



ML Strategies Update

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Africa Update

[Leading the News](#)

Republic of Congo

On March 20th, the Republic of Congo (ROC) held voting in a presidential election that was predicted to see President Denis Sassou Nguesso extend his three-decade rule. Leading up to the opening of the polls, the Congolese Government order mobile phone and internet services to be blocked on election day and banned motor vehicle use across the country, citing security concerns. There were also reports of police firing tear gas at opposition supporters gathered in Brazzaville to follow the vote counting. The atmosphere surrounding the vote was described [here](#).

On March 21st, the U.S. Department of State congratulated the Congolese people for their active participation in the March 20th presidential elections, praising their enthusiasm and determination to register to vote and peacefully engage. The State Department, however, noted numerous reports of irregularities that have raised concerns about the credibility of the process, including the media blackout during the polls, an imbalanced and restrictive media environment, significant disparity in access to state resources, a short timeframe for electoral preparations, and restrictions on freedoms of expression, communication, and association in the pre-election period. As the vote tallying continued, the State Department called on Congolese authorities to restore communications and complete the electoral process with accuracy, credibility, fairness, and transparency, and urged the Congolese people to remain patient and avoid speculation. The State Department's views were shared [here](#).

On March 22nd, with the official results of the ROC's presidential election anticipated on Tuesday, the Congolese Ministry of Defense deployed hundreds of police to guard major roads and troops to secure the presidential palace and the main traffic circle in Brazzaville. Heightened security was reported as Congolese authorities also extended a telecommunications blackout into a third day as part of its strategy to stem unrest surrounding the vote. Incumbent President Denis Sassou Nguesso was expected to be reelected. In October, President Nguesso pushed forward a constitutional referendum to remove term and age limits that would have made him ineligible to run again. An update on the situation in the ROC was provided [here](#).

On March 23rd, a coalition of opposition candidates in the ROC said their own polling showed that President Denis Sassou Nguesso placed no better than fourth in any major district, rejecting official partial results that showed President Nguesso with a commanding lead. On Tuesday, the electoral commission announced partial results that showed President Nguesso leading the vote count with 67 percent of the ballots cast. Meanwhile, the Congolese

Government said the opposition's publication of its own vote count was illegal and justified the ongoing internet and mobile phone communications blackout. Developments were noted [here](#).

On March 24th, ROC Interior Minister Raymond Zephyrin Mboulou appeared on state television to declare President Denis Sassou Nguesso the winner of another five-year term after capturing 60.39 percent of the vote in the weekend presidential election. Minister Mboulou reported opposition leader Guy-Brice Parfait Kolelas had won 15 percent of the vote, while retired general Jean-Marie Mokoko trailed with 14 percent. Meanwhile, opposition candidates continued to claim there was election fraud, as their own polling showed President Nguesso headed for defeat. The official results were analyzed [here](#).

Niger

On March 20th, voting ended in a presidential runoff election in Niger. Heading into the polls, incumbent President Mahamadou Issoufou looked poised to win after the opposition called a boycott. President Issoufou won 48 percent of the vote in last month's first round of voting but was unable to win the majority of votes needed to avoid a runoff. Meanwhile, opposition candidate Hama Amadou, who came in second with 18 percent of the vote in the first round, was being jailed in November for his alleged involvement in baby trafficking and recently flown to France for treatment of a chronic health issue. The Nigerien runoff election was analyzed [here](#).

On March 22nd, preliminary results were released in Niger's presidential runoff contest. With 226 of 308 constituencies reporting, incumbent President Mahamadou Issoufou led the vote count with roughly 93 percent of ballots cast. The vote totals were not surprising, as a coalition of about 20 political parties supporting opposition candidate Hama Amadou called for a boycott of the polls, arguing the electoral process had been tainted by fraud. The preliminary vote count was released [here](#).

Benin

On March 20th, a second round of voting was held in Benin's presidential contest after no candidate clinched an outright majority in the first round of voting held on March 6th. The vote pinned Prime Minister Lionel Zinsou against businessman Patrice Talon. In the first round of voting, Prime Minister Zinsou came out on top with 28.4 percent of the vote, followed by Talon, who had won 24.8 percent of the vote. While Prime Minister Zinsou had the support of term-limited President Thomas Boni Yayi, during his campaign he has come under criticism for having spent much of his political career abroad. The dynamics in the runoff election were discussed [here](#).

On March 21st, Benin Prime Minister Lionel Zinsou conceded defeat to opposition candidate Patrice Talon in the country's presidential election. Prime Minister Zinsou called Talon to congratulate him and wish him luck after early results tallied overnight gave Talon 64.8 percent of the vote, compared to just 35.2 percent for Prime Minister Zinsou. His concession was reported [here](#).

On March 21st, following Prime Minister Lionel Zinsou's concession in the presidential election, Benin's electoral commission announced the official results of the runoff poll held on Sunday. According to the electoral commission, businessman and opposition leader Patrice Talon won with a commanding 65.39 percent of the vote. The outcome of the election was not surprising, as 24 of the other 32 candidates who stood in the first round of voting ultimately came out in support of Talon in the runoff. The official vote count was detailed [here](#).

Tanzania

On March 20th, voters in Tanzania's semi-autonomous Zanzibar went to the polls to vote in a re-run of presidential elections boycotted by the opposition. In October, the Zanzibar Electoral Commission (ZEC) called for a re-run, citing fraud. The opposition Civic United Front (CUF) rejected allegations of fraud and warned of violence during a re-run. CUF ultimately decided to boycott the re-run, claiming the cancellation of the October vote was meant to prevent CUF candidate Seif Sharif Hamad from forming a government. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On March 21st, the ZEC declared incumbent Zanzibar President Ali Mohamed Shein of the national ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) party the winner in the re-run presidential election conducted over the weekend with 91.4 percent of the vote. The ruling CCM won the national presidential and parliamentary elections held in October on

mainland Tanzania. Despite the opposition boycott and threat of violence, the vote was largely peaceful. The results were announced [here](#).

Cape Verde

On March 20th, Cape Verde held its parliamentary elections, in a lead up to presidential elections to be held later this year. While the African Party for the Independence of Cape Verde (PAICV) has controlled the legislature for the past decade and a half, the party struggled in the 2012 municipal elections and has faced criticism for running up public debt and failing to address youth unemployment. The political environment heading into the elections was detailed [here](#).

On March 21st, with most of the votes in Cape Verde's parliamentary election tallied, the opposition Movement for Democracy (MPD) party appeared on track to win an absolute majority, ending the PAICV's 15 years in power. Prime Minister-elect Ulisses Correria e Silva said the vote demonstrated Cape Verdeans' desire to move towards a brighter economic future. An article on the results of the election can be read [here](#).

Senegal

On March 20th, Senegalese voters went to the polls to vote on a referendum put forward by President Macky Sall to advance constitutional reforms. Among the 15 proposed reforms, the referendum aimed to reduce presidential powers and terms from seven to five years, strengthen the National Assembly, improve representation for Senegalese citizens abroad, enhance the rights of the political opposition, and boost the participation of independent candidates in elections. President Sall first proposed a reduction in term limits last year, but the Constitutional Court called for a referendum to determine future term limits. The referendum was discussed [here](#).

On March 24th, Senegal's electoral commission released the outcome of the weekend referendum on proposed constitutional changes. According to the commission, 62.7 percent of ballots were cast in support of the reforms. The vote is widely viewed as a political victory for Senegalese President Macky Sall. The results were reported [here](#).

Libya

On March 17th, the U.S. Department of State released its Atrocities Prevention Report. The report highlights the activities of violent extremist organizations in Libya, including Ansar al-Sharia and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). In particular, the report calls attention to various abuses committed by ISIL in 2015 in Benghazi, Sirte, and Derna. The report can be accessed [here](#).

On March 23rd, United Nations (U.N.) Special Envoy to Libya and head of the U.N. Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) Martin Kobler said he had been forced to cancel a flight to Tripoli because he had not been granted landing rights by Libya's self-declared government based in the city. Special Representative Kobler said his planned visit to Tripoli was intended to pave the way for the U.N.-backed unity government to move from Tunis, Tunisia to Tripoli. Meanwhile, authorities in Tripoli responded that Special Representative Kobler had not been granted permission to land because he had not provided an agenda for his visit. The full story is available [here](#).

Nigeria

On March 17th, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon condemned the recent double suicide attacks in Maiduguri, Nigeria carried out by suspected Boko Haram elements. The attack on the mosque left at least 20 people dead and many more injured. Secretary-General Ban also reiterated U.N. support to the Nigerian Government in its fight against terrorism, which he argued should be grounded in international humanitarian, human rights, and refugee law. Secretary-General Ban's response to the attack was posted [here](#).

On March 23rd, *Voice of America* reported the U.S. military has provided Cameroonian police with military equipment to monitor airports and border crossings as part of continued cooperation in the fight against Nigerian extremist group Boko Haram. According to Cameroonian Police Chief Martin Mbarga Nguelle, the U.S. is installing scanning and identification systems in Cameroonian airports and at border checkpoints to allow the tracing of

criminals who attempt to escape. The U.S. has also provided equipment to detect explosives. A full report was published [here](#).

Burundi

On March 18th, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein briefed the U.N. Security Council on the situation in Burundi, registering concern about ongoing violence and rights violations and calling for an inclusive political dialogue to peacefully resolve the 11-month crisis. Secretary-General Ban highlighted his recent trip to Burundi and underscored the importance of regional and international support for peace efforts. Meanwhile, Commissioner Zeid called attention to the hundreds of people killed, thousands detained, and over a quarter million of Burundians who have fled the country. Excerpts from the briefing were highlighted [here](#).

On March 22nd, as part of his participation in a Human Rights Council session on the situation in Burundi, U.N. Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights Ivan Simonovic advised a climate for inclusive dialogue is urgently required to eradicate the polarization and further fragmentation of Burundian society resulting from growing poverty and the country's ongoing political crisis. Assistant Secretary-General Simonovic also cautioned the human rights violations occurring in Burundi will not only affect the future population in the country, but also the wider Great Lakes region. His input was recorded [here](#).

South Sudan

On March 17th, while noting the ceasefire between rival factions in South Sudan has largely held, the U.N. Security Council expressed concern for ongoing violence in the country. As a result, the Security Council laid out specific steps for South Sudan's implementation of a seven-month old peace agreement, and pledged to review the country's progress at the end of the month. More specifically, the Security Council called for the South Sudanese Government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement in Opposition (SPLM-IO) to adhere to the permanent ceasefire, complete the agreed upon security enhancements in Juba, launch the Transitional Government of National Unity (TGNU), uphold the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) agreement signed in January, and protect civilians. The Security Council's demands were outlined [here](#).

On March 23rd, the well-read *Sudan Tribune* reported that South Sudanese President Salva Kiir is supporting Republican candidate Donald Trump in the U.S. 2016 presidential election. While President Kiir's government was quick to deny any such endorsement, the article suggested that President Kiir's backing of Trump is based on Trump's comments in favor of the use of torture against U.S. enemies. President Kiir's administration has been accused of using torture, sexual violence, extrajudicial killings, and recruitment of child soldiers as tactics in the country's civil war. The full story is available [here](#).

Cote d'Ivoire

On March 22nd, authorities in Cote d'Ivoire announced the arrest of 15 people suspected to have links with the recent attack perpetrated by Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) on beach hotels in Grand-Bassam. The national prosecutor also released a photo of Kounta Dallah, who authorities believe was the mastermind behind the attacks and remains on the run. The prosecutor's office added that additional national and international warrants were being prepared for other suspects. An update was provided [here](#).

West Africa Ebola Outbreak

On March 18th, the World Health Organization (WHO) dispatched a team of specialists to Guinea after at least two new cases of Ebola were confirmed in the southern village of Koropara. The new cases represent the first re-emergence of the virus in the country since the WHO declared Guinea Ebola-free on December 29th. Guinea's National Emergency Response Center noted response teams were working to investigate the origin of the new infections and to identify, isolate, vaccinate, and monitor all contacts. The situation was discussed [here](#).

On March 22nd, Guinea's Ebola Coordination Unit reported it has traced an estimated 816 people belonging to 107 families who may have come into contact with victims of Ebola or their corpses during a recent flare up of the virus that killed four people in the southeastern part of the country. Those contacts will be quarantined in their homes for

21 days, after which they will be released if they have not developed symptoms of Ebola. Details on the contact tracing underway in Guinea were released [here](#).

On March 22nd, Liberian Information Minister Lenn Eugene Nangbe announced the closure of the Liberian border with Guinea as a precautionary measure following at least for Ebola deaths reported in Guinea. Minister Nangbe said the border would remain closed until the situation in Guinea improves. Additionally, Liberia deployed a team of medics with protective gear to the border to improve surveillance. Liberia was declared Ebola-free in January. The Liberian Government's response to the new Ebola cases in Guinea was described [here](#).

On March 23rd, Guinean health authorities reported the death of a fifth person from Ebola in the southeastern part of the country since March 17th. The latest case was detected in Macenta prefecture, not far from the village of Korokpara where the most recent four Ebola deaths were reported. The victim was a man who had recently visited Korokpara and had been in direct contact with one of the earlier Ebola patients. He was buried in the village of Makoidou without any sanitary precautions, raising concerns about the potential worsening of the recent Ebola flare up. Developments were reported [here](#).

Migrant Crisis in the Mediterranean

On March 18th, during a European Union (EU) Summit, British Prime Minister David Cameron pushed EU leaders to approve the deployment of more international ships to start turning back boats of refugees as soon as they depart Libya seeking to cross the Mediterranean. Prime Minister Cameron argued the EU rescue mission in the Mediterranean needs to be expanded to include work with the Libyan coast guard on sending boats back to Africa. Tens of thousands of refugees are rescued every year and thousands die trying to cross the Mediterranean from Africa to Italy. Prime Minister Cameron's position was outlined [here](#).

United States – Africa Relations

State Department

On March 18th, Secretary of State John Kerry expressed concern for the deterioration in the human rights situation in Egypt in recent weeks and months, including the reported decision this week by the Egyptian Government to reopen an investigation of Egyptian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) documenting human rights abuses and defending the freedoms enshrined in Egypt's constitution. Secretary Kerry observed this decision comes against a wider backdrop of arrests and intimidation of political opposition, journalists, civil society activists, and cultural figures. Secretary Kerry said these steps run contrary to the universal principle of freedom of association and urged the Government of Egypt to work with civic groups to ease restrictions on association and expression. His feedback was articulated [here](#).

On March 18th, State Department Spokesperson John Kirby acknowledged reports that the Government of Morocco has order nearly 80 members of the U.N. Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) to leave the country. He reiterated the State Department's support for MINURSO and its mandate. Spokesperson Kirby highlighted the U.S. also participated in a closed session of the U.N. Security Council, where members expressed concern about the situation. Additionally, he said the U.S. is encouraging all parties to the conflict in the Western Sahara to remain fully and actively engaged in seeking an effective resolution. Spokesperson Kirby's comments were transcribed [here](#).

On March 19th, the U.S. welcomed the release by Eritrea of four Djiboutian prisoners, taken captive after the 2008 conflict over the shared border between the two countries. State Department Spokesperson John Kirby expressed concern, however, for the remaining prisoners of war who have not been reunited with their families. The State Department thanked the Government of Qatar for their mediation efforts to bring about the release of the prisoners and its contribution to regional peace and security. Spokesperson Kirby also reaffirmed U.S. support for Qatar's ongoing efforts to mediate and the work of the Governments of Djibouti and Eritrea to resolve outstanding issues. A press statement was issued [here](#).

On March 21st, Secretary of State John Kerry congratulated the people and the Government of Namibia on their 26th independence day. Secretary Kerry highlighted a mutual commitment to democracy, the rule of law, and other values. He noted the U.S. and Namibia have worked together to help give young men and women the skills they

need to help lead their communities through the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI), combatting HIV/AIDS through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), and increasing shared efforts to combat wildlife trafficking. Secretary Kerry's full statement can be read [here](#).

On March 21st, Secretary of State John Kerry joined the Tunisian people in celebrating the 60th anniversary of Tunisia's independence. Secretary Kerry observed Tunisians continue to build on their country's rich history and remarkable achievements since 2011, and he commended the courage of the Tunisia people, noting their commitment to peaceful dialogue, consensus building, and compromise have enshrined citizen engagement as a cornerstone of their inclusive and growing democracy. He also applauded Tunisia's commitment to ensuring security and stability, as well as to modernizing its economy. Secretary Kerry's remarks were recorded [here](#).

On March 22nd, the State Department welcomed the International Criminal Court's (ICC) verdict in the case against Jean-Pierre Bemba Gombo, a former vice president of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and previously a leader of a Congolese rebel group that committed widespread atrocities in the Central African Republic (CAR) from 2002 to 2003. The State Department said his conviction for rape, murder, and pillaging as war crimes and crimes against humanity while a rebel leader brings an important measure of justice to the victims of these crimes and advanced the fight against impunity for sexual violence in conflict. A press statement was issued [here](#).

On March 23rd, the State Department welcomed the transfer of Ladislas Ntaganzwa by the Government of the DRC to face trial in Rwanda for several crimes, including genocide and crimes against humanity, pursuant to an arrest warrant by the U.N. Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals (MICT). Noting that Ntaganzwa is accused of abusing his position of power as a mayor to help plan, prepare, and carry out the massacre of over 20,000 Tutsis, the State Department said Ntaganzwa's apprehension is a welcome step toward justice for the victims of the Rwandan genocide. A full statement was released [here](#).

U.S. Agency for International Development

On March 21st, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) announced three new award nominees in its fifth global call for solutions to protect mothers and newborns under Saving Lives at Birth: A Grand Challenge for Development. The Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation (EGPAF) and Partners in Health (PIH) were nominated for \$2 million transition-to-scale awards. EGPAF will develop a model for national scale-up of the "Pratt Pouch" in Uganda, which is a new delivery method to provide HIV prophylaxis to babies and prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV. PIH will transition its successful quality improvement model to seven new, high need districts in Rwanda. The University of Washington was also awarded a \$250,000 validation grant to develop a business model to sustain and scale Mobile WACH NEO, a virtual communication system that connects mothers with health care providers in Kenya. A press release was issued [here](#).

Department of Defense

On March 16th-17th, U.S. soldiers with the Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) and their French counterparts conducted a field training exercise (FTX) in Arta, Djibouti. As part of the exercise, U.S. and French forces responded to simulated threats and attacks in a manner that was designed to promote teamwork, overcome language barriers, and explore different techniques and procedures. More information can be seen [here](#).

On March 17th, maritime forces from Gulf of Guinea nations, Europe, South America, the U.S., and several regional and international organizations began the multinational maritime exercise, Exercise Obangame/Saharan Express 2016. The exercise provides African, European, South American, and U.S. partner maritime forces the opportunity to work together, share information, and refine tactics, techniques, and procedures in order to assist Gulf of Guinea maritime nations with building the capacity to monitor and enforce their territorial waters and exclusive economic zones. An article on the exercise was published [here](#).

On March 18th, U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) highlighted an engineering workshop the command recently hosted with U.S. European Command in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany. The workshop brought together stakeholders to address programmatic and emerging problems, exchange information, and network. It also included presentations on various programs including contracting, military construction, environmental security, and exercise related construction. Details were shared [here](#).

On March 18th, soldiers with Senegal's Compagnie Fusilier de Marin Commando (COFUMACO) completed a month-long training event with U.S. Marines from Special-Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force – Crisis Response – Africa (SPMAGTF-CR-AF). Conducted in Toubacouta and Thies, the training focused on land-based infantry skills, including patrolling, reconnaissance, raids, combat marksmanship, and scouting. For more information, click [here](#).

Department of Homeland Security

On March 22nd, U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has extended the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) designations for Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone as the region continues to face challenges related to Ebola. The current TPS designations, which protect people from deportation if the countries they come from could be dangerous to return to, were set to expire May 21st and will now be extended through November 21st. Details can be accessed [here](#).

U.S. Trade and Development Agency

On March 13th-24th, the U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) will host a delegation of senior public and private sector officials from Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, and Djibouti for an East Africa Ports Security and Modernization RTM. The RTM is designed to introduce delegates to U.S. technologies, service providers, operational best practices, financing products, and training resources in the areas of port development, operation, and security. The RTM will address key themes of security and safety solutions, including risk assessment methodologies and best practices for cross-departmental coordination. More information was posted [here](#).

Overseas Private Investment Corporation

On March 22nd, to commemorate World Water Day, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) released an infographic displaying how OPIC is supporting access to clean water across the developing world. In Algeria, OPIC financing supported the construction of a reverse-osmosis water desalination plant that is providing water to 350,000 families, while in Ghana, OPIC political risk insurance is supporting a project to modernize the water infrastructure to increase the supply of clean water. Additionally, in sub-Saharan Africa, OPIC financing is helping small farmers purchase irrigation equipment so they can grow more food. The infographic was posted [here](#).

On March 23rd, OPIC President and CEO Elizabeth Littlefield traveled to West Africa to recognize the recent opening of OPIC's first-ever West Africa and Central regional office, located in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire. President Littlefield traveled to Cote d'Ivoire and Senegal with a group of international CEOs on a business development and investment mission to explore increasing opportunity in the region. Her travel was announced [here](#).

Millennium Challenge Corporation

On March 23rd, on the heels of World Water Day, the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) and WaterAid America convened development practitioners, thought leaders, and MCC experts for a roundtable discussion on the use and management of water resources. The event featured experts from MCC's Practice for Water, Irrigation, and Sanitation, including Lead Director Kumar Ranganathan, Senior Director Omar Hopkins, and Associate Director Marycel Tuazon, who discussed the agency's work to increase access to clean water and sanitation for people in countries like Cabo Verde and Zambia. Event details can be viewed [here](#).

North Africa

On March 19th, the Egyptian Interior Ministry reported 13 police officers were killed in a mortar attack targeting a security checkpoint at al-Arish in the Sinai Peninsula. ISIL claimed responsibility for the attack online. Egyptian state media reported that security forces were undertaking operations to capture the armed men who executed the attack. The incident was reported [here](#).

On March 20th, an International Monetary Fund (IMF) mission completed a visit to N'Djamena, Chad to hold discussions on the third review of the government's economic program supported under the Extended Credit Facility (ECF) arrangement approved in August 2014 and to conduct the 2016 Article IV consultation. The IMF team observed Chad's economy continues to be affected by external shocks, notably the persistent decline in oil prices

and the deterioration in regional security. As economic growth is expected to continue to decelerate, the IMF noted discussions with Chadian authorities focused on executing the 2016 budget while protecting social spending. Additional analysis was provided [here](#).

On March 21st, BP and Norway's Statoil announced plans to withdraw staff from the In Salah and In Amenas gas plants in Algeria following a recent attack on the In Salah site. No casualties were reported in the AQIM attack on the In Salah gas plant on Friday, but both companies indicated that the temporary relocation of staff was being taken as a precautionary measure. Details were released [here](#).

On March 23rd, Egyptian President Abdul Fattah Al-Sisi announced a cabinet reshuffling, naming ten new ministers tasked with reviving the Egyptian economy. President Sisi named Amr el-Garhy Finance Minister and appointed Dalia Khorshi to serve as Investment Minister. He also announced four new deputy minister positions focused on planning, treasury affairs, tax policy, and fiscal policy. More information can be found [here](#).

On March 24th, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, World Bank President Jim Yong Kim, and President of the Islamic Development Bank Mohamed Ali Al-Madani began a joint visit to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region to rally global support for peace and development in MENA countries. Following stops in Lebanon and Jordan, the leaders are expected to visit Tunisia for meetings with government leaders and private sector and civil society representatives to reaffirm international support for Tunisia's transition as the government strives to strike a balance between maintain security and pursuing economic reforms to restore investor confidence and stimulate job creation. The visit was announced [here](#).

On March 24th, the Moroccan Interior Ministry announced it had dismantled a suspected militant cell linked to ISIL's affiliate in Libya, arresting nine men who were thought to be plotting attacks. The cell was active in Marrakesh, Sidi Bennour, and Smara. The Moroccan Government estimates about 1,500 Moroccan nationals are fighting with ISIL factions in Syria and Iraq. About 220 have returned to Morocco and been jailed, while 286 have been killed in battle. The full story is available [here](#).

On March 24th, Egypt's central bank announced a decision to impose a nine-year term limit for all bank CEOs in a move intended to modernize the country's banking sector and inject new blood into Egypt's central banking system. Eight bank CEOs will be forced to step down as a result of the new policy. Details can be seen [here](#).

East Africa

On March 17th, *Voice of America* called attention to Uganda's new law that makes it harder for foreigners to adopt children and take them out of the country. Earlier this month, the legislation restricting guardianship of orphaned or needed children to Ugandan nationals passed the parliament in a unanimous vote. While supporters claim the new law closes loopholes exploited by child traffickers, critics argue it may rob Ugandan children of the opportunity to pursue better lives overseas. The new policy was detailed [here](#).

On March 17th, researchers reported evidence that a small elephant population still exists in Somalia, based on the unusual finding of the migration of a bull across the border from Kenya, who was thought to be looking for a mate. Somalia used to be home to thousands of elephants, but the population was decimated in the violence prevalent in the country during the 1980s and 90s. An article on the elephant population in Somalia was published [here](#).

On March 18th, upon the arrival of Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani in Djibouti and the announcement of the release of four Djiboutian prisoners by the Eritrean authorities, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon commended the efforts of the Qatari mediation in brokering the process and Eritrea for releasing the prisoners. Secretary-General Ban also expressed hope the prisoner release will help address other regional outstanding issues between Djibouti and Eritrea and enhance regional peace and security in the Horn of Africa. His response was posted [here](#).

On March 18th, a lion that escaped from a park in Kenya mauled a man during rush hour in Nairobi. According to Kenya Wildlife Service Spokesman Paul Udoto, the lion was captured and returned to Nairobi National Park as the victim received treatment for his injuries. This is the fourth time in recent weeks lions have escaped from the park, posing threats to Nairobi residents. The full story is available [here](#).

On March 20th, David Obonyo, a spokesperson for the Kenya Defense Forces (KDF) reported the Kenyan army killed 21 Al Shabaab militants in clashes on Saturday in Afmadow, Somalia. The fighting began when Al Shabaab ambushed the KDF soldiers, using an improvised explosive device to hit and damage one of their vehicles, killing two Kenyan soldiers and wounding five others. The KDF responded by killing 21 Al Shabaab fighters and recovering 19 AK-47 rifles, three rocket-propelled grenades, and a pistol. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On March 20th, Al Shabaab fighters attacked a military base in Laanta Buuro, Somalia. The attack was launched shortly after Kenyan troops supporting the African Union (AU) Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) said they had killed 34 Al Shabaab militants in two separate raids carried out over the weekend. Al Shabaab fighters killed at least one person and seized vehicles and other military equipment. For more information, click [here](#).

On March 21st, during an open debate on the prevention and resolution of conflicts in the Great Lakes region, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon advised the U.N. Security Council that peace and security go hand-in-hand with human and economic development. Secretary-General Ban also observed that the exploitation of natural resources also presents a major challenge for the Great Lakes region. Secretary-General Ban's remarks were captured [here](#).

On March 21st, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni and Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta held talks about which route to choose for an oil export pipeline which Kenyan would prefer to go through its territory rather than Tanzania. The discussions did not end in a deal, but the leaders agreed to meet again in two weeks once technical teams had been given more time to assess the two routes. The talks were summarized [here](#).

On March 22nd, an IMF mission concluded a mission to Seychelles to conduct discussions on the fourth review under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) arrangement with the country. IMF staff reported Seychelles' macroeconomic performance over the past year was positive, but warned that slowing growth and recession in a number of key tourism markets could weigh on economic developments in 2016. As a result, the IMF recommended that authorities implement offsetting measures along with proposed increases in pensions and minimum wages and income tax cuts. The discussions were captured [here](#).

On March 22nd, the World Bank noted its Partial Credit Guarantee (PCG) Fund is providing technical assistance to Djibouti's Central Bank and Ministry of Economy and Finance on developing a framework for increasing access to financing for micro, small, and medium size enterprises (MSMEs). While banks in Djibouti are fairly liquid, they are often unwilling to lend to MSMEs because of low appetite for risk and insufficient collateral. Details were posted [here](#).

On March 22nd, HAART, a Kenyan charity that provides economic and psychologic support for human trafficking victims, said one in four internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Kenya have been a victim or witness to human trafficking. Many of the victims in Kenyan have been lured to the Middle East and forced to do menial work or subject to sexual exploitation. More information can be found [here](#).

On March 23rd, the ICC ruled there was enough evidence to try Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) commander Dominic Ongwen for crimes committed in Uganda, including rape and recruitment of child soldiers. Ongwen, who surrendered early last year and was handed over to ICC custody, faces 70 charges for crimes including murder, rape, sexual slavery, torture, and conscripting children under the age of 15. An article on the case can be read [here](#).

On March 23rd, an IMF team completed a mission to Tanzania to initiate the fourth review under the Policy Support Instrument (PSI) program and to hold the 2016 Article IV consultation with Tanzanian authorities. The IMF mission estimated that Tanzania achieved gross domestic product (GDP) growth of seven percent in 2015, resulting in conversations focused on sustaining high growth and implementing the new government's priorities while preserving fiscal sustainability. The IMF observed reforms will be needed to foster structural transformation in the economy and to sustain high productivity gains and investment. Additional analysis was provided [here](#).

On March 23rd, Somali Prime Minister Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke added his signature to over a million others on an online petition demanding a total ban on female genital mutilation (FGM) in the country. Activists hope Prime Minister Sharmarke's signature will push the Somali parliament to take up an anti-FGM bill. According to the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF), more than 90 percent of young girls in Somalia undergo FGM. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On March 23rd, ride-hailing company Uber launched its services in Nairobi, Kenya. The launch was met with an attack on an Uber vehicle, in which four men torched the car, marking the second attack against Uber in Kenya in the past two months. Last month, Kenyan taxi drivers requested a ban on Uber in Nairobi. Authorities refused to implement a ban, but agreed to draft new laws seeking to regulate online taxi drivers. The situation was discussed [here](#).

On March 24th, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called on the U.N. Security Council to take action in support of MINURSO following the Moroccan Government's decision to expel personnel from the U.N. peacekeeping mission in the Western Sahara. The U.N. shut its military liaison office and withdrew dozens of staff from MINURSO as demanded by Morocco in retaliation for U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon using the word occupation to describe the conflict in the region. More information was posted [here](#).

On March 24th, Kenya's anti-corruption commission released the results of a recent survey finding that nearly 75 percent of the country's population believes there is a high level of corruption in Kenya. Those surveyed primarily blamed the greed of public officials for high levels of corruption. According to the commission, Kenya loses about a third of its budget through corruption in the form of inflated prices the government is charged for tenders, non-existent projects, and wages for ghost workers. The situation was described [here](#).

West Africa

On March 17th, U.N. Special Representative for Liberia and head of the U.N. Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) Farid Zarif addressed the U.N. Security Council on the situation in the country. Special Representative Zarif said the expected completion of the security transition in June will be one of the most significant milestones for Liberia and the international community since the end of the country's civil war and the signing of the peace agreement in 2003. By June, UNMIL will have consolidated its 13 county field offices into five regional ones and will reduce civilian staffing by more than 30 percent over the next two years. Excerpts from the briefing can be seen [here](#).

On March 21st, the Executive Board of the IMF concluded the annual Discussion on Common Policies of Member Countries of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU). The IMF welcomed the region's continued strong growth performance, with growth rates over six percent for the second consecutive year, despite the fragile security situation in some member countries and a less favorable external environment. The IMF encouraged West African authorities to safeguard macroeconomic and financial stability by implementing prudent and well-coordinated national fiscal policies and regional monetary policy. Additional analysis was provided [here](#).

On March 21st, African Development Bank (AfDB) President Akinwumi Adesina launched the fourth CEO Forum in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire. The conference brought together some 500 CEOs from 43 African countries and 20 more worldwide to discuss how Africa's private sector can help guide the continent to economic transformation. President Adesina called on African governments to ensure macroeconomic stabilization and fiscal consolidation, broaden the tax base, and deepen domestic capital markets, while urging the private sector to double efforts to transform African commodities locally, and to diversify African economies, particular into areas like services and tourism. President Adesina's participation was highlighted [here](#).

On March 21st, Sierra Leone received a \$300,000 grant from the Climate Investment Funds (CIF) to prepare an Investment Plan (IP) for advancing its renewable energy sector. The IP will be developed with support from the AfDB and the World Bank under the CIF's Program for Scaling Up Renewable Energy in Low Income Countries (SREP) using a collaborative approach that includes multiple ministries and stakeholders throughout the country, including the private sector, commercial and development banks, and NGOs. The grant was announced [here](#).

On March 21st, gunmen stormed the Nord-Sud Hotel in Bamako Mali, which has been serving as headquarters for nearly 600 EU personnel deployed to the country to train Malian security forces. Guards at the facility responded quickly, killing one of the attackers, and two suspects were taken into custody for questioning. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack, but Mali and its regional partners have recently been confronted by attacks perpetrated by armed groups linked to Al Qaeda. Details can be accessed [here](#).

On March 22nd, the AfDB joined the Ivoirian Government in celebrating World Water Day. This year's events were themed "Water and Jobs," and brought together industry experts, scientists, development partners, and

representatives of civil society to discuss how water can contribute to job creation and overall wealth. The AfDB's participation was noted [here](#).

On March 23rd, Malian National Police announced the arrest of 21 people in connection with the attack on EU military headquarters at the Nord-Sud Hotel in Bamako earlier this week. National Police Director Moussa Ag Infahi noted security forces had also recovered grenades, ammunition, a sub-machine gun, and an assault rifle from the scene of the attack. An update was provided [here](#).

On March 23rd, Ghanaian President John Dramani Mahama and Ivorian President Alassane Ouattara proposed establishing CHOCPEC, an organization for cocoa producers modeled after the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana are the world's top two producers of cocoa beans and together account for nearly 70 percent of the world's cocoa production. However, the two countries earned just over \$8 billion in cocoa exports last year in a global chocolate market worth roughly \$100 billion. The proposal was outlined [here](#).

On March 23rd, U.S.-based Endeavor Energy indicated it is in the process of securing financing to construct a \$900 million gas-fired power project in Cote d'Ivoire that will assist the country in meeting the demand of electricity. Endeavor plans to operate a liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal, which will help to fuel the 1,200 megawatt (MW) power plant. The project was described [here](#).

Sub-Saharan Africa

On March 16th, the Executive Board of the IMF concluded the Article IV consultation with Botswana. The Board of Directors commended Botswana's track record of prudent economic policies and sound institutions, which it observed have led to low public debt and sizable fiscal and foreign exchange savings. While predicting gradual economic recovery for the country over the next three years, the IMF observed GDP growth turned slightly negative in 2015 due to the decline in global demand for diamonds and copper, lower mining activity, regional drought, and electricity and water shortages. Additional observations were recorded [here](#).

On March 18th, the U.N. highlighted Director and Founder of Panzi General Referral Hospital in the DRC. Dr. Denis Mukwege has focused his career on helping women who have suffered genital mutilation at the hands of armed groups in the country. Over the past 17 years, Dr. Mukwege has treated more than 40,000 victims of sexual violence at the hospital in Panzi. Dr. Mukwege was profiled [here](#).

On March 18th, an IMF team completed a visit to Zambia to review recent macroeconomic developments and discuss with the authorities how to best address the current economic challenges facing the country. The IMF team met with Zambian Minister of Finance Alexander Chikwanda, Bank of Zambia (BOZ) Governor Denny Kalyalya, and other senior government and BOZ officials, members of parliament, leaders of political parties, and representatives of the private sector, labor unions, civil society organizations, and development partners. Noting challenges including lower copper prices, electricity shortages, and poor rainfall, authorities agreed to move to cost-reflective energy pricing, scale back discretionary spending, and safeguard social protection programs. The discussions were summarized [here](#).

On March 18th, South African President Jacob Zuma appeared before a rowdy session of parliament where he denied rumors that the wealthy Gupta family had influenced cabinet appointments. Senior officials of the ruling African National Congress (ANC), including Secretary General Gwende Mantashe, said the accusations may cause influential members of the party to lose confidence in President Zuma. Meanwhile, the political opposition has demanded President Zuma's resignation. The full story is available [here](#).

On March 18th, Zimbabwean Information Communication Technology Minister Supa Mandiwanzira said the government had been approached by networks in the country requested that authorities step in to ban over-the-top (OTP) services, such as Facebook and WhatsApp, in order to protect networks' profitability. Minister Mandiwanzira noted the Ministry rejected these complaints and has taken a position aimed at promoting access to technology. Meanwhile, other African countries, such as Nigeria and South Africa, are considering regulating OTP services. More information was shared [here](#).

On March 20th, the U.N. Joint Human Rights Office in the DRC sent Ladislas Ntaganzwa back to Rwanda to be tried by the U.N. MICT. Ntaganzwa is accused of killed an estimated 20,000 people during Rwanda's 1994 genocide. He was arrested in the eastern DRC in December. His detention and extradition were reported [here](#).

On March 21st, U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein welcomed the judgement delivered by the ICC in the trial against Congolese national Jean Pierre Bemba for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in 2002 and 2003 in the CAR. The case is considered a landmark as the first time the ICC has convicted the commander of a military force both for the crimes of his subordinates and for using sexual violence as a weapon of war. While recognizing the ICC's ruling may be subject to appeal, High Commissioner Zeid said the judgement should serve as a powerful deterrent against future serious human rights violations. U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon also recognized the judgment as a strong signal that commanders will be held responsible for international crimes committed by those under their authority. The U.N.'s position articulated [here](#).

On March 21st, at the close of a three-day party summit held in light of allegations of corruption against South African President Jacob Zuma, the ANC defended the president and expressed full confidence in his leadership. ANC leadership reported there was no discussion of President Zuma stepping down during the summit. Party leaders also expressed support for Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan, who is being investigated by the elite police unit Hawks. The summit was detailed [here](#).

On March 22nd, the World Bank's Board of Executive Directors approved an International Development Association (IDA) credit totaling \$53 million in support of the Government of Madagascar's Agriculture Rural Growth and Land Management project (CASEF). The project was designed to help improve rural land tenure security and access to markets for targeted households that are facing poverty. For details, click [here](#).

On March 22nd, the World Bank highlighted its support for Zimbabwe's Reconstruction Fund (ZIMREF), which is providing funding for Zimbabwe's Capital Budgets Technical Assistance Program. The project, which is designed to rebuild Zimbabwe's state enterprise and parastatals sector, has started collecting baseline data from parastatals to capture assets, liabilities, and other information. An assessment of corporate governance practices is also ongoing in a number of public enterprises. More information can be found [here](#).

On March 22nd, the Office of South Africa's Public Prosecutor said it is considering asking the Treasury for a special fund to speed up investigations into the growing scandal over President Jacob Zuma's relationship with the wealthy Gupta family. The funding would be used to appoint a more robust team of external forensic investigators. Meanwhile, the ruling ANC, which recently reiterated its support for President Zuma, announced it would conduct its own investigation. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On March 22nd, Zimbabwe's Censorship Board rejected an application submitted by Upfront Films seeking permission to distribute an internationally recognized documentary chronicling the 2013 process used to draft Zimbabwe's constitution. The Board said the documentary was not fit for local consumption because it depicted President Robert Mugabe as a dictator. The full story is available [here](#).

On March 22nd, the Malaysian Transport Ministry announced it is sending a team to South Africa to retrieve a piece of debris found along a beach for testing to see if could be a part of the missing Malaysia Airlines flight MH370. The wreckage, which was discovered near the town of Mosselbay, is thought to be from an inlet cowling of an aircraft engine. An article on the discovery was published [here](#).

On March 23rd, U.N. Special Representative to the DRC and head of the U.N. Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) Maman Sidikou briefed the U.N. Security Council on developments in the country. Special Representative Sidikou warned the DRC is at a critical juncture, with rising political tensions ahead of the presidential and legislative elections scheduled for November. He also urged the need to neutralize armed groups in the DRC and to consult the DRC Government on reducing MONUSCO personnel. The briefing was summarized [here](#).

On March 23rd, Mauritius' Environment Minister Raj Dayal was forced to resign in light of corruption allegations. Prime Minister Aneroo Jugnauth requested Minister Dayal's resignation after the surfacing of an audio recording that appeared to show him asking for money from a businessman seeking to develop a piece of land. Minister

Dayal rejected the allegations, claiming he was the victim of a conspiracy to bring down the government. The full story is available [here](#).

On March 23rd, South Africa's elite Hawks police unit launched an investigation into corruption allegations against President Jacob Zuma's son, Duduzane, as well as the Gupta family, which has recently been accused of seeking undue influence in cabinet appointments. The investigation follows a complaint filed by the Democratic Alliance, South Africa's main opposition party. The investigation was launched [here](#).

On March 24th, South Africa's national weather service forecasted most parts of the country will see above average rainfall in August. While welcome news in a region that has experienced its driest year on record due to El Nino weather patterns, the rain is anticipated to come too late to benefit maize crops. The forecast was outlined [here](#).

On March 24th, Malaysian authorities announced they will conduct a coastal search around South Africa and Mozambique for potential debris from missing Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 after investigators in Australia announced debris recently recovered in Mozambique by a South African tourist is likely to have come from the doomed flight. The most recent data suggests the plane crashed somewhere in the Indian ocean off the coast of Mozambique. An update on the investigation was provided [here](#).

General Africa News

On March 17th, *Quartz Africa* reported Nigeria is no longer the top investor destination on the African continent. According to a new Nielson report that provides a ranking of business prospects for leading markets in Africa, Cote d'Ivoire has risen to the top of the rankings, followed by Kenya, Tanzania, Nigeria, Zambia, Cameroon, South Africa, Uganda, and Ghana. The full report can be downloaded [here](#).

On March 22nd, the AfDB released its 2015 report on its CIF portfolio titled, "Financing Change: the AfDB and CIF for a Climate-Smart Africa." The report highlights that by the end of 2015, the CIF was providing support to 27 African nations in their pursuit of climate solutions and financing 39 pilot programs that are helping to advance the economic development and social goals in African countries. The report can be read [here](#).

On March 24th-29th, AfDB President Akinwumi Adesina will lead an AfDB delegation on a working visit to Japan, Korea, and China. During their trip, the AfDB team will meet with senior government officials and business contacts regarding current development issues and the AfDB's priorities initiatives, including Light Up and Power Africa, Feed Africa, Integrate Africa, Industrialize Africa, and Improve the Quality of Life for the People of Africa. The delegation's trip was outlined [here](#).

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