Chad. The exercise was intended to build relationships between the Chadian military medical team of doctors, nurses, surgeon, and medics and to assist U.S. providers in treating patients, seeing patients, and operating in an austere medical environment. The exercise was described [here](#).

On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, AFRICOM Public Affairs noted that approximately 100 scholars and security experts from Ghana, Nigeria, Guinea, Botswana, Cameroon, the DRC, Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Kenya, Senegal, and Burkina Faso are gathering at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center in Accra, Ghana, this week to discuss security cooperation on the continent. The theme for the symposium is "Perspectives and Partners on Population-Centric Security Sector Transformation." More information is available [here](#).

On June 24<sup>th</sup>, AFRICOM announced the details of the U.S. Army Exercise Western Accord 14. Western Accord is an AFRICOM sponsored and U.S. Army Africa hosted joint training exercise between the U.S., the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and partner nations. During the exercise, U.S. Marines worked with armies from Ghana, Senegal, and Burkina Faso to improve capabilities for peacekeeping operations, such as cordon and search, protection of civilians, crowd management, internally displaced person protection, and entry/traffic control point. The details can be viewed [here](#).

On June 24<sup>th</sup>, AFRICOM, U.S. Army Africa, and the Namibian Defense Force kicked off a week-long Gender Mainstreaming Seminar in Windhoek, Namibia. With participants from Namibia, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Zambia, the seminar was organized to provide information sessions ranging from laws and leadership to sexual harassment and sexual assault prevention. The seminar was detailed [here](#).

On June 24<sup>th</sup>, Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 74 Detail Horn of Africa transferred authority to NMCB 133 during a ceremony at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti. NMCB 74 will return to Gulfport, Mississippi, and will decommission on July 25<sup>th</sup>, making this the unit's final deployment. During their tour to CJTF-HOA, NMCB 74 completed a storage warehouse for protecting equipment and assisted other units with construction and logistics support. More information on the transfer of authority can be seen [here](#).

On June 25<sup>th</sup>, the National Defense University's Center for Technology and National Security Policy hosted a forum on President Barack Obama's Power Africa initiative. Speakers included Director of the Center for Technology and National Security Policy Linton Wells, Oversight Executive for Building Partnerships programs at the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering Elmer Roman, and Deputy Coordinator for Power Africa and Trade Africa initiatives Don Niss. Additional presenters included Gabino Guerengomba of Integrated Solar Technologies, Melinda Kershaw of Day and Night Solar, Michelle Lacourciere of Sirona, and Scott Sklar of The Stella Group. Event details were shared [here](#).

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

On June 20<sup>th</sup>, the U.S. Department of Commerce's *Commerce Blog* featured a post on Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker's swearing in of 24 new Foreign Commercial Services Officers and one Intellectual Property Attaché. According to the blog post, the Department's International Trade Administration (ITA) will add a total of 68 new positions and open offices in five new countries, including in Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Tanzania. The full blog post can be seen [here](#).

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

On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, the U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) awarded a grant to Botswana's Ministry of Minerals, Energy, and Water Resources (MMEWR) to enhance the agency's partnership with Botswana under its Global Procurement Initiative (GPI): Understanding Best Value. The grant will fund two senior advisors to help MMEWR receive the best value for its money in upcoming water and energy procurements. The grant was announced [here](#).

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

On June 25<sup>th</sup>, *The Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) Blog* highlighted the 2014 Africa Attractiveness Survey, recently released by Ernst & Young. This year's survey, which measures foreign direct investment (FDI) into the continent, as well as investors' perceptions and actual investment levels, showed that Africa and Asia are tied in second place, just behind North America, as the world's best investment destinations. The blog post can be accessed [here](#). The full survey can be downloaded [here](#).

### **Millennium Challenge Corporation**

On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) announced that new MCC CEO Dana Hyde would make her first trip abroad to Namibia and South Africa this week. In Namibia, CEO Hyde joined Namibian Minister of Education David Namwandi at an official ceremony to hand over schools in the country's Kavango region. In South Africa, CEO Hyde met with business leaders from companies focusing on investments in energy, infrastructure, and technology in Johannesburg. CEO Hyde's visit to Namibia was detailed [here](#). Her visit to South Africa was noted [here](#).

On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, the MCC's *Poverty Reduction Blog* featured a post on the success of the Agriculture Development Project, which is part of Burkina Faso's \$480.9 million compact with MCC. The initiative has focused on helping livestock producers practice techniques that aim to increase value through improved animal husbandry techniques. The blog post can be read [here](#).

### **Congress**

On June 17<sup>th</sup>, Senator Rand Paul (R-KY) introduced the Egyptian Military Coup Act of 2014. If enacted, the bill would prohibit direct assistance to the Government of Egypt because of the July 3, 2013 military coup. The full text of the bill can be seen [here](#).

On June 19<sup>th</sup>, Representative David Cicilline (D-RI) introduced a bill to impose sanctions against foreign persons responsible for gross violations of internationally recognized human rights against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals. The legislation was referred to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on the Judiciary. Representative Cicilline's bill has 17 co-sponsors. Details can be found [here](#).

On June 24<sup>th</sup>, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee held a business meeting to vote on the nomination of Ambassador Robert Beecroft to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Egypt. The Committee also marked up and reported the Energize Africa Act, introduced by Senators Robert Menendez (D-NJ), Bob Corker (R-TN), Chris Coons (D-DE), Johnny Isakson (R-GA), and Ed Markey (D-MA) last week. The business meeting was noticed [here](#). A press release on the passage of the Energy Africa Act was issued [here](#).

On June 24<sup>th</sup>, the House Appropriations Committee met to markup its FY15 state and foreign operations spending bill. During the markup, Congressman Adam Schiff (D-CA) offered an amendment to reduce Egypt's aid package by 30% and to redistribute some money to support education and democracy programs. The amendment was defeated in Committee by a vote of 35-11, but Congressman Schiff indicated he will introduce the amendment again when the bill is debated on the House floor. A recording of the markup can be viewed [here](#).

On June 25<sup>th</sup>, the House Foreign Affairs Middle East and North Africa Subcommittee held a hearing titled, "Libya at a Crossroads: A Faltering Transition." The Committee received testimony from Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Anne Patterson and Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs Derek Chollet. A recording of the hearing can be accessed [here](#).

On June 26<sup>th</sup>, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee held a nominations hearing. The Committee received testimony on Alfonso Lenhardt's nomination to serve as USAID Deputy Administrator and Marcia Denise Occomy's nomination to serve as U.S. Executive Director of the African Development Bank (AfDB). A webcast of the hearing can be watched [here](#).

On July 10<sup>th</sup>, House Foreign Affairs Africa Subcommittee Ranking Member Karen Bass (D-CA), along with Ranking Member Chris Smith (R-NJ), full Committee Ranking Member Eliot Engel (D-NY), and Senate Foreign Relations African Affairs Subcommittee Chairman Chris Coons (D-DE) will host an Africa Policy Breakfast on "Instability in Northern Nigeria and the ongoing threat of Boko Haram." Event details

were posted [here](#).

## **North Africa**

On June 21<sup>st</sup>, Mauritania held its presidential elections. It has been predicted that the incumbent, Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, will win because most opposition parties boycotted the election. Voter turnout was varied, but was strong in the capital's poorer outskirts. More details can be seen [here](#).

On June 24<sup>th</sup>, the Atlantic Council's Rafik Hariri Center for the Middle East and the Energy and Environment Program hosted a two-panel discussion on "Egypt's Looming Energy Crisis: Short Term Responses for Energy Security." Speakers included Mihaela Carstei, Mohsin Khan, and Mirette Mabrouk of the Atlantic Council, State Department Economic Advisor Joshua Volz, Cairo University Professor Mohamed Sobki, and Mokhtar Awad of the Center for American Progress (CAP). Details were shared [here](#).

On June 25<sup>th</sup>, the Center for National Policy (CNP) hosted four members of the American Chamber of Commerce in Egypt (AmCham Egypt) to discuss Egypt's economy, especially anticipated reforms following Egypt's recent presidential elections. The panelists were part of a 40-member delegation that is visiting Washington, DC, June 23<sup>rd</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>. Event details were posted [here](#).

## **East Africa**

On June 21<sup>st</sup>, U.N. Special Representative to Somalia and head of the U.N. Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) Nicholas Kay condemned the murder of radio journalist Yusef Kenyan in Mogadishu, and urged Somali authorities to bring the perpetrators of the attack to justice. Kenyan was killed when an explosive device attached to his vehicle detonated in the city's Hamarwyne District. Special Representative Kay's condemnation of the attack was shared [here](#).

On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, the World Bank Group announced a \$4 million Governance for Private Sector Development Project in Djibouti. The goal of the project is to assist the Government of Djibouti's efforts to attract foreign investment and improve the local business climate by strengthening mechanisms to address commercial disputes, easing access to finance, and expanding the capacity of the National Agency for Investment Promotion (ANPI) for project management and implementation. The project was announced [here](#).

On June 24<sup>th</sup>, U.N. officials praised an agreement reached in Mogadishu, Somalia, to form a new Interim South West Administration for the regions of Bay, Bakool, and Lower Shabelle. U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and U.N. Special Representative to Somalia and head of UNSOM Nicholas Kay noted the agreement is a significant step forward in Somalia's progress towards federalism that is likely to enhance security and regional efforts to combat Al Shabaab. Details on the agreement were reported [here](#).

On June 24<sup>th</sup>, at the U.N. Environment Assembly in Nairobi, Kenya, the U.N. Environment Program (UNEP) and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) released a new report titled, "The Environmental Crime Crisis: Threats to Sustainable Development from Illegal Exploitation and Trade in Wildlife and Forest Resources." The report finds that transnational environmental crime, worth about \$213 billion annually, is financing criminal and militia terrorist groups and threatening the security and sustainable development of many countries in sub-Saharan Africa. For example, the report finds terrorist groups in Mali, the CAR, the DRC, Sudan, and Somalia may earn as much as \$289 annually from the illegal charcoal trade. The full report can be downloaded [here](#).

On June 24<sup>th</sup>, the World Bank issued its biannual economic updated for Tanzania in Dar Es Salaam. The report finds that Tanzania could create large numbers of new, productive jobs for its people, especially youths, if policymakers fostered industrial and business policies that catered to the country's growing cities. On the whole, the report finds that Tanzania's economy is expected to continue its steady growth of approximately 7% per year. The report's main findings were highlighted [here](#).

On June 25<sup>th</sup>, *Reuters* reported that authorities in Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda have issued a solicitation for a single consultant to oversee a feasibility study and initial design for the construction of a 1,300 kilometer oil pipeline to transport crude oil to the coast. The consultant would also be required to oversee the construction of a fiber optic cable originating in Uganda and through tank terminals in

Kenya. An article on the solicitation can be read [here](#).

## **West Africa**

On June 18<sup>th</sup>, Malian prisoners attempted a prison escape. One of the escapees was Mahamed Aly Ag Wadoussene. Wadoussene was convicted of organizing the kidnappings of Philippe Verdon and Serge Lazarevic. During the escape, Wadoussene was shot, but 22 other prisoners successfully escaped and only eight prisoners were recaptured. More information is available [here](#).

On June 19<sup>th</sup>, Director of Operations in the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) John Ging concluded a three-day visit to Mali. Despite initial improvements in 2013, Director Ging noted that the security situation in northern Mali has deteriorated since the start of the year. He called on Malian authorities to address political issues, especially as he projected that the humanitarian situation in Mali would worsen unless peace and stability are restored. Director Ging's observations from his trip to Mali were described [here](#).

On June 19<sup>th</sup>, U.N. Special Envoy for the Sahel Guebre Sallassie briefed the U.N. Security Council on developments in the region for the first time since she was appointed to the position on May 1<sup>st</sup>. Special Envoy Sallassie reported that the Sahel region continues to face enduring political and security challenges that require greater cooperation between regional governments and international partners. In addition, she suggested that Sahel nations will need assistance to lay the foundations for stability and sustainable development as part of the means to help with efforts to address terrorism, weak governance, and recent droughts. Excerpts from the briefing were highlighted [here](#).

On June 19<sup>th</sup>, the Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) completed the first review of Sierra Leone's economic program under the Extended Credit Facility (ECF) for Sierra Leone, allowing for an additional disbursement of \$13.69 million. The IMF observed that Sierra Leone's economic growth momentum continued in 2013 and forecasted a growth rate of 11.3% for 2014. The IMF also suggested that fiscal policymakers in Sierra Leone should continue to focus on reducing duty waivers, increasing audit capacity in tax administration, supporting revenue mobilization, and strengthening budget execution and public financial management. More information can be found [here](#).

On June 19<sup>th</sup>, the World Bank's Board of Executive Directors approved a \$495.3 million International Development Association (IDA) credit to improve farmers' access to irrigation and drainage services, strengthen institutional arrangements for integrated water resources management, and improve delivery of agricultural services in northern Nigeria. The financing was approved as part of the Transforming Irrigation Management in Nigeria (TRIMING) project, which is anticipated to improve existing irrigation on 27,000 hectares, irrigate an additional 23,000 hectares, and benefit more than 140,000 Nigerian farmers. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On June 19<sup>th</sup>, World Bank Vice President for the Africa Region Makhtar Diop delivered remarks at the 7<sup>th</sup> Consultative Group Meeting on Sierra Leone, held in Freetown. Vice President Diop said that since the end of its civil war in 2002, Sierra Leone has made significant progress towards political stability and economic growth. He also applauded Sierra Leone for its Agenda for Prosperity program, which has yielded 4.8% economic growth per year and helped reduce poverty to 66% of the population in 2003 to 52% currently. Vice President Diop's remarks were transcribed [here](#).

On June 19<sup>th</sup>, Liechtenstein reported that it will return \$227 million of looted money to Nigeria. Former Nigerian ruler Sani Abacha siphoned billions of dollars from Nigeria. In order to retrieve the money, Nigeria dropped a legal case connected to the Abacha family. A full report can be read [here](#).

On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, She Leads Africa launched a female-only competition for entrepreneurs in West Africa, offering a prize of \$10,000 for the winner. The organization is now collecting applications to participate in a September pitch competition for their early stage startup ideas. Ten finalists will be selected and paired with mentors to help advance their businesses. More information was posted [here](#).

On June 24<sup>th</sup>, the Executive Board of the IMF completed the seventh review of Senegal's economic performance under the program supported by the Policy Support Instrument (PSI) approved in December 2010. The IMF found that program implementation has been mixed, noting that GDP growth was lower than expected for 2013 at just 3.5%. Meanwhile, deflation declined and the IMF forecasted an

increase in economic growth to 4.9% in 2014, due to greater activity in Senegal's agriculture, mining, and industrial sectors and sustained inflation. More information is available [here](#).

On June 25<sup>th</sup>, the U.N. Security Council extended the mandates for peacekeeping operations in Mali and Cote d'Ivoire. The Security Council extended the mandate for the U.N. Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) by one year through June 2015 and maintained the mission's charge of stabilizing security, protecting civilians, and supporting national political dialogue and reconciliation. The Security Council also extended the mandate of the U.N. Operation in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI) through the end of June 2015 and urged the mission to continue to work on the core priorities of protecting civilians, facilitating disarmament, demobilizing and reintegrating former combatants, and promoting security sector reform. More information can be found [here](#).

On June 25<sup>th</sup>, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon participated in the AU Summit in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea. In his address to the AU Summit, Secretary-General Ban pledged U.N. support to Equatorial Guinea to help reduce poverty, inequality, and promote food security. He also said the U.N. will assist in improving health conditions by helping more women to survive childbirth, reducing malaria and tuberculosis, and preventing and combating the spread of HIV/AIDS. Secretary-General Ban's participation at the AU Summit was highlighted [here](#).

### **Sub-Saharan Africa**

On June 18<sup>th</sup>, the Executive Board of the IMF concluded the Article IV consultation with Zimbabwe. The IMF noted that the Government of Zimbabwe has expressed its commitment to continuing to implement the policies and reforms agreed to under the IMF's staff-monitored program (SMP), engage with international financial institutions, and execute the five-year Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZIM ASSET). The IMF praised these commitments, especially as Zimbabwe still faces large deficits and financial sector vulnerabilities. Additional analysis was provided [here](#).

On June 24<sup>th</sup>, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon arrived in Windhoek, Namibia, to inaugurate the new U.N. House that is intended to help enhance the coordination between U.N. activities and entities working in Namibia. In his remarks at the ceremony commissioning the facility, Secretary-General Ban commended Namibia for its progress on national reconciliation, press freedom, adoption of human rights treaties, and economic growth and highlighted the ongoing challenges of inequality, youth unemployment, and climate change. More information can be seen [here](#).

On June 24<sup>th</sup>, the World Bank Zambia team hosted the "Think Jobs" writing and debate competition, which invited students from across the country to participate in a discussion about unemployment challenges. A team of three students from the University of Zambia (UNZA) won the competition and have been offered internships at the World Bank's Zambia office. More than 80 students across Zambia applied to take part in the competition. Details can be found [here](#).

On June 25<sup>th</sup>, tens of thousands of South African platinum miners returned to work after wage deals ended a five-month strike. The Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU) had demanded an immediate doubling of basic wages to approximately \$1,200 per month. Ultimately, the union agreed to a 20% increase in wages annually. A return to full production could take as long as three months. The full story can be viewed [here](#).

On June 26<sup>th</sup>, the IMF opened the Africa Training Institute (ATI) in Ebene, Mauritius. The institute's objective is to contribute to improved macroeconomic and financial policies through high-quality training, which will ultimately support sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction in sub-Saharan Africa. The ATI is strategically located next to the IMF's Africa regional technical assistance center (AFITAC) in Ebene, which is already providing technical assistance to 13 countries in the region. A press release was issued [here](#).

### **General Africa News**

On June 25<sup>th</sup>, at the AU Summit, African leaders discussed potential delays in implementing the African Standby Force (ASF), a regional military force that is supposed to be ready by the end of next year. AU Commissioner for Peace and Security Smail Chergui said four of the five regional brigades due to make up the ASF were in an advanced state of readiness, including the brigade in North Africa. He noted that

additional progress is being made to have the force fully operational by December 2015. An article on the status of the ASF can be read [here](#).

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