

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Press release

### Civil society intelligence agency releases forecasts for insecurity and conflict in West Africa in 2014

---

LONDON, 14 February 2014: Some narratives have painted West Africa as a region where conflict and insecurity occur naturally due to ethnic tensions and porous borders. In reality, the underlying sources and drivers of instability are critical to understanding events. A new study from Open Briefing, *West Africa: Forecasts for Insecurity and Conflict in 2014*, attempts to avoid generalisations by analysing specific factors and identifying forecasts for individual countries in the region.

Open Briefing is the world's first civil society intelligence agency. They are a unique not-for-profit social enterprise providing intelligence and research services to civil society organisations and concerned citizens.

For the last six months, Open Briefing's Africa desk has been developing specific forecasts for insecurity and conflict in individual countries in Africa over 2014. Separate reports for West, Central and Southern Africa will be published over February 2014.

Their intelligence team has exploited the most reliable datasets and deployed Open Briefing's trademark data-driven, evidence-led analysis combined with expert experience in national and international politics and a thorough understanding of significant trends in African security. Using the cone of plausibility method and other analytical techniques borrowed from the intelligence community, analysts have developed baseline, plausible and wildcard scenarios for countries throughout Africa.

The synthesis report for West Africa focusses on those countries whose drivers and internal volatility are likely to create substantial levels of insecurity and conflict over 2014. The report outline the key findings for Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Sierra Leone.

Gustavo Plácido dos Santos, lead author of the report and an associate researcher at Open Briefing, explained:

'West Africa is possibly the region of sub-Saharan Africa with the highest potential. But countries such as Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire that were once deemed stable and with positive prospects have become unstable and remain so. This report examines the drivers of conflict and insecurity that undermine national stability and ultimately economic development.'



**open briefing**  
the civil society intelligence agency

**Open Briefing**  
27 Old Gloucester Street  
Bloomsbury  
London WC1N 3AX

t 020 7193 9805  
info@openbriefing.org  
www.openbriefing.org

He continued:

‘This report also examines the current instability in countries that are located in the Sahel and neighbouring areas. Countries such as Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso are situated in a volatile area where self-determination movements and jihadist ideas take root quickly. Radical philosophies have the potential to spill over to other countries in West Africa by capitalising on the socio-political instability that pervades much of the region.’

Chris Abbott, founder and Executive Director of Open Briefing, commented:

‘This study is a major accomplishment for Open Briefing, as it showcases our unique approach and the abilities of our analysts while providing civil society with intelligence and forecasting that can inform their decision-making.’

*West Africa: Forecasts for Insecurity and Conflict in 2014* will be of interest to those working in the media, aid and development, African politics, peacebuilding, international business and anyone with an interest in what is happening – and what is going to happen – in West Africa.

ENDS

## Notes to editors

1. *West Africa: Forecasts for Insecurity and Conflict in 2014* is published on 14 February 2014 and available to download from <http://www.openbriefing.org/thinktank/publications/west-africa-forecasts-2014/>.
2. Lead author Gustavo Plácido dos Santos is available for interview and comment. Please call +35 19181 31789 or email [gustavo.a.placido@gmail.com](mailto:gustavo.a.placido@gmail.com) to arrange. Mr dos Santos is based in Lisbon, Portugal.
3. For more information about Open Briefing, please visit [www.openbriefing.org](http://www.openbriefing.org) or contact the Executive Director, Chris Abbott, on +44 (0)20 7193 9805 or [chris.abbott@openbriefing.org](mailto:chris.abbott@openbriefing.org).