



ML Strategies Update

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Africa Update

Leading the News

Libya

On December 4th, international media reported that French military aircraft have flown reconnaissance and intelligence missions over Libya, including areas controlled by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). According to a document leaked to the press, additional French flights over Libya are planned. An article on the French missions over Libya was published [here](#).

On December 6th, at peace talks held in Tunis, Tunisia, Libya's rival parliaments, the House of Representatives (HOR) and the General National Congress (GNC), reached an agreement separate from United Nations (U.N.) mediation efforts that would establish a single government and yield elections within two years. U.N. Special Representative for Libya and head of the U.N. Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) Bernardino Leon applauded the effort and said the agreement would serve as a good basis for moving forward. The deal was outlined [here](#).

On December 7th, the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) confirmed that Abu Nabil, also known as Wissam Najm Abd Zyd al Zubaydi, an Iraqi national who was a longtime Al Qaeda operative and the senior ISIL leader in Libya, was killed in a U.S. military airstrike conducted in Libya on November 13th. Pentagon Press Secretary noted this was this first U.S. strike against an ISIL leader in Libya and demonstrates the U.S. will go after ISIL leaders wherever they operate. A press statement was released [here](#).

On December 7th, U.N. Special Representative for Libya Bernardino Leon called on all parties in Libya to rapidly endorse the U.N.-brokered Libyan Political Agreement. Special Representative Leon observed the Agreement is supported by the majorities of both the HOR and the GNC and urged those who are still opposed to the Agreement to support it as an opening to unite the country, fight terrorism, and address the deteriorating economic situation in Libya. Special Representative Leon's comments were captured [here](#).

Nigeria

On December 3rd, the Nigerian military arrested an 11-year-old boy as a potential suicide bomber at the Dalori camp for people displaced by Boko Haram violence in Maiduguri. According to military sources, a preliminary investigation revealed the suspect was from Bama town and is among four children trained by Boko Haram to execute suicide bombings. The three others already carried out their missions at different locations. The arrest was announced [here](#).

On December 3rd, the U.S. Department of State condemned the recent deadly suicide bombings and attacks carried out in Niger, Nigeria, and Cameroon by Boko Haram. The State Department noted these acts of brutality carried out by Boko Haram terrorists are depriving the people of the Lake Chad Basin region of their fundamental right to live in peace and security. The U.S. is supporting the governments of the Lake Chad Basin region in the fight against Boko Haram through a number of security and counterterrorism assistance programs, including the provision of advisors, intelligence, training, logistical support, and equipment. For more information, click [here](#).

On December 5th, Chadian security sources reported three suspected Boko Haram suicide attacks in the Lake Chad region, which remains under a state of emergency, have killed at least 27 people. An additional 80 people were wounded. The explosions occurred on the island of Koufoua at a weekly market. The bombings were reported [here](#).

On December 6th, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon condemned the triple suicide attacks carried out on the island of Koufoua on the Chadian side of Lake Chad, which left more than 30 people injured. Secretary-General Ban reaffirmed his solidarity with the Chadian people and reiterated U.N. support for the Government of Chad in its fight against terrorism. Secretary-General Ban's comments were recorded [here](#).

On December 7th, Nigerian military spokesperson Rabe Abubakar announced the Nigerian military has begun carrying out airstrikes on Boko Haram positions in the Sambisa forest, destroying 11 bases and allowing multinational forces to rescue people taken hostage by the terrorist group. Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari has set a December deadline for defeating Boko Haram. While the Nigerian Government has claimed that Boko Haram has surrendered, Boko Haram objected those assertions in newly released audio messages. An update was provided [here](#).

On December 8th, Cameroonian Information Minister Issa Tchiroma Backari reported the Nigerian schoolgirls captured by Boko Haram in Chibok last year were not among the roughly 900 hostages liberated by the Cameroonian army last week. While Minister Backari noted 100 Boko Haram fighters were killed during last week's raids, he said it is likely the schoolgirls have been split into groups and settled with families across a wide terrain, making them more difficult to locate. Minister Backari's comments were transcribed [here](#).

On December 8th, Nigerian refugees accused Cameroonian troops of crossing the border into Nigeria, killing 150 villagers, burning their huts, and forcing them to flee the border area between Gamboru and Banki. The Government of Cameroon denied the charges, although the incident has increased tensions between Nigeria and its neighbors regarding efforts to fight the Boko Haram extremist group. The situation was described [here](#).

On December 9th, aid agencies warned the recent spate of suicide bombings and other Boko Haram attacks in the Lake Chad region have hindered the delivery of assistance to displaced people in the region. Humanitarian organizations also observed new restrictions aimed at stopping attacks, such as bans on motorized canoes, have had the unintended consequence of hampering the provision of supplies and health care services to more than 50,000 people in need. Details were provided [here](#).

Burundi

On December 4th, Burundian police shot and killed three attackers and arrested three others in connection with an ambush and failed attempt to assassinate Christophe Manirambona, the leader of the special unit police bureau, in Bujumbura. Responding officers said the attackers were wearing police uniforms. Police also recovered rocket-propelled grenades and rifles. The incident was detailed [here](#).

On December 9th, 97 Burundian protesters who opposed President Pierre Nkurunziza's bid for a third term in office were released from prison. The freeing of the prisoners occurred as the Government of Burundi held talks with the European Union (EU) regarding the status of European assistance to Burundi in light of the arrests of protesters, shuttering of private media, and closure of the bank accounts of NGOs that have occurred as tensions continue over President Nkurunziza's reelection. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On December 9th, at least seven people were killed in Bujumbura, Burundi during overnight violence in districts where tensions remain high over President Pierre Nkurunziza's controversial reelection to a third term. Witnesses reported that police shot and killed five men in the Cibitoke district after conducting house-to-house searches in

response to grenade attacks. Additionally, administrative offices for city hall were attacked by unidentified assailants, resulting in the deaths of one policeman and one civilian. The attacks were described [here](#).

On December 9th, the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health policy held a hearing on “The Political and Security Crisis in Burundi.” The Committee received testimony from Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield, Josh Siegle of National Defense University, and Thierry Vircoulon of International Crisis Group. The hearing was noticed [here](#).

Central African Republic

On December 4th, armed men killed eight civilians and wounded one U.N. peacekeeper at a camp for displaced people in Ngakobo, Central African Republic (CAR). The attacks came just days after Pope Francis visited the country and called for Christians and Muslims to end the violence between religious groups. The attack was reported [here](#).

On December 9th, the CAR’s constitutional court unveiled the lists of the candidates rejected and approved to run in the country’s presidential election scheduled for December 27th. Notably, former President Francois Bozize, who was forced into exile two years ago and has vowed to run in the upcoming election, did not appear on the list of eligible candidates. A spokesman for President Bozize’s Kwa Na Kwa party said the court had told them President Bozize had not furnished proof of enrollment for the electoral list. Details can be seen [here](#).

On December 9th, following the release of approved candidates for the CAR’s upcoming election, former President Francois Bozize accused the constitutional court of caving to foreign pressure and banning him from the race. President Bozize’s accusations came as gunfire was reported throughout Bangui after the 30 presidential candidates were announced. President Bozize’s reaction was articulated [here](#).

Seychelles

On December 6th, state-run media in Seychelles announced the country’s presidential elections will go to a second round because none of the six candidates got a clear majority. A runoff election between incumbent President James Michel of the ruling Lepep party and Wavel Ramkalawan of the Seychelles National Party will be held in two weeks. In the first round of voting, President Michel won 47.76 percent of the vote, while Ramkalawan won 33.93 percent of the vote. Voter turnout was high with more than 60,000 of the nearly 71,000 eligible voters in Seychelles casting ballots. The results of the first round of the election were discussed [here](#).

Egypt

On December 4th, Egypt’s Supreme Electoral Commission (SEC) announced the average turnout rate of voters in the first and second rounds of voting in the Egyptian parliamentary elections was 38.3 percent, or a total of 15,206,010 voters out of an eligible 53,786,762 voters. Voter participation was highest in the South Sinai province at 41.6 percent and lowest in Suez at 18.1 percent. Additional electoral data was analyzed [here](#).

On December 4th, the U.S. Department of State issued a statement on the Egyptian parliamentary elections. The State Department said the U.S. looks forward to the seating of the new parliament and to continued engagement with the Egyptian Government and people. The State Department noted reports that the Higher Electoral Commission administered the elections professionally, but also expressed concerns about low voter turnout and limited participation by opposition parties. The State Department’s feedback was articulated [here](#).

On December 5th, the polls opened in four electoral districts in Egypt where the results of the initial voting in the parliamentary elections were voided because the candidates competing in the polls were found to be ineligible to run. Voters in the four districts will select the remaining 13 Members of Parliament (MPs) to serve in Egypt’s 596-member House of Representatives. In the previous round of voting, 555 candidates secured seats in the legislative body. An additional 28 MPs will be appointed by Egyptian President Abdul Fattah Al-Sisi. More information can be seen [here](#).

West Africa Ebola Outbreak

On December 3rd, Liberia released its last two known Ebola cases from the Ebola treatment unit (ETU) in Paynesville. The recently released patients are the father and brother of a 15-year-old boy who died from Ebola in Monrovia last week. While Tolbert Nyenswah, the head of Liberia's Ebola response, was optimistic the country is back on the path to being declared Ebola-free, new cases of Ebola are still possible, as 165 contacts remain under quarantine in Liberia. For details, click [here](#).

On December 9th, the World Health Organization (WHO) updated its statistics on the number of Ebola cases in West Africa. No confirmed cases of Ebola were reported in the week to December 6th, although the WHO noted investigations into the origin of infection of the cluster of the three cases of Ebola reported in Liberia in late November continue. Additionally, the WHO noted Sierra Leone has been Ebola-free for 20 days, while the last case of Ebola in Guinea was reported on October 29th. Additional data was analyzed [here](#).

African Migrant Crisis

On December 4th, more than 2,000 African migrants were rescued from 11 boats that were attempting to cross the Mediterranean destined for Italy. The rescues, executed by the Italian, British, and Spanish navies and assisted by Doctors Without Borders (MSF), are the largest reported in the last month. The migrants were primarily from sub-Saharan African and are thought to have set sail from Libya. The rescue operations were described [here](#).

On December 9th, Moroccan authorities recovered the bodies of 11 African migrants whose boat sank when it encountered bad weather crossing the Mediterranean for the Canary Islands. The bodies were recovered off Boujedor in the southern part of the country. It was not immediately clear how many other passengers may have been in the boat, but authorities noted that rescue operations would continue. Details were shared [here](#).

21st United Nations Conference on Climate Change

On December 3rd, as part of the U.N. Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REED) program held as part of the U.N. Climate Change Conference (COP21), Ethiopian government officials discussed the importance of forest resources to the Ethiopian economy. Ethiopian Minister of Environment and Forest Tsagaye Tadesse said Ethiopia is considering long-term strategies with a low carbon future for the management of forest resources. More information was posted [here](#).

On December 4th, leading members of the African Group of Negotiators (AGN) and civil society leaders at COP21 expressed dissatisfaction with the pace of negotiations. At an event titled, "Paris Outcome and Africa's Adaptation Need," AGN Lead Negotiator Seth Osafo said that hurdles in the talks resemble past efforts to get countries that were not parties to the Kyoto Protocol to commit to a new agreement. He also ruled out the possibility of creating new legal frameworks to accompany any agreement that is reached on climate change. Lead Negotiator Osafo's comments were captured [here](#).

On December 5th, as the COP21 negotiations continued, the World Bank, in partnership with the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the World Meteorological Organization, announced a \$600 million program to improve hydrometeorological services in 15 West African countries. The program will target countries that have poor infrastructure and lack modern technology for reliable and timely capture and transmission of meteorological information to the public. Details can be accessed [here](#).

On December 6th, following a meeting with U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, more than 50 African Environment Ministers held a meeting on the sidelines of COP21. During the meeting the Ministers received an update from the AGN on the status of the ongoing negotiations. Following the briefing, the Ministers restated their resolve to collectively demand the finalization of a binding legal agreement. More information can be seen [here](#).

On December 6th, as part of COP21, the African Union (AU) New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) launched the African Resilient Landscapes Initiative (ARLI) in partnership with the World Bank and the World Resources Institute. The initiative was designed to mobilize African countries and partners to leverage sectorial interventions and collectively ensure the integrity, resilience, restoration, and sustainable management of landscapes across regions. A press release was issued [here](#).

On December 6th, in conjunction with the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) participation in COP21, Power Africa Coordinator Andrew Herscowitz authored a blog post detailing how the Obama Administration's Power Africa initiative will enhance access to electricity and reduce poverty on the continent. In particular, Coordinator Herscowitz said Africa has tremendous potential for growth in the renewable energy sector, noting sub-Saharan countries have attracted over \$25 billion worth of investment in renewable energy projects. The full blog post can be read [here](#).

On December 8th, as part of its participation in COP21, USAID announced new partnerships and tools under the Power Africa initiative intended to support the development of renewable energy across sub-Saharan Africa. USAID highlighted new partnerships with the Government of Norway, the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), and the United Kingdom's (U.K.) Department for International Development (DFID). Additionally, Power Africa announced the launch of the Efficiency for Access (E4A) Coalition and Women in African Power. The new partnerships and tools were described [here](#).

On December 9th, the World Bank called attention to the proposed establishment of the Africa Facility for Climate-Resilient Investment, included as part of the World Bank's \$16 billion Africa Climate Business Plan that was unveiled at COP21. Launched in partnership with the AU Commission (AUC) and the U.N. Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Facility will be used to spur climate resilient investment planning on the continent. Details were shared [here](#).

On December 9th, along the margins of the COP21 climate conference, AfDB President Akinwumi Adesina held a meeting with African parliamentarians and representatives of African civil society. The forum was organized to create an opportunity for dialogue with African grassroots organizations and for President Adesina to share his vision on how the AfDB intends to make climate finance beneficial to those who need it most, including peasants, smallholder farmers, and pastoralists. The meeting was noticed [here](#).

On December 9th, on the sidelines of COP21, USAID hosted an event titled, "The Case for Inclusive Renewable Energy in Africa: A Conversation with Power Africa Partners," in Paris, France. The event was live streamed [here](#).

United States – Africa Relations

State Department

On December 3rd, State Department Deputy Spokesperson Mark Toner noted the arrival of a group of senior-level police from Somalia who are visiting the U.S. on a study tour. The Somali police officers will visit Minneapolis and Washington, DC, where they will meet senators and members of Congress. The visit was organized as part of an exchange program that affords the Somali police an opportunity to shadow U.S. police while they conduct their daily duties, with the ultimate aim of enhancing the abilities of the police force in Somalia. The visit was noted [here](#).

On December 6th-11th, Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Rose Gottemoeller was on overseas travel to Kenya, Angola, and South Africa. From December 7th-9th, Under Secretary Gottemoeller visited Nairobi, Kenya to discuss the bilateral cooperative security relationship, regional security matters, and peacekeeping efforts with counterparts at the Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs, as well as Members of the Kenyan Parliament. She also led a discussion on regional security at the University of Nairobi and participated in a roundtable discussion on military issues and regional security with think tank experts. On December 9th-10th, Under Secretary Gottemoeller traveled to Luanda, Angola for meetings on regional security, security cooperation, weapons removal and abatement, and arms control matters with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defense. She also met with HALO Trust and the National Demining Authority to discuss humanitarian mine action and conventional weapons destruction. Finally, On December 11th, Under Secretary Gottemoeller will be in Pretoria, South Africa for meetings on security cooperation, peacekeeping, and nonproliferation matters with her counterparts at the Department of International Relations and Cooperation. She is also scheduled to meet with Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) alumnae to discuss leadership and lead a think tank roundtable on peacekeeping. Under Secretary Gottemoeller's travel was outlined [here](#).

On December 7th, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Steven Feldstein delivered a speech on "Human Rights and Democracy Trends in Africa" at the New York City Bar Association. In his remarks, Deputy Assistant Secretary Feldstein addressed the uprising against former President Blaise

Compaore in Burkina Faso, President Pierre Nkurunziza's controversial run for a third term in office in Burundi, as well as other efforts underway to extend presidential term limits in Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and the Republic of Congo (ROC). Deputy Assistant Secretary Feldstein's full remarks can be read [here](#).

On December 9th, U.S. Secretary of State met with Algerian Foreign Minister Ramtane Lamamra. During the meeting, Secretary Kerry thanked Foreign Minister Lamamra for his leadership and for Algeria's guidance with respect to the mediation in Mali, where they successfully managed to get an agreement and are still working to reduce tensions. The two leaders also discussed the situation in Libya and strategies for advancing the peace process in the country. Secretary Kerry's remarks with Foreign Minister Lamamra were transcribed [here](#).

On December 9th, the State Department designated Emrah Erdogan as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT), imposing an assets freeze, travel ban, and arms embargo against Erdogan. As a member of both Al Qaeda and Al Shabaab, Erdogan has recruited foreign terrorist fighters, participated in fighting, and raised funds for both groups. He was known to have trained with Al Shabaab and to have carried out attacks in Kenya and Uganda before he was apprehended in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Erdogan is currently serving a prison sentence in Germany related to his engagement in terrorist activities. For details, click [here](#).

On December 10th-11th, Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs Michele Thoren Bond will visit the DRC for a series of meetings with foreign government authorities. While in the DRC, Assistant Secretary Bond will discuss the status of exit permits for children adopted by U.S. citizens and encourage the DRC to immediately lift the suspension of exit permits. She will also reach out to U.S. families currently resident in the DRC who have adopted Congolese children and are awaiting permission to exit with their new family members. Assistant Secretary Bond's travel was announced [here](#).

Department of Defense

On December 4th, the U.S. Army Research, Development, and Engineering Command (RDECOM) highlighted its work with African soldiers to test and upgrade language translation software. U.S. soldiers recorded 1,664 lines of speech from 20 Nigerien soldiers during the Military Intelligence Basic Officer Course recently held in Niger. The effort is part of U.S. Army Africa's Horizon strategy to build partnerships across the continent to achieve mutual security objectives. More information can be found [here](#).

On December 7th, DOD confirmed Abdirahman Sandhere, also known as Ukash, a senior leader of Al Shabaab was killed in a U.S. military airstrike carried out in Somalia on December 2nd. The Pentagon reported two other Al Shabaab-affiliated associates were also killed in the strike that specifically targeted Sandhere. DOD recognized Sandhere's removal from the battlefield as a significant blow to Al Shabaab and pledged the U.S. will continue to use all of the tools at its disposal to dismantle Al Shabaab and other terrorist groups who threaten the U.S. A press release was issued [here](#).

On December 7th, USS Gravely Public Affairs called attention to the guided-missile destroyer's recent participation in a bilateral passing exercise (PASSEX) with the Royal Moroccan Navy Ship Sultan Moulay Ismail. The exercise included a coordinated series of movements made in formation and a maritime interdiction operations exercise where the two ships exchange their visit, board, search and seizure teams to provide an opportunity for training with the other crew. For details, click [here](#).

On December 7th, the West Africa Disaster Preparedness Initiative Way Forward Conference (WADPI) kicked off in Accra, Ghana. Supported by U.S. Africa Command's (AFRICOM) Disaster Preparedness Program and other U.S. Government agencies, WADPI brought together more than 200 attendees from West Africa, European, and U.S. government agencies to promote a whole-of-government approach to disaster management in West Africa. Details can be seen [here](#).

On December 10th, Pentagon leaders presented the White House with a new plan for utilizing overseas bases, including in Africa, to collect intelligence and carry out strikes against ISIL and its affiliates. The proposed architecture of bases would include four hubs, including one that would expand the existing U.S. base in Djibouti, as well as a series of smaller, more basic installations that could include Niger and Cameroon, where the U.S. is already carrying out surveillance missions. The plan has been met with some resistance, mostly due to concerns about the expansion of the U.S. military presence abroad and overall costs. The proposal was outlined [here](#).

Department of Justice

On December 7th, U.S. victims of the 2000 USS Cole bombing who won a \$315 million default judgement appeared before a Second Circuit panel to argue against U.S. and Sudanese claims that the initial lawsuit was inappropriately served to Sudan's U.S. Embassy. While the Government of Sudan has said it was not made aware of the original complaint, the victims argued that Sudanese Government officials met with them over a settlement, which makes them unable to claim they were unaware of the suit. Details were shared [here](#).

Overseas Private Investment Corporation

On December 3rd, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) highlighted the impact of its 2015 development portfolio. In FY15, OPIC committed \$4.4 billion in development finance support, with \$1.9 billion committed to impactful projects in low-income countries. As an example, OPIC noted its Portfolio for Impact (PI) pilot program was used to support the Africa-focused microfinance group PAMIGA, which will spur 100,000 microloans across eight countries, supporting farm households with home solar power and micro-irrigation kits. Details were released [here](#).

Congress

On December 3rd, House Select Committee on Benghazi Communications Director Jamal Ware released the Committee's upcoming schedule of private witness interviews to be conducted throughout December and early January. The Committee is scheduled to interview former Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Jeffrey Feltman, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for International Program and Diplomatic Security Charlene Lamb, former Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources Thomas Nides, and former Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) David Petraeus. The schedule was posted [here](#).

On December 9th, the House Select Committee on Benghazi completed its 60th witness interview, questioning Jeffrey Feltman, the former Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs. According to Select Committee on Benghazi Press Secretary Matt Wolking, the Committee is on track to complete more than 70 witness interviews before releasing its report in just a few months. A press release was issued [here](#).

On December 9th, House Select Committee on Benghazi Ranking Member Elijah Cummings (D-MD) released an unredacted email aimed at debunking recent allegations from conservative news outlets regarding DOD's response on the night of the September 2012 attacks in Benghazi, Libya. Committee Democrats highlighted that then-Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta authorized three specific actions in response to the attacks, including the deployment of two Marine Fleet Antiterrorism Security Team (FAST) platoons to Benghazi and Tripoli, the movement of a U.S. special operations unit from Croatia to Italy, and the dispatch of a special operations team in the U.S. to the region. Details can be accessed [here](#).

On December 10th, the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee held a hearing titled, "Independent South Sudan: A Failure of Leadership." Witnesses included U.S. Special Envoy to Sudan and South Sudan Donald Booth and Deputy USAID Administrator for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance Robert Leavitt. Additional testimony was provided by Princeton Lyman of the U.S. Institute of Peace and Adotei Akwei of Amnesty International USA. A recording of the hearing can be watched [here](#).

North Africa

On December 4th, at least 16 people were killed and three others injured in an attack on a restaurant and nightclub in Cairo, Egypt. According to the Ministry of Interior, there had been altercations and arguments between employees and the perpetrators of the attack. The perpetrators left the venue and returned with Molotov cocktails for revenge. The full story is available [here](#).

On December 4th, Tunisian police arrested two suspected jihadists planning new attacks on Tunis. The arrests were announced just ten days after a suicide bombing claimed by ISIL killed 12 members of the presidential guard. The arrests were reported [here](#).

On December 4th, the Partnership for a Secure America (PSA) hosted a briefing on “Libya and Kurdistan: An Analytical and On-the-Ground Perspective.” Speakers included Christopher Blanchard of the Congressional Research Service (CRS), Andrew Engel, Middle East and North Africa Analyst at the Navanti Group, and Tera Dahl, Executive Director and Co-Founder of the Council on Global Security. Event details can be seen [here](#).

On December 8th, Egyptian Tourism Minister Hisham Zaazou said the country’s tourism revenues in 2015 will be at least ten percent below last year’s following the October 31st take down of a Russian passenger jet by ISIL militants. A global advertising campaign aimed at reviving Egypt’s tourism sector was actually due to be launched on the day of the crash. According to Minister Zaazou, Egypt has since undertaken new efforts to plug gaps in security and persuade tourists to return to its ancient sites, desert treks, and beaches. His remarks were recorded [here](#).

On December 8th, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) released a video showing three men confessing to spying for the Mauritanian and French military and then one being shot in the head. According to the video, the men said they had been spying in northern Mali since 2006. The video was described [here](#).

On December 9th, Egyptian Housing Minister Mustafa Madbouly announced a \$20 billion plan to build one million homes for some of Egypt’s poorest citizens over the next five years. The project is targeted at alleviating the spread of slums and unlicensed buildings since the 2011 uprising in the country. According to Minister Madbouly, Egypt needs to build 500,000-600,000 new homes a year to keep pace with demand. His comments were captured [here](#).

East Africa

On December 4th, the WHO noted the deployment of an emergency health team to Ethiopia to support the government’s response to the drought conditions brought on by El Nino. Recent weather patterns have left an estimated 8.2 million people in need of food aid. Additionally, the WHO expressed concern that rising food security is creating additional burdens for people’s health and the health system, as malnutrition predisposes more people, including children, to infectious diseases. The situation was detailed [here](#).

On December 4th, as part of his push to end graft, Tanzanian President John Magufuli set a one-week deadline for taxpayers to pay what they owe or face prosecution. Big firms are the main source of tax revenue in Tanzania, primarily because the country boasts a relatively large informal economy. Additionally, President Magufuli threatened to sack any public official seeking to block investment in Tanzania. An article on the latest measures rolled out by President Magufuli can be read [here](#).

On December 4th, Google launched its first Wi-Fi network in Kampala, Uganda, as part of its effort to boost access to affordable, high-speed internet. As part of the project, Google has made the broadband wireless network available to local internet providers, who will then charge customers for the service. It is estimated 8.5 million Ugandans, or roughly 23 percent of the population, are internet users. The project was launched [here](#).

On December 6th, Kenyan herdsman in the remote village of Lethe discovered shallow graves containing the remains of 12 corpses. Photos of the freshly dead bodies were shared on social media, sparking fears of a return of extrajudicial killings in an area where police and military forces have been fighting Al Shabaab. The situation was described [here](#).

On December 7th, the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), in partnership with the EU, completed the deployment of 15 Fish-Aggregating Devices (FADs) along Somalia’s coastline to help boost small-scale fisheries and tackle food insecurity and malnutrition. The FADs will attract fish that can be easily caught, making fishing off Somalia’s coast more safe and efficient. More information can be accessed [here](#).

On December 7th, Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta came under criticism for his frequent travel abroad. Last week, President Kenyatta traveled to South Africa, France, and Malta, and he is scheduled to depart for Rwanda later this week. An internet campaign has been launched to mock President Kenyatta as a visitor to Kenya. Details were shared [here](#).

On December 7th, while campaigning in the West Nile region, Ugandan presidential candidate Abed Bwanika of the People’s Development Party pledged to return the remains of former President Idi Amin from Saudi Arabia and hold

a decent state burial. The pledge was enthusiastically supported in the West Nile region where many people believe if one is buried away from his homeland, there will be misfortune for his family. Bwanika's campaigning in the West Nile area was highlighted [here](#).

On December 8th, newly elected Tanzanian President John Magufuli sacked Director General of the Tanzania Ports Authority (TPA) Awadhi Massawe and the Permanent Secretary for the Transport Ministry Shaaban Mwinjaka. The dismissals were related to the disappearance of over 2,700 shipping containers at the port in Dar es Salaam. President Magufuli also disbanded the TPA's Board of Directors, citing the Board's failure to address longstanding poor performance. An article on the dismissals was published [here](#).

On December 9th, Kenya and the U.K. signed a deal to allow British troops to continue military training in Kenya for five more years. While about 10,000 soldiers typically train in Kenya each year, the future for training operations in the country had been unclear due to disagreements regarding the judicial process for British soldiers accused of crimes in Kenya. Under the new agreement, British soldiers who commit crimes while off duty will appear before Kenyan courts, while those who are accused of crimes that take place during active duty will face British military tribunals. The agreement was outlined [here](#).

On December 9th, *Quartz Africa* profiled Kenyan solar company M-Kopa, which is providing energy access to Kenyans, Ugandans, and Tanzanians who live off-the-grid for just 50 cents a day. M-Kopa's technology uses mobile phones to show how solar energy can be marketed at scale in Africa. The company's home solar energy system provides three lights, five USB connections, and a portable radio, which has helped to address the challenge of limited grid connections in East Africa. M-Kopa's approach was discussed [here](#).

On December 10th, Tanzanian President John Magufuli announced a new cabinet of 19 ministers and 16 deputies. Notably, President Magufuli reappointed Sospeter Muhongo, who resigned from the previous cabinet over a graft scandal at the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, to his old post, and former Tanzanian Ambassador to the U.N. Augustine Mahiga to serve as Minister of Foreign Affairs. President Magufuli deferred decisions on four cabinet appointments, including the Minister of Finance. An article on the new cabinet can be read [here](#).

On December 10th, six Kenyan politicians were detained over comments they made about the alleged discovery of mass graves in the northeastern part of the country. Billow Kerrow, a prominent lawmaker who was among those detained, suggested the graves were used to conceal the bodies of people who were killed by Kenyan security forces. Meanwhile, the Interior Ministry continued to refute such claims. Developments were noted [here](#).

On December 10th, Kenya's Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) announced presidential and parliamentary elections will proceed on August 8, 2017, despite rising concerns in the country regarding hate speech. Following the disputed elections and post-election violence in 2007, the Kenyan parliament passed strict laws banning hate speech. Leading up to voter registration in February and March, the IEBC called on security agencies to address hate speech as a potential threat to the electoral process. The issue was detailed [here](#).

West Africa

On December 2nd, the Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) concluded the Article IV consultation and completed the fourth review of Mali's performance under an economic program supported by a three-year Extended Credit Facility (ECF) arrangement, enabling a \$5.5 million disbursement. The Executive Board noted that Mali is entering its third year of economic recovery. It applauded Malian authorities for the growth in tax revenue and encouraged further broadening of the tax base and the reduction of large exemptions. The Executive Board's feedback was summarized [here](#).

On December 2nd, IMF's Africa Regional Technical Assistance Center (AFRITAC) West 2 held its third steering committee meeting in Ghana. Despite the Ebola crisis, Ghanaian Minister of Finance Seth Terkper noted AFRITAC West 2's capacity building efforts in the region are having a positive impact in member countries. There was consensus that AFRITAC West 2 has made significant progress in the past six months and agreement that AFRITAC West 2 should help foster regional integration in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and facilitate greater knowledge sharing between its members. Outcomes of the meeting were highlighted [here](#).

On December 4th, the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) said it had cut a fine on mobile operator MTN to \$3.9 billion and not \$3.4 billion as previously reported, due to a typo. The NCC hit MTN with a \$5.2 billion penalty in October for failing to disconnect users with unregistered SIM cards. The miscommunication was discussed [here](#).

On December 7th, the AfDB launched its Development Effectiveness Review 2015 in Freetown, Sierra Leone. The review will result in a comprehensive report on the AfDB's performance in the country and track how the AfDB's operations have contributed to Sierra Leone's development results. The launch of the review was noted [here](#).

On December 7th, Islamist militant group Al Mourabitoun published a photo of two men in military fatigues that it claimed executed the November 20th attack on the Raddisson hotel in Bamako, Mali that left 20 people dead. Last month, Mali state television showed photographs of the corpses of the two men it said were the attackers. Developments were reported [here](#).

On December 8th, Executive Directors of the AfDB met in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire to approve the institution's 2016-2018 work program and budget, which proposed lending of up to \$33.55 billion to 620 projects. The Board also approved a \$492 million administrative budget for the AfDB in 2016, which will allow the Bank to scale up and accelerate the implementation of the Ten Year Strategy, which places priority on powering, feeding, industrializing, and integrating Africa, and improving quality of life for people who live on the continent. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On December 8th, Ghanaian Chief Justice Georgina Theodora Wood dismissed 20 judges and magistrates found guilty of bribery. Those sacked appeared in a video released this summer documenting evidence of judges demanding bribes and sex to influence their decisions in court cases. Some of the judges were also stripped of their benefits, while others who showed remorse and apologized for their actions got to keep their benefits. The full story is available [here](#).

On December 8th, Gabonese Prime Minister Daniel Ona Ondo opened the 11th African Symposium on Statistical Development (ASSD) organized by the AfDB, the ECA, the AUC, Statistics South Africa, and the Gabon Bureau of Statistics in Libreville. The event brought together representatives of 54 African countries, as well as bilateral and multilateral institutions to discuss the use of information communications technology (ICT) systems to improve civil registration systems in Africa for the delivery of education, health care, housing, water, and sanitation services. For more information, click [here](#).

On December 8th, lawyers for Ivorian Parliament Speaker Guillaume Soro said a warrant issued by a French judge in a case brought against him by former Ivoirian President Laurent Gbago's son, Michel, regarding kidnapping, false imprisonment, and inhuman and degrading treatment, has been withdrawn. French police reportedly tried unsuccessfully to execute the warrant on Monday at the residence where Speaker Soro has been staying during the COP21 climate talks. Details can be seen [here](#).

On December 8th, lawmakers in Nigeria pulled a bill outlining broad reforms for the country's oil sector from consideration and instead introduced the first piece of incremental legislation toward reform drafted by the Senate and overseen by the Petroleum Ministry. The new draft bill would split the state-owned Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) into two entities, rather than a number of smaller units as called for in the earlier bill. An article on the legislation can be read [here](#).

On December 8th, Nigerian protestors marched on the National Assembly in opposition to a bill limiting the use of social media that recently passed the Senate. Critics of the legislation say the bill, which would establish fines or jail time for people who use social media or text messages to circulate abusive statements against public institutions or individuals and criminalize the spreading of false information, is an attack on the right to freedom of speech enshrined in Nigeria's constitution. The opposition to the legislation was discussed [here](#).

On December 9th, the IMF completed the eighth and final review under the ECF Arrangement for Cote d'Ivoire, enabling the immediate release of approximately \$67.7 million. The IMF's Executive Board observed Cote d'Ivoire's economic performance since the arrangement was established in 2011 has been impressive, noting that macroeconomic stability has been restored and per capita income has been lifted by 20 percent. While the IMF noted that poverty decreased, it also cautioned that poverty in Cote d'Ivoire remains high. Additional economic data was provided [here](#).

On December 10th, *Reuters* reported on the impact coastal erosion has had on tourism in Senegal. While Senegal attracts roughly one million tourists each year, primarily European beach goers, this trend may slow as reckless building on beach compounds worsens the outcomes of climate change. Tourism accounts for 11 percent of Senegal's economy and has also been affected by perceptions of insecurity and the regional Ebola crisis. Additional insights were posted [here](#).

Sub-Saharan Africa

On December 4th, the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCHR) reported more than 4,000 people fled to a remote region in the DRC due to recent fighting between local groups known as the Arrow Boys and the South Sudanese Army in the Western Equatoria region of South Sudan. Registration in the DRC is ongoing along the border, where new arrivals of refugees continue to be documented. The situation was described [here](#).

On December 4th, the World Bank highlighted Madagascar's vulnerability to climate change, noting the country is one of the Vulnerable Twenty (V20) nations that may see its future development severely impacted by changes to the environment. Climate change has increased Madagascar's vulnerability to cyclones and flooding, raising concerns about the impact of climate change on agriculture, food security, and infrastructure. Details can be viewed [here](#).

On December 4th, AFRITAC South completed a seminar at the facilities of the Africa Training Institute in Mauritius on improving fiscal and statistical reporting. The event brought together government officials from Comoros, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe to share their knowledge and country experience in implementing international public sector accounting (IPSAS) and the IMF Government Finance Statistics Manual 2014 (GFSM2014). Details can be seen [here](#).

On December 4th, at the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation held in Johannesburg, South Africa, Chinese President Xi Jinping pledged \$60 billion in financing for development projects across the continent. Without going into detail on which African countries would receive Chinese assistance, President Xi said the funds would be invested in ten projects over three years. The Chinese commitments were highlighted [here](#).

On December 4th, South African authorities denied local media reports that an arrest warrant had been issued for Paralympian Oscar Pistorius after he was convicted on appeal of murdering his girlfriend, Reeva Steenkamp. National Prosecuting Authority Spokesman Luvuyo Mfaku clarified no warrant had been issued and Pistorius' new sentence will be handed down at a later date. More information can be accessed [here](#).

On December 7th, Rwandan President Paul Kagame said he will likely decide on whether or not to run for a third term in office after a constitutional referendum that would legally allow him to run. The proposed constitutional changes would allow President Kagame to run for another seven-year term in 2017 and two additional five-year terms after that. An article on the referendum can be read [here](#).

On December 7th, General Gilbert Diendere, the leader of September's failed coup attempt in Burkina Faso, was charged with complicity in the 1987 murder of former President Thomas Sankara. President Sankara was thought to be murdered by a group of soldiers and the exact circumstances surrounding his death have been under investigation. General Diendere, who is already in detention related to the coup, was viewed as one of President Sankara's allies at the time he was murdered. The full story is available [here](#).

On December 8th, U.N. Special Representative and head of the U.N. Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) Abdoulaye Bathily presented to the U.N. Security Council on conditions in the region. Special Representative Bathily said the violent activities of armed groups, such as Boko Haram and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), have triggered a humanitarian and security crisis. He also raised concerns regarding other regional conflicts near the Lake Chad Basin and the risks posed by vulnerability to radicalization and poverty. Excerpts from the briefing were highlighted [here](#).

On December 8th, the U.N. released a new report documenting 143 human rights violations carried out by security forces in the DRC linked to the country's electoral process. The report notes Congolese security forces have used summary executions, death threats, and arbitrary arrests against the opposition, media, and civil society since the start of the year. In response to the report U.N. High Commission for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein said if

the upcoming elections are to be credible and peaceful, authorities must ensure all citizens can fully participate in open and democratic debate. The report's findings were summarized [here](#).

On December 8th, the World Bank released the Botswana Poverty Assessment Report, which finds that thousands of Botswana rose out of poverty thanks to increased growth in rural areas driven by rising agricultural incomes and welfare improvements. The World Bank observed the number of poor people in Botswana declined by nearly 180,000 between 2002 and 2010, with many people in rural areas rising out of poverty. The full report can be downloaded [here](#).

On December 8th, the AfDB's African Financial Markets Initiative (AFMI) concluded a two-day workshop in Johannesburg, South Africa on the collection and dissemination of reliable and accurate market data. The workshop convened central bank officers, regulators, and representatives of Ministries of Finance and stock exchanges together to share experiences in the development of debt markets and diversification of the investor base and regulatory environment. More information was posted [here](#).

On December 8th, the High Court in Pretoria, South Africa granted murder-convicted Paralympian Oscar Pistorius bail and fitted him with an electronic tag. As part of the bail agreement, Pistorius was also ordered to turn over his passport. His case was then postponed until April 18, 2016. An update on the proceedings was provided [here](#).

On December 8th, *Quartz Africa* reported that drilling rigs may soon be constructed in Botswana's Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, one of the largest wildlife conservation areas in Africa. In 2014, the Government of Botswana sold the rights to explore for natural gas in more than half of the park to the British company Nodding Donkey, now known as Karoo Energy. Details were posted [here](#).

On December 8th, three South African musicians, including Wouter Kellerman, Ladysmith Black Mambazo, and Neville D were nominated for Grammy awards in categories recognizing a range of music, including gospel, contemporary, and traditional. The 2016 Grammy Awards ceremony will be held on February 15th. The nominations were noted [here](#).

On December 9th, the WHO released its annual malaria report, which showed that the number of people killed by malaria has fallen below half a million in the past year, due primarily to strides made against the disease in sub-Saharan Africa. In particular, the WHO said malaria prevention measures, including bed nets and indoor and outdoor spraying, have been especially effective. The report's findings were highlighted [here](#).

On December 9th, the Government of Rwanda announced plans to hold a referendum on the constitutional amendment that will allow President Paul Kagame to seek a third term in office, and potentially allow him to remain in power until 2034. Rwandans overseas will vote on the amendment on December 17th, while voting in the country will be held on December 18th. The scheduling of the referendum was announced [here](#).

On December 9th, Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe warned members of the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party that the group could split if rival factions continue to foster division around the selection of his successor. While President Mugabe did not name anyone in particular, Joice Mujuru, who President Mugabe fired as his deputy last year, has come under allegations of plotting to remove President Mugabe from power. Another faction of the party is supporting President Mugabe's wife, Grace, as his successor, while current Vice President Emmerson Mnangagwa is largely favored to take over. More information can be found [here](#).

On December 9th, Luzolo Bambi, DRC President Joseph Kabila's anti-corruption advisor, estimated the DRC loses up to \$15 billion each year due to fraud, including cases at the highest level of government. In June, Bambi filed a criminal complaint on behalf of President Kabila against more than a dozen current and former government officials accused of fraud, corruption, and money laundering. Bambi's comments were recorded [here](#).

On December 10th, the U.N. Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) unveiled new data demonstrating that populations in Zimbabwe continue to be the vulnerable to HIV/AIDS, despite overall progress that has been made in fighting the virus. According to UNAIDS, about 17 percent of Zimbabwean adults live with HIV/AIDS, making the country one of five African nations where HIV/AIDS in the adult population hovers around 20 percent. Additionally, only 40 percent of children in Zimbabwe who require antiviral therapy receive it. The data was analyzed [here](#).

On December 10th, South African President Jacob Zuma announced his decision to replace Finance Minister Nhlanhla Nene with the relatively unknown David van Rooyen. President Zuma indicated Minister Nene would be moved to another strategic position, but did not seek to justify the switch up. Local analysts believe Minister Nene's efforts to reign in public spending may have unsettled some people close to President Zuma. An article on the situation was published [here](#).

General Africa News

On December 7th, U.S. Republican presidential candidate Ben Carson announced he will make a weeklong trip to Africa at the end of December, making stops in Nigeria, Kenya, and Zambia. The Carson campaign indicated those countries were selected because of the strategic importance of those regions to the U.S. and because of Carson's own family ancestry. The trip is viewed by most analysts as a move to boost Carson's credentials on foreign policy. Details can be seen [here](#).

On December 8th, the U.N. Security Council issued a presidential expressing concern for terrorist safe havens in Libya and the humanitarian crisis caused by Boko Haram terrorists in Nigeria and calling for greater international security cooperation and more humanitarian aid to bring stability to the continent. In particular, the Security Council registered concern for the widespread availability of unsecured arms and ammunition in Libya, as well as the 41 million youths vulnerable to radicalization in the areas impacted by Boko Haram. The full statement can be read [here](#).

On December 8th, Save the Elephants reported that Chinese President Xi Jinping's pledge to ban the ivory trade, in addition to the launch of public awareness campaigns, has halved demand for ivory in China over the past 18 months. While poaching has yet to significantly decrease in Africa, Save the Elephants expressed optimism this could be a positive trend for the continent's declining elephant population. For more information, click [here](#).

On December 9th, Rupert Boyd, Co-Founder of African Alpha Investment Partners, said his firm is in talks to raise funding for a new equity platform that would help developers bridge the gap in financing to support Africa's emerging renewable energy sector. Similar firms, including Denham Capital, The Carlyle Group, and The Abraaj Group, have also all recently targeted the African energy sector for investment. More information can be found [here](#).

On December 9th, the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) announced a regional plan that calls for \$1.98 billion to provide assistance to nine African countries in the Sahel region. OCHA appealed for pledges to meet the funding request that will be used to address the effects of climate change, fast population growth, and a rise in violence and insecurity. Details were issued [here](#).

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