

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Press release

### Forecasts for the Central African Republic and three other countries released by civil society intelligence agency

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LONDON, 20 February 2014: The violence in the Central African Republic is currently dominating news headlines, as have events in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the past. Some narratives have painted Central 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 timely new study from Open Briefing, *Central 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 Central Africa focusses on those countries whose drivers and internal volatility are likely to create substantial levels of insecurity and conflict over 2014. The report outlines the key findings for Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of the Congo.

Nick Branson, lead author of the report and a contributing analyst at Open Briefing, explained:



**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

'This report details the drivers of insecurity and conflict that pervade Central Africa, illustrating the challenges faced by civil society organisations operating there, and underlining the need to prepare for a range of different scenarios in 2014. The issues of note range from Burundi's post-conflict political settlement, to prospects for peace in the Central African Republic.'

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, government and businesses with intelligence and forecasting that can inform their decision-making.'

*Central 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 Central Africa.

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## Notes to editors

1. *Central Africa: Forecasts for Insecurity and Conflict in 2014* is published on 20 February 2014 and available to download from <http://www.openbriefing.org/thinktank/publications/central-africa-forecasts-2014/>.
2. Lead author Nick Branson is available for interview and comment. Please call +44 07919 114 512, Skype nickbranson1984 or email [nick.branson@me.com](mailto:nick.branson@me.com) to arrange. Mr Branson is based in London, United Kingdom.
3. Nick Branson is a contributing analyst at Open Briefing. He is an expert in African politics, governance and the rule of law. He has advised governments, political parties, legislatures and civil society organisations across Africa. Nick is also the Programme Manager for the Africa Justice Foundation and is a Deployable Civilian Expert for the UK government's Stabilisation Unit. He is currently undertaking a PhD at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, and holds a MA in International Studies and Diplomacy from the same institution.
4. 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).