



Security Council

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Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa

I. Introduction

1. In a letter dated 23 December 2013 ([S/2013/759](#)), the President of the Security Council informed the Secretary-General of the Council's concurrence with my recommendation to extend the mandate of the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA) until 31 December 2016, and requested that I report to the Council every six months on the implementation of the mandate.

2. The present report covers the period from 1 July to 31 December 2014. It provides an overview of developments and trends in West Africa and outlines the activities undertaken by UNOWA in the areas of good offices, enhancing subregional capacities to address cross-border and cross-cutting threats to peace and security, and promoting good governance, respect for the rule of law, human rights and gender mainstreaming. It also outlines the efforts of UNOWA in engaging regional and subregional organizations, in particular the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Mano River Union, in order to promote peace and stability in West Africa.

II. Developments and trends in West Africa

3. On 12 September, I announced the appointment of Mohammed Ibn Chambas (Ghana) as my new Special Representative for West Africa and Head of UNOWA to succeed Said Djinnit (Algeria), whose mandate ended on 30 September. My new Special Representative assumed responsibilities on 9 October.

4. Since the issuance of my last report ([S/2014/442](#)), there have been several key political and security developments in West Africa, particularly in countries preparing for general elections in 2015 and 2016, including Burkina Faso, the Niger, Nigeria and Togo. In Burkina Faso, political tensions resulted in a popular uprising leading to the resignation of President Blaise Compaoré. In Nigeria, a rapidly deteriorating security situation in the north-east of the country is heightening political debate ahead of the general elections to be held in February 2015. In Togo, demonstrations calling for electoral reforms continued, while in the Niger, political divisions and criminal action initiated against key political figures escalated tensions.



5. A number of persisting challenges continued to affect West Africa, notably transnational organized crime, including illicit drug trafficking, piracy in the Gulf of Guinea and cross-border security challenges in the Sahel. Among the more serious challenges were violent extremism in Mali, as well as the activities of Boko Haram in and outside of Nigeria, which had a significant impact on security in the Lake Chad Basin area.

6. The spread and scale of the Ebola virus disease outbreak in West Africa, which was first reported in March 2014, intensified drastically and plunged the region into an unparalleled public health crisis, with implications for peace and security. The outbreak led to the near isolation of the three most-affected countries — Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone — with severe economic, social and political consequences for the entire region. Ebola has exposed weaknesses in national health infrastructures and services, as well as gaps in regional mechanisms.

A. Political and governance trends

7. In Burkina Faso, tensions had been brewing for some time over former President Compaoré's intention to amend the Constitution to allow him to run in the 2015 presidential elections. On 23 September, the former President initiated a political dialogue with the opposition in an attempt to defuse the political crisis. However, he announced on 6 October that the dialogue had been inconclusive after four preliminary meetings. The dialogue followed several attempts by national and regional actors to mediate between the presidential majority and the opposition, including efforts led by former Burkinabé President Jean-Baptiste Ouédraogo as well as initiatives taken by President Alassane Ouattara of Côte d'Ivoire. On 21 October, the Council of Ministers adopted a draft bill on proposed amendments to the Constitution, which was scheduled to be voted on by the National Assembly on 30 October. The draft bill proposed amending article 37 by changing the two-term limit on the presidency to three, thus allowing President Compaoré to stand for re-election.

8. In reaction, on 28 October, Burkinabés came out in massive numbers to attend a rally planned by opposition parties and civil society organizations. Apart from sporadic confrontations between demonstrators and the police, no violence was reported. The rally ended with the opposition launching a civil disobedience campaign to prevent the adoption of the draft bill. On 30 October, demonstrators broke through police lines and ransacked the National Assembly building. They also set ablaze City Hall, which was the headquarters of the ruling party, Congress for Democracy and Progress (CDP), and other private and public buildings. Despite former President Compaoré's radio announcement, later in the day, withdrawing the bill and establishing a state of emergency, violent protests intensified in Ouagadougou and spread beyond the capital. According to the report of an ad hoc commission set up to assess the losses incurred and damage caused during the popular uprising, some 29 people were killed and 625 injured in the protests.

9. On 31 October, President Compaoré resigned and left the country. On 1 November, shortly after a similar announcement by the Chief of Defence Staff, General Nabéré Honoré Traoré, Lieutenant Colonel Isaac Yacouba Zida, the Deputy Chief Commander of the presidential guard, announced the suspension of the Constitution, and each declared himself Head of State. While the Chief of Defence

Staff held discussions with Burkinabé stakeholders, some opposition parties and civil society leaders accused the military of trying to hijack the “people’s revolution” and repeatedly demanded that they hand over power to a civilian-led transition. On 13 November, following an intensive national dialogue process, which was supported by regional and international stakeholders, including my Special Representative, Burkinabé stakeholders agreed on a Charter of the Transition, which was signed on 16 November. On 18 November, Michel Kafando was sworn in as the Transitional President and was officially inaugurated on 21 November. On 19 November, Lieutenant Colonel Zida was appointed Transitional Prime Minister. On 23 November, he announced the composition of a 26-member Transitional Government, which held its first meeting on 24 November. The composition of the final transitional organ, the Transitional National Council, was announced on 27 November. According to the Charter of the Transition, the transitional period will end with the conduct of general elections in November 2015.

10. In Nigeria, on 11 November, President Goodluck Jonathan announced his intention to run for a second presidential term. He pledged his commitment to continue to fight against terrorism and to secure the liberation of the schoolgirls abducted in Chibok Town, in the north-east of the country, in April. Muhammadu Buhari, former Head of State and three-time presidential contender, was selected as the candidate for the leading opposition party, the All Progressives Congress (APC), at the party’s presidential primaries on 10 December.

11. Symptomatic of the continuing political manoeuvring among political parties in the lead-up to the election, on 28 October, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Aminu Tambuwal, defected from the ruling People’s Democratic Party (PDP) to APC. On 20 November, security personnel prevented Mr. Tambuwal from entering the National Assembly, which was expected to discuss President Jonathan’s request for an extension of the state of emergency in the three north-eastern States of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa. A scuffle ensued, leading to police being called to the scene and tear gas being sprayed. Due to the incident, the Senate President adjourned meetings in both houses until 7 December.

12. In the Niger, political tensions increased owing to the rift between President Mahamadou Issoufou and Hama Amadou, Speaker of the National Assembly. On 26 August, the National Assembly lifted the immunity of Mr. Amadou to enable a criminal investigation against him for his alleged role in a child-trafficking network. While a national warrant for his arrest was issued on the same day, it could not be served since he had fled the country. During the reporting period, several members of opposition parties in the Niger were arrested and subsequently released on bail. These events took place against a background of increased cross-border security threats from Boko Haram in the south of the country.

13. In Benin, Côte d’Ivoire and Togo, the political environment was also marked by preparations for upcoming elections. In Togo, eight opposition parties formed a coalition and nominated a joint presidential candidate ahead of the elections scheduled for March 2015. Meanwhile, calls for free and inclusive dialogue and reforms intensified, culminating in mass demonstrations on 21 November. Protestors demanded that constitutional reforms be instituted to prevent President Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé from running for a third term. In Benin, the political climate was also tense owing to technical difficulties related to the electronic voter registration list, as well as the perceived intention of incumbent President Boni Yayi

to initiate a constitutional amendment to enable him to run for a third term of office. In Côte d'Ivoire, the members of the Independent Electoral Commission were sworn in on 11 August following negotiations between the Government and opposition parties on its composition.

14. Formal peace negotiations between the Government of Mali and the armed groups were launched in Algiers on 14 July, with the facilitation of an international mediation team comprised of the United Nations, regional organizations and neighbouring countries and led by Algeria. The negotiations were aimed at preserving the ceasefire and finding a political solution to the conflict, while safeguarding Mali's territorial integrity. On 24 July, the Government of Mali and the armed groups signed a preliminary accord laying out a road map for further negotiations. In mid-November, the parties resumed negotiations on a draft peace agreement provided by the mediation team in the third round of negotiations in October. These negotiations ended on 27 November and will resume in January 2015.

15. During the period under review, the Ebola outbreak exacerbated political and social tensions in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Measures adopted by national authorities to contain the outbreak were criticized by civil society and humanitarian actors as being too coercive or promoting stigmatization. In some instances, national officials involved in containment efforts were accused of embezzlement and corruption. Confrontations between police forces and demonstrators turned deadly in Monrovia on 22 August, and in Koidu, in the eastern part of Sierra Leone, on 21 October. States of emergency were declared in Sierra Leone on 31 July, in Liberia on 6 August and in Guinea on 13 August. In Guinea, local elections were postponed indefinitely, and in Liberia senatorial midterm elections were postponed from 14 October to 16 December. Both the House of Representatives and the Senate denied President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf's request for additional emergency powers to assist in stemming the spread of Ebola. On 13 November, the state of emergency in Liberia was lifted, although the night time curfew continues.

16. In an effort to contain Ebola, some West African countries closed their borders and suspended commercial flights to the three most-affected states, namely Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Côte d'Ivoire imposed flight restrictions to and from the three States on 10 August, followed by a land border closure on 22 August. Guinea-Bissau closed its land border with Guinea on 13 August, and Senegal followed suit on 22 August. These unilateral actions were indicative of the absence of an integrated regional response to the crisis and were taken outside of existing frameworks of cooperation provided by ECOWAS and the Mano River Union. On 1 September, the Government of Côte d'Ivoire announced the opening of humanitarian corridors and, on 26 September, the resumption of air traffic with the affected countries. Acting on agreements reached at an extraordinary ECOWAS summit in Accra on 6 November, Senegal also announced the reopening of its borders on 14 November.

17. The Ebola outbreak was quickly contained in Senegal (one case) and Nigeria (20 cases). Effective information campaigns, as well as rapid and well-coordinated actions by the respective Governments and international partners, ensured the containment of Ebola transmission. Both countries were declared free of Ebola transmission on 17 and 20 October, respectively. In Mali, eight Ebola cases, including six fatalities, were confirmed in October and November. The Government

met the outbreak with a rapid and robust response, putting in place an emergency operations centre and appointing an Ebola response coordinator with a direct reporting line to President Keita. At the request of the President, the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) established a small office in Bamako, which became operational on 26 November, under the leadership of an Ebola crisis manager to support the Government in containing the Ebola outbreak and bolstering its preparedness. On 13 December, the last known Ebola patient was released from the hospital. Three days later, Mali released from quarantine the last 13 people being monitored for Ebola in the country. The World Health Organization (WHO) has said that the country could be declared free of the virus in January 2015 if no further cases are recorded.

B. Security trends

18. During the reporting period, attacks by extremist groups in northern Mali and the escalation of violence in north-eastern Nigeria had an adverse impact on security and stability in the region. Of particular concern has been the impact of Boko Haram-related violence in the southern part of the Niger and in the extreme north of Cameroon.

19. In northern Mali, the number of violent attacks against national and international security forces in the north of the country rose sharply. These included ambushes, as well as asymmetric and rocket attacks targeting the assets and personnel of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). Confrontations between armed groups affiliated with the Government of Mali and armed groups represented in the Algiers talks also occurred, despite the various parties' ceasefire commitments. On 9 October, a convoy carrying arms, mortars and anti-aircraft weaponry moving through northern Niger towards Mali was intercepted and destroyed by French and Nigerian forces. The weapons were reportedly being delivered to Ansar Dine. On 12 October, Mauritanian security forces arrested four people suspected of establishing contact with jihadists and recruiting for the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) in the mining city of Zouérat, in the north of the country.

20. Nigeria also witnessed an escalation in attacks and bombings, particularly in the north-eastern States of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa. During the reporting period, Boko Haram carried out several attacks on military and security installations, as well as over 40 deadly raids on civilian settlements, which included torching of churches and mosques. On 1 July, a vehicle-borne explosive device detonated and killed at least 56 civilians in a crowded marketplace in Maiduguri, Borno State. On 23 July in Kaduna, Kaduna State, two successive bombings targeted the convoys of Sheik Dahiru Bauchi, a prominent Islamic scholar, and Muhammadu Buhari, a presidential contender for APC, leaving 82 people dead. On 7 November, a bomb killed 10 people in Azare, Bauchi State. On 10 November, a suicide bomber in Potiskum, Yobe State, killed at least 46 students and wounded 79 others at the Public Science Technical College. The Yobe State government subsequently closed all schools until further notice. On 12 November, another suicide bombing took place at a school in Kontagora, Niger State, injuring scores of people. On 25 November, two teenage female suicide bombers killed over 45 people in the marketplace of Maiduguri. On 27 November, a bomb explosion in the Maraba-Mubi area in Adamawa State killed at least 40 people. The Kano Central Mosque was

attacked on 28 November, killing at least 120 people and injuring over 270 others. On 11 December, twin bombs killed at least 40 people at a market in Jos. On the same day, in Kano, a 13-year-old girl was arrested for allegedly wearing a suicide vest.

21. The territorial expansion of the Boko Haram insurgency was quite rapid. The group took over the towns of Buni Yadi, Yobe State, on 20 August; Gambaru-Ngala, Borno State, on 26 August; Dikwa, Borno State on 28 August, and Bama, the second-largest city in Borno State, on 2 October. On 5 and 11 November, Boko Haram captured the town of Malam Fatori in Borno State and the city of Maiha in Adamawa State, respectively. The group is now believed to be in control of significant swaths of land in Borno and Adamawa States, raising questions about the Government's ability to conduct elections in these areas. Boko Haram has also reportedly established governance architecture and imposed Sharia law in the areas under its control.

22. Despite national and international reaction to the kidnapping of schoolgirls in Chibok, Borno State, in April 2014, Boko Haram has continued its spate of kidnappings of adults and children. On 10 August, Boko Haram militants overran local militias in a remote fishing village near Lake Chad and kidnapped 97 persons. On 14 September, over 50 women were reported to have been abducted in Gulak, Adamawa State; on 30 September an unknown number of persons were abducted in Gwoza, Borno State; and on 18 October, 40 women were reportedly abducted in Wagga, Adamawa State.

23. On 17 October, the Nigerian Chief of Defence Staff announced that a cessation of hostilities had been reached with Boko Haram, following talks facilitated by the Government of Chad in N'Djamena. On 19 October, the Government of Chad stated that negotiations were ongoing on a ceasefire agreement and the release of the schoolgirls kidnapped in Chibok. On 4 November, the Federal Government of Nigeria announced that no agreement had been reached, although talks would continue.

24. At the regional level, Boko Haram intensified its activities in Cameroon. Since August, at least 20 cross-border attacks, including raids on refugee camps and attacks on Cameroonian security forces, have been reported. In particular, the border cities of Gambaru-Ngala and Fotokol in northern Cameroon witnessed frequent attacks carried out by insurgents based in Nigeria. On 28 July, Boko Haram-suspected militants raided the Cameroonian town of Kolofata, killing dozens of people and abducting the wife of Vice-Prime Minister Amadou Ali. She was released on 9 October, along with 16 other hostages.

25. With regard to transnational drug trafficking and organized crime, the region has seen a rise in seizures of illicit drugs. Couriers carrying methamphetamine were arrested in Benin, Ghana, Nigeria and Togo during the reporting period. On 15 October, customs agents in Johannesburg, South Africa, seized approximately 200 kg of methamphetamine originating from Benin. Interceptions of couriers at West African airports using commercial flights and carrying cocaine have also been on the increase. At the Port of Cotonou, in Benin, 56 kg of cocaine were seized from a container originating from Suriname in August, providing further evidence that the transatlantic drug trafficking route is active.

26. In the Ebola-affected countries, Government and other officials communicating information about the Ebola virus were attacked in some communities owing to the lack of trust and knowledge about the disease. On 16 September, an eight-member Government delegation on a sensitization visit about Ebola was brutally killed by villagers in Wome, in the Forest Region of Guinea.

C. Socioeconomic trends

27. While the overall macroeconomic projections for West Africa in 2014 remained generally positive, the Ebola outbreak had a negative impact on local economies, cross-border trade, farming activities and productive industries in the affected countries. Unemployment also rose in mining and extractive industries. On 11 September, the Minister of Finance of Liberia stated that the country was technically in a recession and suffering from a 20 per cent drop in Government revenues. In a report issued on 2 December, the World Bank noted that the outbreak would cost Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone more than US\$ 2 billion in lost income over the 2014-2015 period. The World Bank added that projections for 2015 were negative for Guinea and Sierra Leone, while in Liberia, growth projections were positive but still lower than the pre-crisis estimate.

28. On 10 July, the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government adopted the Community Development Programme to update its “Vision 2020” and promote balanced and people-centred development. Consultations on the policy were held in Banjul, from 25 to 28 July, with the participation of West African civil society organizations. On 31 July, Burkina Faso and Côte d’Ivoire signed a treaty fostering economic and social cooperation, while Senegal’s “Plan Sénégal Emergent” attracted international support.

D. Humanitarian trends

29. The humanitarian situation in the region continued to be a source of increased concern, particularly in northern Mali, north-eastern Nigeria and the three countries most affected by the Ebola outbreak. In the Sahel region, there was also an increase in humanitarian needs, owing to a combination of acute and chronic factors, including food insecurity, malnutrition and population displacement. A prolonged lean season owing to diminished rainfall had an adverse impact on countries along the Atlantic Coast, such as the Gambia, Mauritania and Senegal, as well as on stock-raising in Mali, the Niger and Senegal. Some 25 million people are estimated to be food insecure, of which 6.5 million have crossed the emergency threshold, as opposed to about 2.5 million reported at the beginning of the year. Regrettably, the humanitarian response to these developments has been limited owing to severe underfunding. Only US\$ 1 billion has been contributed to humanitarian operations in the Sahel out of an estimated requirement of US\$ 1.9 billion.

30. Persistent insecurity in northern Mali prevented the return of 143,000 Malian refugees from Algeria, Burkina Faso, Mauritania and the Niger. Moreover, in north-eastern Nigeria, increased attacks on civilian settlements resulted in the forced displacement of an estimated 700,000 people in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States. During the reporting period, nearly 4.8 million people were estimated to be food

insecure and 628,000 children under the age of 5 suffered from severe malnutrition in the West Africa subregion. An estimated 160,000 refugees have fled the violence in Nigeria to Cameroon, Chad and the Niger.

31. During the reporting period, the number of registered cholera cases increased. About 57,000 cholera cases were reported in 10 West African countries, namely, Benin, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, the Niger, Nigeria and Togo. In Borno State, in northern Nigeria, 4,500 cases of cholera and 70 deaths were reported in October alone. Cholera cases have also risen in the Diffa region, in southern Niger.

32. The humanitarian situation in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone deteriorated owing to the Ebola outbreak, which has been declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern by WHO. Overwhelmed by the epidemic, health systems in the three aforementioned countries were not able to effectively respond to other health service requirements, including childbirth and malaria, which resulted in avoidable deaths and triggered an under-reported secondary emergency. Since June, Ebola transmission rates remain intense in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

33. The Ebola outbreak has adversely affected harvests, causing steep price increases on staple goods. The isolation of quarantined communities and a slow humanitarian response have stretched the coping mechanisms of affected communities. During the period under review, the World Food Programme (WFP) launched an emergency regional relief operation to provide food assistance to 1.3 million people. In July, ECOWAS established the Ebola Emergency Fund, to which several Member States and regional organizations have provided contributions.

E. Trends on human rights

34. Since July 2014, the Ebola outbreak has negatively affected the human rights situation in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. In some cases, the national response to contain the virus involved excessive use of force or quarantining of communities that fell below recognized standards of human dignity. Misinformation compounded identity-based discrimination and stigmatization, and triggered violence among and within communities. Freedom of expression was also impacted in some countries. In November, under the emergency laws, a well-known Sierra Leonean radio journalist was detained in the maximum-security Pademba Road prison for allegedly criticizing the country's efforts to fight Ebola. The journalist was released on bail after 11 days in prison.

35. In Nigeria, abductions and indiscriminate killings of civilians by Boko Haram continued. Concerns were also raised over the human rights implications of the counter-terrorism measures put in place by the Government of Nigeria and implemented by its security forces.

36. In Gambia, opposition groups protested against State authorities over the lack of accountability for alleged human rights abuses. On 4 November, the former Chief of Defence Staff, General Lang Tamba, and six co-accused individuals filed an appeal in the Supreme Court against their death sentence for conspiracy and treason, which had been handed down by the High Court in July 2010 and upheld by the Appeal Court in October 2012. The United Nations Special Rapporteur on torture

and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions visited the country from 3 to 7 November. During their visit, the Special Rapporteurs were denied access to inmates on death row in Mile Two Prison in Banjul.

37. In relation to the fight against impunity in West Africa, the trial of the former first lady of Côte d'Ivoire, Simone Gbagbo, and 82 others for crimes allegedly committed during the 2011 post-elections violence in the country, originally scheduled for 22 October, was postponed. On 11 December, the International Criminal Court requested Côte d'Ivoire to hand over Mrs. Gbagbo to stand trial on charges of crimes against humanity. On the same day, a Pre-Trial Chamber of the Court confirmed four charges of crimes against humanity against Charles Blé Goudé, the former leader of the Young Patriots militia.

F. Trends on gender issues

38. Some progress was made in the political participation of women in West Africa. In Mali, steps were taken towards the adoption of a bill to ensure that the list of candidates presented by political parties contained at least 30 per cent women. Several countries also increased the number of women appointees to senior government positions. In Côte d'Ivoire, on 27 October, 33 women were appointed to the 115-member Economic and Social Council, as opposed to 9 in the Council's previous configuration. In Mauritania, on 11 September, three women were appointed as Secretary-General in key ministries, including Economic Affairs and Development. In Cabo Verde, where gender parity has been achieved since 2006, four new women were appointed to ministerial positions, bringing their number to 11 in an 18-member Cabinet.

III. Activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa

A. Good offices and special assignments by my Special Representative

Burkina Faso

39. Following the popular uprising in Burkina Faso, my Special Representative travelled to Ouagadougou on 31 October with the President of the ECOWAS Commission, Kadré Desire Ouédraogo, and the Commissioner of the Africa Union for Political Affairs, Aisha Abdullahi, as part of a joint United Nations-African Union-ECOWAS mission. The joint mission met with national and international stakeholders, including representatives of civil society, traditional and religious leaders, opposition parties and the military. In his meetings with national stakeholders, my Special Representative reiterated my call to refrain from violence and engage in an inclusive political dialogue. On 3 November, my Special Representative travelled to Accra to meet with President John Dramani Mahama of Ghana, in his capacity as Chairman of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government, to galvanize regional support for a solution to the crisis.

40. On 5 November, my Special Representative provided support to the Presidents of Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal during their visit to Ouagadougou to encourage Burkinabé stakeholders to rapidly agree on a civilian transition. On 6 November, my

Special Representative attended the extraordinary session of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government on the Ebola virus disease and the situation in Burkina Faso. He subsequently returned to Ouagadougou to continue his good offices. On 10 and 11 November, he also provided support for the visits to Burkina Faso of the Chairman of the African Union, President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz of Mauritania, and of Presidents Macky Sall of Senegal and Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé of Togo, who encouraged national stakeholders to remain engaged in dialogue to reach agreement on transitional arrangements. On 16 and 21 November, my Special Representative attended the signing ceremony of the Charter of the Transition and the inauguration of the Transitional President Michel Kafando. He continues to remain actively engaged, together with regional and international stakeholders, in accompanying the transition in Burkina Faso.

Nigeria

41. During the reporting period, my Special Representative for West Africa and High-Level Representative for Nigeria continued his efforts for the safe release of the schoolgirls abducted in Chibok Town, Borno State, on 14 April, and for wider support to address the threat of Boko Haram. From 11 to 15 July, he conducted a third visit to the country to discuss political and security developments, and met with former Nigerian Heads of State, Muhammadu Buhari, Yakubu Gowon and Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida. He also conducted broad-based consultations with the heads of federal security agencies, the National Security Adviser, the Minister of Special Duties and the Speaker of the House of Representatives. My Special Representative discussed the security situation in the three north-eastern States under emergency rule and possible ways for the United Nations to support national efforts to tackle the Boko Haram insurgency. He also liaised with members of the diplomatic community, the organizers of the “Bring Back Our Girls” campaign and the Pakistani education activist and Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai to review international efforts for the release of the Chibok schoolgirls. Moreover, in consultation with the United Nations country team in Nigeria, he assessed the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Support Package to provide support for the Chibok girls, their families and their communities.

42. On 3 September, in Abuja, my Special Representative represented the United Nations at a ministerial conference on security. Three ministerial meetings were previously held in Paris, London and Washington, D.C. on 17 May, 12 June and 5 August, respectively. My Special Representative highlighted my deep concern about the continuing violence in the north-east of Nigeria and stressed the need to preserve national unity. He noted the progress made in the provision of technical support and assistance by bilateral partners to fight terrorism in the north-east of Nigeria, and pledged the continued support of the United Nations. He also underscored the importance of ensuring that counter-terrorism activities are carried out in accordance with international human rights standards.

43. From 19 to 21 November, my Special Representative met with key national stakeholders, including political parties, the Independent National Electoral Commission, cabinet members and international partners. Among the issues discussed were the security challenges and the humanitarian situation in the north-eastern States.

Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission

44. The work of the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission was negatively affected by the activities of Boko Haram. The Commission was unable to conduct field visits along the border owing to a series of attacks on Cameroonian towns in the provinces bordering Nigeria. Against this background, my Special Representative, in his capacity as Chairman of the Mixed Commission, adapted the scope of its work to the evolving security situation. In this regard, on 11 October, both parties expressed confidence that the remaining tasks could be completed without dispatching new field missions to the border. The Commission agreed to adopt innovative measures to complete the demarcation exercise, including by utilizing in-office cartographic methodologies to assess the remaining areas of the land boundary to be demarcated. The United Nations Support Team to the Mixed Commission provided the delegations of Cameroon and Nigeria with relevant cartographic documentation to assist them with the in-office assessment of the boundary. The Joint Technical Team met for two weeks in November. Its working session was followed by a meeting of the Sub-commission on Demarcation, which contributed to resolve several outstanding demarcation issues.

45. Approximately 1,947 km of the estimated 2,100 km land boundary has so far been assessed and agreed on by the parties, and 667 boundary pillars have been constructed. Another 767 pillars remain to be constructed to complete the demarcation plan. In October, the parties officially expressed willingness to further contribute to the pillar emplacement project under the Trust Fund, and also agreed to call upon international donors for renewed assistance.

Other activities in West Africa

46. On 10 July, my Special Representative participated in the forty-fifth ordinary session of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government in Accra. As part of his regular consultations with regional leaders, he also travelled to Burkina Faso on 11 and 12 August, where he met with former President Compaoré to discuss his intention to call for a referendum on the revision of the Constitution. My Special Representative also conducted a visit to Liberia, on 12 and 13 August, to meet with President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and Government officials to discuss the response to the Ebola outbreak.

47. On 18 and 19 November, my Special Representative and the President of the ECOWAS Commission conducted a joint visit to Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. They met with Prime Minister Mohamed Said Fofana of Guinea, President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf of Liberia and President Ernest Bai Koroma of Sierra Leone. During the visit, the delegation assured their interlocutors of the full support of the United Nations and ECOWAS in addressing the Ebola outbreak in the three countries.

B. Enhancing subregional capacities to address cross-border and cross-cutting threats to peace and security

United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel

48. During the reporting period, UNOWA provided support to the Lake Chad Basin Commission in the design of its counter-terrorism strategy.

49. UNOWA played an active role as convener of the meeting of Working Group 2 (on security) of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel. Progress achieved in the implementation of the Strategy will be described in my forthcoming report on this issue.

Strategy for cross-border security in the Mano River Union

50. The crisis caused by the Ebola outbreak diverted attention and negatively affected resource mobilization efforts for three of the four member States of the Mano River Union, namely, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. As a result, very little progress was made in the implementation of the strategy for cross-border security in the Union during the reporting period.

Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea

51. UNOWA, together with the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), participated in high-level meetings on the Gulf of Guinea from 9 to 12 September in Yaoundé, during which the Inter-regional Coordination Centre for Maritime Safety and Security in the Gulf of Guinea, responsible for the coordination and implementation of the Gulf of Guinea Joint Maritime Strategy, was inaugurated on 11 September. The inauguration was followed by the appointment of a Centre interim management team comprised of staff seconded from the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), ECOWAS, the Gulf of Guinea Commission and Member States. The European Union and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) also pledged to deploy liaison officers. The inauguration and operationalization of the Centre mark a milestone in the implementation of the decisions of the Yaoundé summit held on 24 and 25 June 2013. Regional efforts are also expected to expedite the operationalization of the Regional Maritime Surveillance Centre of West Africa and the Regional Centre for Maritime Security in Central Africa. This will build on ongoing cooperation between countries of the Gulf of Guinea, including through joint naval operations and patrols. UNOWA, in collaboration with UNOCA, will continue to advocate for international support to facilitate the work of the Inter-regional Coordination Centre for Maritime Safety and Security in the Gulf of Guinea.

Security sector reform

52. In Guinea, efforts to reform the security sector advanced with the adoption in July of the 2014-2017 National Strategy for Priority Actions. The United Nations security sector reform advisory team assisted the Technical Monitoring Commission in the preparation of a draft operational manual, as well as a monitoring and evaluation guide for the strategy. The team also provided support to the budgeting process for security sector reform sectorial ministries. As a result of the Ebola outbreak, Guinean security institutions shifted efforts towards containment of the outbreak. In consultation with UNOWA, the team facilitated and supported the establishment of an UNMEER office in Conakry.

Drug trafficking and transnational organized crime

53. During the reporting period, the ECOWAS Commission conducted a review of the ECOWAS regional action plan to address the growing problem of illicit drug trafficking, organized crime and drug abuse in West Africa (2008-2015). On 3 July,

United Nations experts participated in an ECOWAS working-level meeting in Abuja, to review the action plan. The meeting produced a draft logical framework for the 2015-2020 regional action plan.

54. The Ebola outbreak slowed down the activities of the Transnational Crime Units established under the West Africa Coast Initiative in Sierra Leone and Liberia. Although international Initiative Coordinators for Sierra Leone and Liberia have been recruited, they have not been able to assume their functions.

55. In Guinea-Bissau, a more conducive environment has emerged in the post-electoral dispensation, which will help the Transitional Crime Units to become fully operational. In a meeting with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) on 5 August, the new Minister of Justice outlined the new Government's efforts to revamp the Unit to align it with the objectives of the West Africa Coast Initiative. On 27 October, over 100 Members of Parliament and Government representatives adopted a political declaration reiterating Guinea-Bissau's commitment to support initiatives to combat transnational organized crime, including drug trafficking, corruption, money-laundering and terrorism. They called for continued support from the United Nations to strengthen national institutions in this area. The declaration followed a three-day meeting jointly organized by UNODC and the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, at the invitation of the President of the Parliament and the Prime Minister of Guinea-Bissau. In the meantime, on 5 November, the Council of Ministers of Côte d'Ivoire issued a decree establishing a Transitional Crimes Unit in the country. The UNODC Law Enforcement Coordinator, who will oversee West Africa Coast Initiatives activities in the country, is expected to start his work in early 2015.

Counter-terrorism

56. The Heads of State of the Lake Chad Basin Commission and of Benin held a summit in Niamey on 7 October to address the growing threat of terrorism in the region and the issue of a multinational joint task force. They committed themselves to unifying efforts in the fight against Boko Haram and pledged to finalize the establishment of the headquarters of the multinational joint task force by 20 November in Nigeria and to deploy, within national borders, a contingent of 700 troops each. From 14 to 18 October, UNOWA and UNOCA participated in a workshop organized by the Lake Chad Basin in Yaoundé to develop a regional counter-terrorism strategy, as well as to hold discussions on the multinational joint task force. During the meeting, they noted that the two major challenges to the operationalization of the task force were funding and the interoperability of equipment.

C. Promotion of good governance, respect for the rule of law, human rights and gender mainstreaming

57. During the reporting period, UNOWA convened a series of consultative meetings with human rights stakeholders on good governance and human rights, as well as on gender mainstreaming. On the margins of the fifty-sixth ordinary session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights held in Banjul, UNOWA convened a panel to discuss the human rights dimension of Ebola, elections, constitutional changes and terrorism. A series of recommendations were adopted to

enhance the engagement of civil society actors in mitigating election-related violence, and in promoting a human rights-based approach to collective security. In addition, from 11 to 13 December, UNOWA, in partnership with the Gorée Institute, organized a seminar that brought together experts and trainers from ECOWAS police academies. Participants reviewed and adopted generic curricula for capacity development of civil society and security forces in the promotion of peace, security and governance in West Africa.

58. In November, UNOWA worked with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), ECOWAS, United Nations peacekeeping missions in the region and the Working Group on Women, Peace and Security in West Africa to finalize the evaluation of the implementation of the regional plan of action on Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions on women, peace and security.

59. On 4 and 5 November, UNOWA participated in a retreat organized by UN-Women in Bamako, which was aimed at enhancing women's participation in peace and security processes at the national and local levels. The national plan of action on Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions were reviewed. From 25 November to 10 December, my Special Representative joined my annual campaign "Unite to End Violence against Women", with a specific emphasis on countries in conflict.

D. Inter-institutional cooperation

United Nations inter-institutional cooperation

60. During the reporting period, UNOWA and the heads of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes based in Dakar held regular consultative meetings to share information and strengthen cooperation. On 1 September, my Special Representative briefed regional directors on political developments in the region. He also briefed on his role as my High-Level Representative for Nigeria and on the multisectoral response of the United Nations to the crisis in the country. Other issues discussed included the political and socioeconomic repercussions of the Ebola epidemic and proposed constitutional amendments to extend presidential term limits being considered in some countries in the region.

61. From 20 to 30 October, UNOWA participated in a United Nations electoral needs assessment mission to Togo, where presidential elections are scheduled for the first quarter of 2015. The mission assessed institutional, technical, security, legal and political preparedness for the elections. It identified areas of support and called for enhanced participation of women and youth, improved institutional transparency and mechanisms for the prevention of political and electoral conflicts.

Cooperation with regional and subregional partners

62. Throughout the reporting period, UNOWA provided a regular flow of information on the impact of the Ebola outbreak to the Mano River Union secretariat, regional institutions and peace missions, as well as United Nations representatives in the region, highlighting the consequences of the outbreak on peace, security, stability and regional integration.

63. In close cooperation with UNOCA and ECOWAS, UNOWA has engaged with the Lake Chad Basin Commission to assess the latter's capacity to engage in regional efforts to curb the spread of terrorism and violent extremism by Boko Haram. This included, from 20 October to 1 November, a joint UNOWA-UNOCA-ECOWAS mission in the Lake Chad area.

IV. Observations and recommendations

64. I am deeply concerned by the violence linked to Boko Haram and its impact on the region, in particular in northern Nigeria, northern Cameroon and southern Niger. I welcome efforts being taken to strengthen regional security mechanisms and to accelerate the planned deployment of a multinational force to secure border areas. I also welcome the initiatives being undertaken by the Lake Chad Basin Commission to find lasting solutions to curb terrorism, violent insurgency and extremism through a common strategy. In particular, I welcome the development by the member States of the Commission and Benin of a regional counter-terrorism strategy, and urge that the joint efforts to address the threat of Boko Haram be pursued in a manner consistent with international human rights standards. I encourage UNOWA, UNOCA, ECOWAS, ECCAS and the Lake Chad Basin Commission to continue to strengthen cooperation to address cross-border security threats. I also remain concerned about the simmering political and security tensions in some West African countries in the lead-up to presidential and legislative elections scheduled for 2015 and 2016. I urge political stakeholders to engage in dialogue to address, through consensus, all contentious issues. I also call on national actors to create conducive conditions for the holding of inclusive, free and credible elections.

65. With particular regard to Nigeria, I am profoundly concerned by reports of thousands of killings over the past year, and hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons and refugees. These are linked to Boko Haram's barbarous attacks, but there are also worrying allegations of human rights violations by security forces. I call upon the Nigerian authorities to scrupulously enforce respect for human rights regarding both combat operations and the conditions of detention, and also to address the humanitarian impact of the conflict, and I offer full United Nations support for their endeavours in this regard. I also take this opportunity to underline my concerns regarding challenges in the context of Federal and gubernatorial elections to be held in Nigeria in February 2015, and the serious risks of violence that might occur either because of Boko Haram attacks or because of contestation of the election results. I want to stress the vital importance of free and fair elections and the full respect of human rights, while any dispute must be dealt with by peaceful means and by the appropriate independent national procedures. I also underline the crucial leadership role that Nigerian stakeholders will play in ensuring that the elections and their aftermath meet the highest standards, commensurate with Nigeria's leadership role in the international community, and I urge them to repeatedly and publicly restate commitments to peace and democracy. Finally, I call upon the Security Council to stand by Nigeria during this critical period and to provide whatever support is required to prevent further destabilization and violence, especially in the badly-hit North-Eastern States.

66. I commend the prompt action taken by my Special Representative, in close coordination with the African Union and ECOWAS, to support national efforts to

find a solution to the crisis in Burkina Faso. I also commend the people of Burkina Faso for the responsible manner in which they reached consensus on transitional arrangements. I call on all appointed transitional leaders to work in a collaborative and harmonious manner to uphold the aspirations of the people of Burkina Faso, to ensure that the physical security and human rights of all citizens are respected and to address any contentious issues through dialogue to ensure a smooth transitional period leading to the holding of elections in November 2015. I also urge the international community to continue to accompany the efforts of Burkina Faso during this critical period.

67. I commend efforts by subregional organizations and Governments to address the threat of organized crime, terrorism, violent extremism, piracy and armed robbery at sea. In particular, I welcome the inauguration and operationalization of the Inter-regional Coordination Centre on Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea, which will coordinate and implement the Gulf of Guinea Regional Joint Maritime Strategy. I call on regional and international partners to continue to provide assistance to the Centre and to intensify efforts to establish the two planned maritime operation centres, in West Africa and in Central Africa, in order to complete the information-sharing architecture. I urge Governments and subregional organizations of the Gulf of Guinea to strengthen their efforts to implement the decisions taken at the summit held on 25 June 2013 in Yaoundé. UNOWA, in collaboration with UNOCA, will continue to provide assistance in the region and mobilize support to achieve these objectives. I call on member States of the West Africa Coast Initiative to accelerate the operationalization of the Transnational Crime Units, and urge the international community to support the joint efforts of ECOWAS, INTERPOL and the United Nations in this regard.

68. Ebola has negatively affected the hard-won peace and stability in the three most affected countries, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. National authorities in the affected countries will continue to require the assistance of the international community, not only in halting the spread of the disease, but also in addressing the resulting political and socioeconomic challenges. It will also be critical for regional and international partners to support efforts to accelerate the implementation of the Mano River Union cross-border security strategy as a comprehensive approach to address the root causes of insecurity in the Union countries.

69. As the inter-Malian peace talks continue in Algiers under the facilitation of the Algeria-led mediation team, I call on all parties to negotiate in good faith to reach a comprehensive, implementable and sustainable peace agreement that addresses the root causes of the conflict. I also call on all parties to respect their ceasefire commitments and to refrain from any actions that could jeopardize the successful conduct of the peace talks.

70. I commend the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission for its continued efforts to implement the judgment of the International Court of Justice of 10 October 2002, including its innovative measures to complete the demarcation exercise. I encourage the Governments of Cameroon and Nigeria to continue to create conducive conditions for completion of the border demarcation.

71. I urge West African Governments and national stakeholders to take active steps to promote the participation of women at all levels of Government, as well as in electoral and political processes. I welcome the ongoing legislative processes aimed at empowering women in some countries, and call on Governments to

accelerate efforts to honour their commitments with regard to Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions on women, peace and security as a prerequisite for equitable development.

72. In conclusion, I wish to express my appreciation to the Governments of West Africa, the ECOWAS Commission, the African Union and the Mano River Union for their continued cooperation with UNOWA in efforts to address challenges to peace and security in the region. I would also like to extend my gratitude to civil society organizations and other partners for their continued collaboration with UNOWA in the implementation of its mandate.

73. I pay tribute to my former Special Representative, Said Djinnit, for his leadership and efforts in the implementation of the mandate of UNOWA. I wish to express my appreciation to my new Special Representative, Mr. Chambas, the staff of UNOWA and of the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission and all United Nations entities in West Africa for their efforts to advance peace and security in West Africa.
