**UNICEF OPSCEN Brief -** **Friday, 8 November 2013**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| GENERAL | **Across Regions** | Europe at 'polio risk' from Syria |
|  |  | Arab Spring fallout fuels Mediterranean smuggling rise |
|  | **DR Congo/Uganda** | M23 commander, 1,500 rebels in Ugandan custody: Ugandan officials |
|  |  | DR Congo, M23 rebels to sign peace deal Monday: Uganda |
|  | **Syria/Turkey** | Kurdish Turks protest building wall along Syrian border |
|  | **Mali/Rwanda** | Rwanda to send 140 peacekeepers to Mali |
| CEE/CIS | **Across CEE/CIS** | EU in Kosovo Indicts 15 for War Crimes |
| EAPR | **Cambodia** | Cambodia warns people of impact from super typhoon Haiyan |
|  | **DPR Korea** | North Korea warns of 'Merciless' Action to stop kidnapping |
|  | **Philippines** | Super typhoon Haiyan slams into Philippines, at least three dead |
|  | **Thailand** | Thai senate fails to vote on amnesty bill for lacking quorum |
| ESAR | **Across ESAR** | Zimbabwe not deploying troops to Mozambique, say commanders |
|  | **Madagascar** | Madagascar headed for second round in presidential vote |
|  | **Malawi** | Donors cut aid to Malawi over cash scandal |
|  | **Somalia** | Al-Shabaab blockade in Bay region threatens food security |
| LAC | **Brazil** | Brazilian president likely to win re-election in first round: poll |
|  | **Chile** | Chile issues health alert over trash |
|  | **Haiti** | Haiti anti-government protest turns violent |
| MENA | **Across MENA** | Lives at risk as Syrian refugees face harshest winter in years |
|  |  | Kerry warns Israel of troubles ahead if peace talks fail |
|  |  | 20 mn Mideast kids to get polio vaccine after Syria outbreak – UNICEF mention |
|  | **Egypt** | Egypt parliament polls in February or March: ministry |
|  | **Iraq** | Double bombing, shooting kill 7 people in Iraq |
|  | **Libya** | Rival Libyan militias exchange gunfire in Tripoli |
|  | **State of Palestine** | Israeli soldiers shoot two Palestinians dead in West Bank |
|  |  | Yasser Arafat poisoned with polonium, tests show |
|  | **Sudan** | 'Dozens' of casualties in Darfur rebel ambush: analyst |
|  |  | UN experts call on Sudan to stop threatening women with flogging |
|  | **Syria** | Syria troops launch major offensive in Aleppo |
|  |  | Syrian opposition refuses Moscow talks: Report |
|  |  | Hundreds of Britons fighting in Syria - MI5 chief |
|  | **Yemen** | Spread of noxious moth destroys tomato crops across Yemen |
| ROSA | **Afghanistan** | Roadside bomb kills eight civilians in Afghanistan |
|  | **Maldives** | Maldives makes 3rd try to elect president Saturday |
|  | **Pakistan** | Taliban plan wave of revenge attacks in Pakistan |
|  |  | New Taliban chief could push Pakistan to military action |
|  | **Sri Lanka** | Sri Lanka accused of barring human rights delegation |
|  |  | Sri Lankan students protest closing universities |
| WCAR | **Across WCAR** | Nigeria says needs Cameroon's help to fight Boko Haram |
|  | **Burkina Faso** | In Burkina Faso, Ban urges cooperation to help Sahel countries tackle climate change impacts |
|  | **DR Congo** | Congo says to sign peace deal with M23 rebels on Monday |
|  | **Mauritania** | Mauritania election campaign underway despite opposition boycott |
|  | **Niger** | Government statistics show sharp increase of displaced persons from Nigeria in Diffa region |
|  |  |  |

GENERAL

**Across Regions**

**Europe at 'polio risk' from Syria**

Europe could be at risk from polio following a recent outbreak in Syria, according to infectious disease experts. Two doctors in Germany have written to the Lancet journal warning that the cases in Syria - which had been free of wild poliovirus since 1999 - could endanger neighbouring regions. Prof Martin Eichner, of the University of Tubingen and Stefan Brockmann, of Reutlingen Regional Public Health Office says that because only one in 200 people infected develop paralysis it might take nearly a year of "silent transmission" before an outbreak is detected. In that time hundreds of individuals could be carrying the infection. The doctors explain that most European countries use inactivated polio vaccine (IPV) rather than the live oral polio vaccine (OPV), because the latter can, in rare cases, lead to cases of acute flaccid paralysis, the main symptom of polio.

**BBC -** [**http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-24854920**](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-24854920)

**Arab Spring fallout fuels Mediterranean smuggling rise**

The chaotic fallout of the "Arab Spring" is fuelling a surge in the smuggling of drugs, weapons and people across the Mediterranean, and cash-strapped regional powers are struggling to respond. Last month, European leaders in Brussels turned down calls from southern European states already hard hit by the euro-zone crisis for additional support to tackle record numbers of migrants attempting to cross to the continent in frequently perilous journeys arranged by people smugglers. More than 32,000 migrants from Africa and the Middle East have arrived in Italy and Malta so far this year, the UN says. More than 550 died in October alone, as autumn storms made a difficult crossing in small, poorly maintained boats even more dangerous. At the same time, Syria's civil war and chaos in Libya are producing massive arms smuggling, while drug runners use similar routes to ship North African hashish and Latin American cocaine.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/11/08/us-crime-mediterranean-for-will-waterman-idUSBRE9A708620131108**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/11/08/us-crime-mediterranean-for-will-waterman-idUSBRE9A708620131108)

**DR Congo/Uganda**

**M23 commander, 1,500 rebels in Ugandan custody: Ugandan officials**

Ugandan military officials say at least 1,500 fighters from a rebel group in the neighboring DR Congo have surrendered, while the group's top commander is in Ugandan custody. The officials say Ugandan forces are holding M23 commander Sultani Makenga along with his fighters. There are conflicting media reports on whether Makenga has formally surrendered or is under arrest. Makenga is on UN and US sanctions lists. Human rights groups have accused rebels under his leadership of carrying out killings and sex attacks. Meanwhile, the UN peacekeeping mission in the DR Congo says the Congolese army now has complete control over all areas once

**VOA -** [**http://www.voanews.com/content/ugandan-officials-m23-commander-1500-rebels-in-ugandan-custody/1785860.html**](http://www.voanews.com/content/ugandan-officials-m23-commander-1500-rebels-in-ugandan-custody/1785860.html)

**DR Congo, M23 rebels to sign peace deal Monday: Uganda**

The government of the Democratic Republic of Congo and the M23 rebels will Monday sign a peace deal that was under negotiation before the M23 suffered a crushing military defeat, Uganda said. “The agreement is ready and we are expecting everybody to return Monday to sign it,” Ugandan government spokesman Ofwono Opondo told AFP, confirming that M23 military chief Sultani Makenga is on Ugandan territory.

**AFP -** [**http://www.arabnews.com/news/474266**](http://www.arabnews.com/news/474266)

**Syria/Turkey**

**Kurdish Turks protest building wall along Syrian border**

Thousands of Kurds on Thursday protested in southeastern Turkey the government's plan to build a 2.5-km wall along the Turkish-Syrian border, private Dogan news agency reported. The pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) staged the protest in Yuksekova town of the province of Hakkari. The demonstrators waved Kurdish flags in protest of the proposed wall in Nusaybin, which would separate it from Syria's Qamishli, both Kurd-dominated towns, according to the report. The demonstration soon turned into clashes between the protesters and riot police, who fired tear gas to disperse the crowds. Kurdish groups in the region decried the plan as the government 's plot to sever the two Kurdish

communities, said the report, while Turkish officials were quoted as saying that the wall was to prevent smuggling activities.

**Xinhua -** [**http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2013-11/08/c\_132868678.htm**](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2013-11/08/c_132868678.htm)

**Mali/Rwanda**

**Rwanda to send 140 peacekeepers to Mali**

Rwanda will deploy 140 police officers to reinforce the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali, an official statement said Thursday. The maiden contingent, including 17 female police officers, will serve for one year in the West African nation. In late April 2013, the UN SC approved a 12,600-strong UN mission in Mali to take over from an African-led mission, authorizing the blue helmets "to use all necessary means" to carry out security-related stabilization tasks. The UN mission's core task is to support the political process in Mali in close coordination with the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States.

**Xinhua -** [**http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/africa/2013-11/08/c\_132870518.htm**](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/africa/2013-11/08/c_132870518.htm)

CEE/CIS

**Across CEE/CIS**

**EU in Kosovo Indicts 15 for War Crimes**

A European Union prosecutor has filed an indictment against 15 former ethnic Albanian rebels suspected of committing war crimes against civilians detained in central Kosovo during the 1998-99 war against Serbia. Among those indicted are Sami Lushtaku, now a mayor of the town of Srbica, and Sylejman Selimi, Kosovo's ambassador to Albania. Lushtaku is suspected of executing a fellow ethnic Albanian by shooting him in the head, according to the indictment obtained by The Associated Press on Friday. Other charges include beating and torturing detainees kept in an improvised prison facility in the village of Likovac in 1998. Two other suspects allegedly used a chain saw to behead a Serbian policeman.

AP - <http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/eu-kosovo-indicts-15-war-crimes-20826153>

EAPR

**Cambodia**

**Cambodia warns people of impact from super typhoon Haiyan**

Cambodia will be suffering from the impact of super-typhoon Haiyan for two days, starting from Sunday, Minister of Water Resources and Meteorology Lim Kean Hor said Friday. According to the weather forecast, the 30th typhoon, namely Haiyan, had been brewing in the Philippines on Friday morning and it would arrive at Vietnam's central coast on Sunday night, the Minister said in a public announcement. In the Philippines, at least one person died and some 125,604 people have evacuated to safe places as typhoon Haiyan, believed to be the strongest cyclone of this year in the world, hit the country on Friday.

**Xinhua -** [**http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2013-11/08/c\_132870771.htm**](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2013-11/08/c_132870771.htm)

**DPR Korea**

**North Korea warns of 'Merciless' Action to stop kidnapping**

North Korea on Friday warned of "merciless" action to stop the alleged abduction of its citizens by South Korean spy agents and activists. The North singled out South Korea's spy agency chief Nam Jae-Joon as the first target of its action. "The puppet group's plot... is a virtual declaration of war against us," the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of Korea said in a statement. Stern and merciless action will be taken immediately "to physically remove hideous criminals and dirty people", it said. The committee accused the South of using North Korean defectors for an espionage mission, or to slander Pyongyang, it said. The statement, carried by the North's official news agency, accused South Korea's spy agency of conspiring with Christian and other activists to kidnap North Koreans.

**AFP -** [**http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/104952-north-korea-warns-of-merciless-action-to-stop-kidnapping**](http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/104952-north-korea-warns-of-merciless-action-to-stop-kidnapping)

**Philippines**

**Super typhoon Haiyan slams into Philippines, at least three dead**

The strongest typhoon in the world this year and possibly the most powerful ever to hit land smashed into the Philippines on Friday, forcing more than a million people to flee, flooding villages and raising fears of widespread casualties. Haiyan, a category-5 super typhoon, scoured the northern tip of Cebu province and headed northwest towards Boracay island, both tourist destinations, after lashing the central islands of Leyte and Samar with 275-kph (170 mph) wind gusts and 5-6 meter (15-19 ft) waves. At least three people were killed and seven injured, national disaster agency spokesman Rey Balido told reporters in Manila. The death toll could rise as more reports arrive. "The humanitarian impact of Haiyan threatens to be colossal," said Patrick Fuller, spokesman for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/11/08/us-philippines-typhoon-idUSBRE9A603Q20131108**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/11/08/us-philippines-typhoon-idUSBRE9A603Q20131108)

**BBC -** [**http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-24863480**](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-24863480)

**AP -** [**http://www.latimes.com/world/worldnow/la-fg-wn-typhoon-haiyan-blasts-philippines-20131108,0,3464096.story#axzz2k3dCdpst**](http://www.latimes.com/world/worldnow/la-fg-wn-typhoon-haiyan-blasts-philippines-20131108,0,3464096.story#axzz2k3dCdpst)

**Thailand**

**Thai senate fails to vote on amnesty bill for lacking quorum**

The Thai senate failed to vote on the controversial amnesty bill in its first reading on Friday, as a fraction of dissent senators refused to show up. The voting session requires the attendance of 74 of the 149- member senate. But only 67 senators registered their attendance on Friday, with about 33 out of town and members of the so-called Group of 40 Senators boycotting the session. The meeting will resume on Monday. On Thursday, Senate speaker Nikom Wairatpanich announced to bring forward the first reading of the draft law to Friday from Monday.

**Xinhua -** [**http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2013-11/08/c\_132871894.htm**](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2013-11/08/c_132871894.htm)

ESAR

**Across ESAR**

**Zimbabwe not deploying troops to Mozambique, say commanders**

The Zimbabwe national army has dismissed reports that it has already deployed troops in neighbouring Mozambique to help President Armando Guebuza’s government to fight off the Renamo rebels. Lieutenant-General Phillip Sibanda, the army commander, said there were no plans for Zimbabwe to intervene in Mozambique. “We are not preparing to go to Mozambique and at no time have we been instructed to go,” he told an event to commemorate the International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict in Harare on Thursday. “We are not happy about the situation in Mozambique, but at no time has anyone been instructed to prepare for war in Mozambique unlike what some reports have said. “That is not true and I do not see us going to Mozambique anytime soon.” Former Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai has cautioned against the deployment of troops in Mozambique, saying the Zimbabwean economy would not be able to sustain the war.

**Africa Review -** [**http://www.africareview.com/News/Zimbabwe-not-deploying-troops-to-Mozambique--official/-/979180/2063748/-/hjlt5pz/-/index.html**](http://www.africareview.com/News/Zimbabwe-not-deploying-troops-to-Mozambique--official/-/979180/2063748/-/hjlt5pz/-/index.html)

**Madagascar**

**Madagascar headed for second round in presidential vote**

Madagascar's first presidential election since a coup in 2009 will go to a run-off due in December after no candidate won an outright majority in last month's first round vote, provisional results showed on Friday. The head-to-head contest risks escalating political tensions on the Indian Ocean island mined for its nickel and cobalt, pitting two aspirants backed by Madagascar's biggest political rivals against each other. European and southern African observers have said voting had been free and fair, a boost for Madagascar, which needs a credible election to rebuild investor confidence and win back suspended aid.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20131108132550-jzk64/?source=hpbreaking**](http://www.trust.org/item/20131108132550-jzk64/?source=hpbreaking)

**Malawi**

**Donors cut aid to Malawi over cash scandal**

Tradition donors under the Common Approach to Budgetary Support (CABS) have announced the withdrawal of aid to Malawi following the country's unsatisfactory response to the cashgate scandal. President Joyce Banda's administration is battling with massive theft that saw over $50 million vanish from the state coffers and millions of kwachas being found in car boots and bedrooms of civil servants. Despite the government's claim that it is was on top of things, only few low ranked civil servants, have so far been arrested. On Thursday, the main donors officially announced the withholding of aid to Malawi pending investigations into the government money looting. The donors, including IMF and the World Bank under CABS, said on Thursday that they were withholding direct budgetary support until investigations on the looting at Capital Hill are concluded.

**Africa Review -** [**http://www.africareview.com/News/Donors-cut-aid-to-Malawi-over-cash-scandal/-/979180/2064282/-/13q5vca/-/index.html**](http://www.africareview.com/News/Donors-cut-aid-to-Malawi-over-cash-scandal/-/979180/2064282/-/13q5vca/-/index.html)

**Somalia**

**Al-Shabaab blockade in Bay region threatens food security**

More than two weeks after al-Shabaab imposed a blockade of goods and food supplies from entering and leaving parts of Somalia's Bay region, local residents and officials are expressing concern about the worsening humanitarian situation. Al-Shabaab's blockade of Qansah Dhere started October 19th, and is also affecting villages on the outskirts of Bardale, another town in Bay region. Al-Shabaab is preventing vehicles transporting food and essential goods from passing through the affected areas, and is also blocking truckloads of local crops from leaving. The situation is causing hardship that threatens the food security of affected populations, according to Bardale Mayor Mohammad Isaq Hassan.

**AllAfrica -** [**http://allafrica.com/stories/201311080150.html**](http://allafrica.com/stories/201311080150.html)

LAC

**Brazil**

**Brazilian president likely to win re-election in first round: poll**

Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff is likely to be reelected in the first round of elections in October next year, according to a poll released Thursday. The poll, commissioned by the National Transports Confederation (NTC) and conducted by pollsters MDA, shows 43.4 percent of the electorate plans to vote for Rousseff, while her closest rival, Brazilian Social Democratic Party (PSDB) Senator Aecio Neves, trails far behind with 19.3 percent. In the third place is Pernambuco state governor Eduardo Campos of the Brazilian Socialist Party (PSB), with 9.5 percent.

**Xinhua -** [**http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2013-11/08/c\_125668951.htm**](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2013-11/08/c_125668951.htm)

**Chile**

**Chile issues health alert over trash**

Chile's government is issuing a health alert for the port of Valparaiso, where thousands of tons of trash have been piling up for nearly three weeks amid a strike by garbage collectors. Health Minister Jaime Manalich said Thursday that the measure seeks to protect residents of Valparaiso from a strike "that carries huge health risks." The work stoppage began on Oct. 16, and the government began negotiations two weeks later. By that time, the snaking streets and steep hills of Valparaiso had become clogged with trash. The strike has spread and is now reaching most of Chile's municipalities. Workers are demanding a wage increase. The government says it can only come to an agreement after the 2014 budget is approved and Nov. 17 presidential elections are held.

**AP -** [**http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/chile-issues-health-alert-trash-20823740**](http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/chile-issues-health-alert-trash-20823740)

**Haiti**

**Haiti anti-government protest turns violent**

Thousands of Haitian protesters have demanded the resignation of President Michel Martelly, clashing with supporters of the leader in the streets of Port-au-Prince. Protesters said two people suffered gunshot wounds after Martelly loyalists opened fire during Thursday's skirmishes that lasted for several hours. The two sides hurled stones at each other during the fighting, which brought parts of the city to a standstill and triggered huge traffic jams. Anti-Martelly demonstrators accused the Haitian president of cronyism, charging that he is ruling the impoverished Caribbean nation for the benefit of his friends and family. The march began peacefully as the crowd grew to a few thousand people and passed through poor neighbourhoods, many of them strongholds of government critics.

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/news/americas/2013/11/haiti-anti-government-protest-turns-violent-201311852555670304.html**](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/americas/2013/11/haiti-anti-government-protest-turns-violent-201311852555670304.html)

MENA

**Across MENA**

**Lives at risk as Syrian refugees face harshest winter in years**

As the region faces a bitter winter, Christian Aid warns that the lives of Syrian refugees will be at risk due to inadequate shelter. With a seven-fold increase in refugees from the Syrian conflict arriving in neighbouring countries over the past year, the UN and aid agencies are struggling to protect the most vulnerable from what it’s feared will be one of the harshest winters in years. There are now almost 200,000 refugees in northern Iraq, most of whom arrived with little or no belongings, and are ill-equipped to deal with near freezing temperatures. UN camps are full, and those forced instead to use temporary shelters are thought to be at particular risk. Winters in northern Iraq are often hard, with heavy rain and even snow. This year, however, some weather experts predict conditions will be particularly harsh. Similar conditions are forecast for Lebanon, at present home to more than a million refugees from the conflict. There, no formal camps exist and many of the new arrivals live in make shift encampments.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20131107141714-oue1r/**](http://www.trust.org/item/20131107141714-oue1r/)

**Kerry warns Israel of troubles ahead if peace talks fail**

US Secretary of State John Kerry warned Israel on Thursday that it could face a third Palestinian uprising and deepening international isolation if American-brokered peace negotiations failed. Both Israelis and Palestinians have given grim assessments of the lack of progress in their talks, which the United States helped revive last July after a three-year hiatus. Violence has simmered and on Thursday, Israeli troops killed a Palestinian wielding a makeshift firearm in the occupied West Bank. Kerry, speaking in Jordan a day after a visit to Israel, where he appealed for limits on its settlement building in the West Bank, said the negotiations had made "significant progress" in some areas.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20131107155255-d9f8k/?source=hpbreaking**](http://www.trust.org/item/20131107155255-d9f8k/?source=hpbreaking)

**20 mn Mideast kids to get polio vaccine after Syria outbreak - UNICEF mention**

Amid a polio outbreak in war-torn Syria, the UN has launched the largest-ever vaccination campaign in the Middle East, aiming to immunise more than 20 million children in seven countries, officials said on Friday. "The polio outbreak in Syria is not just a tragedy for children; it is an urgent alarm - and a crucial opportunity to reach all under-immunised children wherever they are," Peter Crowley, who heads **UNICEF**’s polio division, said in a statement. More than 650,000 children in Syria, including 116,000 in the strife-torn northeastern Deir Ezzor province where the polio outbreak was confirmed last week, had already received emergency vaccinations, UNICEF and the WHO said.

**AFP -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/20-mn-mideast-kids-polio-vaccine-syria-outbreak-112437534.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/20-mn-mideast-kids-polio-vaccine-syria-outbreak-112437534.html)

**Egypt**

**Egypt parliament polls in February or March: ministry**

Egypt is to hold parliamentary elections in February or March, two months after the country votes on a new constitution, a foreign ministry official said on Friday. The official said the schedule, in line with a timetable set out by the country's interim president, was on track. Preparations for presidential elections will start within two months after the end of the legislative vote, he told AFP. The roadmap for elections was adopted by the interim government shortly after the military overthrew president Mohamed Morsi in July and suspended the constitution.

**AFP -** [**http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5iYIbPIJ6XJDAz9RDZWBMEJyPGKwA?docId=e651c389-dac2-43dd-abef-01c624ba6768**](http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5iYIbPIJ6XJDAz9RDZWBMEJyPGKwA?docId=e651c389-dac2-43dd-abef-01c624ba6768)

**Iraq**

**Double bombing, shooting kill 7 people in Iraq**

A double bombing of a Sunni mosque in Baghdad and a shooting west of the Iraqi capital killed seven people on Friday, officials said, the latest attacks in a wave of violence roiling the country. The police said a bomb went off just after Friday prayers as Sunni worshippers were coming out from the Ali Bin Abi Talib mosque in Baghdad's western Shurta district. A second bomb, planted further down the street, exploded seconds later among worshippers trying to flee from the first blast. Police said the two bombings killed five people and wounded 15. Security forces quickly sealed off the area around the mosque. In the western city of Fallujah, a former al-Qaida stronghold 65 km from Baghdad, gunmen sprayed a security checkpoint with bullets, killing two policemen and wounding two others, said police officials.

Two hospital officials confirmed the casualties in the latest attacks. All officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to reporters.

**AP -** [**http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/bomb-striking-iraq-pilgrims-attacks-kill-20813810**](http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/bomb-striking-iraq-pilgrims-attacks-kill-20813810)

**Libya**

**Rival Libyan militias exchange gunfire in Tripoli**

Rival Libyan militias have clashed in the capital, Tripoli, with heavy gunfire and grenade blasts heard in several parts of the city. At least 10 people are been reported injured. An unconfirmed report says one person has been killed. One militia is said to be loosely linked to the interior ministry. It has been blamed for the killing of a rival militia leader from Misrata on Monday and has come under attack in retaliation for his death. Late on Thursday, pick-up trucks mounted with anti-aircraft guns opened fire as they tried to storm the eastern Suq al-Juma district of Tripoli, witnesses quoted by Reuters news agency said.

**BBC -** [**http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-24862718**](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-24862718)

**State of Palestine**

**Israeli soldiers shoot two Palestinians dead in West Bank**

Two Palestinians were shot dead by Israeli soldiers on Thursday evening in West Bank, raising the death toll of Israeli fire to five since last month. The first victim was shot dead at an Israeli army roadblock near the northern West Bank city of Nablus, whose body is still with the Israeli side. A spokesperson of Israeli police said in a statement that the Palestinian man attacked the Israeli soldiers with fireworks, prompting them to respond with fire. Some eyewitnesses, however, said that the Palestinian man was standing near the check point and opened fire at Israeli soldiers with a flare gun. Israeli soldiers then opened fire and shot him dead. The second death was a 23-year-old Palestinian man, who was gunned down at a roadblock northeast of Bethlehem.

**Xinhua -** [**http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2013-11/08/c\_132870520.htm**](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2013-11/08/c_132870520.htm)

**Yasser Arafat poisoned with polonium, tests show**

Palestinians have blamed Israel for the death of Yasser Arafat after Swiss forensic tests confirmed that he was poisoned to death in 2004 with radioactive polonium. Mr Arafat’s widow, Suha, after receiving the test results yesterday, said her husband was the victim of a political assassination. “It is scientifically proved that he didn’t die a natural death and we have scientific proof that he was killed.” Yasser Arafat had many enemies, including Palestinian and Arab rivals, but Wasel Abu Yousef, a member of the executive committee of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, yesterday pointed the finger of blame at Israel. “President Arafat was the victim of an organised terrorist assassination perpetrated by Israel, which was looking to get rid of him.”

**Reuters -** [**http://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/middle-east/yasser-arafat-poisoned-with-polonium-tests-show-1.1585941**](http://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/middle-east/yasser-arafat-poisoned-with-polonium-tests-show-1.1585941)

**Sudan**

**'Dozens' of casualties in Darfur rebel ambush: analyst**

Dozens of government troops have been killed during a rebel ambush in Sudan's Darfur, a regional analyst said on Thursday, confirming an unusually high toll for the troubled region. There were "huge" casualties on the government side, numbering in the "dozens", although exact figures were unclear, the analyst told AFP on condition of anonymity. Rebels were also killed, though in lesser numbers, he added. The Minni Minnawi faction of the Sudan Liberation Army, and the Sudanese military, both said a clash occurred last Sunday about 50 km southwest of El Fasher, the capital of North Darfur state. "We killed 200 regime troops," said Abdullah Moursal, spokesman for the Minnawi faction. He also said rebels seized about two dozen vehicles from government forces in the battle a few kilometres outside Tabit town.

**AFP -** [**http://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/dozens-casualties-darfur-rebel-ambush-analyst**](http://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/dozens-casualties-darfur-rebel-ambush-analyst)

**UN experts call on Sudan to stop threatening women with flogging**

Two UN independent experts today warned Sudan against threatening women with flogging, stressing this practice amounts to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment that goes against international law. “Premarital sex, adultery, failing to prove rape, dressing ‘indecently’ or ‘immorally’, being found in the company of a man, or committing acts that are deemed incompatible with chastity - these are some of the offences for which women have been chastised with flogging in various parts of the world,” said the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Rashida Manjoo. “This needs to stop.” On Monday, Amira Osman Hamed, a 35-year-old Sudanese civil engineer and women’s rights activist was charged with dressing indecently or immorally for refusing to cover her hair with a headscarf. If found guilty, she could be sentenced to corporal punishment of up to 40 lashes.

**UN News Centre -** [**http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=46437&Cr=sudan&Cr1=#.Unyubs0o7cs**](http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=46437&Cr=sudan&Cr1=#.Unyubs0o7cs)

**Syria**

**Syria troops launch major offensive in Aleppo**

Syrian troops have recaptured parts of a military base seized by rebels earlier this year in a fierce fighting near Aleppo international airport, a monitoring group said. Heavy fighting erupted in the early hours of Friday around Base 80 outside Syria's main northern city, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said. A fighter near the airport called the army offensive the heaviest barrage in more than a year on rebel-held areas near the airport. "We did not see it coming. The attack came as a real shock to us" he told Al Jazeera. "There is an insane campaign going on. The regime is employing a scorched-earth policy." Initial reports suggested both sides had suffered casualties in the fighting, and the Observatory added that towns near the base had come under heavy bombardment, along with neighbourhoods of Aleppo city.

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/11/syria-troops-launch-major-offensive-aleppo-201311863542920283.html**](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/11/syria-troops-launch-major-offensive-aleppo-201311863542920283.html)

**Syrian opposition refuses Moscow talks: Report**

The Russian news agency Interfax is reporting that Syria's main Western-backed opposition group is refusing to participate in talks in Moscow. It quotes ministry spokesman Alexander Lukashevich as saying Thursday that the Syrian National Coalition is "blocking and refusing to participate" in the talks, which would focus on resolving the humanitarian crisis in Syria. Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov earlier said that the opposition had first "responded positively" to the proposal. Russian officials had hoped the talks would bolster prospects for a proposed peace conference the US and Russia are trying to convene in Geneva.

**AP -** [**http://www.seattlepi.com/news/world/article/Report-Syrian-opposition-refuses-Moscow-talks-4966516.php**](http://www.seattlepi.com/news/world/article/Report-Syrian-opposition-refuses-Moscow-talks-4966516.php)

**Hundreds of Britons fighting in Syria - MI5 chief**

The number of British Islamists who have gone to Syria to fight in the war there is in the "low hundreds", a senior UK intelligence official says. Andrew Parker, head of domestic intelligence service MI5, told a parliamentary hearing the conflict was attracting al-Qaeda UK sympathisers. Their interaction with militant groups abroad was a "very important strand of the threat" the UK faced, he said. One in 10 foreign militants in Syria is believed to be from Europe. Most of them come from Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and Libya. MI5 has previously said that up to 200 British fighters are in Syria.

**BBC -** [**http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-24856553#**](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-24856553)

**Yemen**

**Spread of noxious moth destroys tomato crops across Yemen**

The price of tomatoes in Yemen has jumped to YR400 ($1.86) per kilogram due to the spread of the noxious moth, tuta absoluta, which is wreaking havoc on farms and destroying crop yields. A strategy to use pesticides to protect the crop against the moth has largely failed and caused locals to complain about the deteriorating quality of the tomato plants that are making it to consumers’ tables. “We were concerned about the price hike of food commodities,” said Abdulla Al-Jubani, a local in Sana’a, “but now tomatoes are another concern.” “Tomatoes are a staple in our meals. Even if we buy tomatoes, it does not taste good because of chemicals farmers are using.” Officials expect the situation to get worse. They predict costs will continue to rise as usable crops diminish.

**Yemen Times -** [**http://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/spread-noxious-moth-destroys-tomato-crops-across-yemen**](http://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/spread-noxious-moth-destroys-tomato-crops-across-yemen)

ROSA

**Afghanistan**

**Roadside bomb kills eight civilians in Afghanistan**

A roadside bomb ripped through a car in restive southern Afghanistan on Friday, killing eight civilians, most of them women and children, officials said. Five women, two children and an elderly man were killed when their vehicle hit a roadside bomb. The bombing near Qalat, the capital of the troubled southern Zabul province, was the latest in a series of explosions to take the lives of civilians instead of their intended military targets. Three other civilians were wounded in the bombing, Ghulam Sakhi Roghliwani, the Zabul provincial police chief told AFP. He blamed the Taliban for planting the improvised device.

**AFP -** [**http://dawn.com/news/1054990/roadside-bomb-kills-eight-civilians-in-afghanistan**](http://dawn.com/news/1054990/roadside-bomb-kills-eight-civilians-in-afghanistan)

**Maldives**

**Maldives makes 3rd try to elect president Saturday**

Two months of political bickering had pushed Maldives voters into the background. But finally they will have their say Saturday when they choose a new president for their vulnerable new democracy. Two attempts at holding the presidential election since September failed with questions over the accuracy of the voters' list prepared by the Elections Commission. The chaos left voters isolated and divided, and their country's budding democracy was under threat.

**AP -** [**http://www.therepublic.com/view/story/e465ff4dbfbc4c2985a3a04efa923263/AS--Maldives-Election**](http://www.therepublic.com/view/story/e465ff4dbfbc4c2985a3a04efa923263/AS--Maldives-Election)

**Pakistan**

**Taliban plan wave of revenge attacks in Pakistan**

The Pakistani Taliban announced on Friday they would orchestrate a wave of revenge attacks against the government after naming hardline commander Mullah Fazlullah as their new leader. The rise of Fazlullah, known for his fierce Islamist views and rejection of peace talks, by the Taliban shura, or leadership council, a day earlier follows the killing of Hakimullah Mehsud, the previous leader, in a US drone strike on November 1. "We will target security forces, government installations, political leaders and police," Asmatullah Shaheen, head of the shura, told Reuters by telephone from an undisclosed location. He said the Taliban's main target included army and government installations in Punjab province, the political stronghold of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. "We have a plan. But I want to make one thing clear. We will not target civilians, bazaars or public places. People do not need to be afraid," Shaheen added.

**Reuters -** [**http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/11/08/uk-pakistan-taliban-idUKBRE9A705I20131108**](http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/11/08/uk-pakistan-taliban-idUKBRE9A705I20131108)

**New Taliban chief could push Pakistan to military action**

The Pakistani Taliban’s appointment of a new hardline leader opposed to peace talks and with a long history of attacks against the military could push the army into launching a fresh offensive, analysts said Friday. The election of Maulana Fazlullah, notorious for leading the militants’ brutal two-year rule in Pakistan’s northwestern Swat valley, is like a “red rag to a bull”, one analyst said. It could also raise tensions with Kabul at a critical juncture as US-led forces withdraw from Afghanistan after 12 years of war. While Kabul has long accused Islamabad of supporting the Afghan Taliban, Fazlullah has orchestrated cross-border attacks from his hideout in eastern Afghanistan, and Pakistan suspects its neighbour’s intelligence services of supporting him.

**AFP -** [**http://www.capitalfm.co.ke/news/2013/11/new-taliban-chief-could-push-pakistan-to-military-action/**](http://www.capitalfm.co.ke/news/2013/11/new-taliban-chief-could-push-pakistan-to-military-action/)

**Sri Lanka**

**Sri Lanka accused of barring human rights delegation**

An international human rights group accused Sri Lanka on Thursday of denying visas to its delegation ahead of a Commonwealth summit in the island nation, which is under growing foreign pressure over its rights record. But Sri Lankan government spokesman Keheliya Rambukwella said he was unaware of any such visa denial or request by The International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI). Sri Lanka hosts the biennial Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting next week and human rights groups have urged a boycott by leaders to put pressure on the government, which faces allegations of extra-judicial killings, harassment of minorities and the detention of politicians and journalists. IBAHRI Said Sri Lanka had denied entry to its delegation, including the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20131107201446-jg269/?source=hpbreaking**](http://www.trust.org/item/20131107201446-jg269/?source=hpbreaking)

**Sri Lankan students protest closing universities**

Sri Lankan university students have protested a government decision to close state universities during a summit of leaders from Commonwealth countries next week. About 2,000 students demonstrated Friday outside the main railroad station in the capital, Colombo, blocking traffic while shouting slogans and displaying placards. University authorities announced Wednesday that a one-week vacation would be given to students during the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, which will be held in Colombo. They asked students to move out from dormitories, saying they need to be renovated.

**AP -** [**http://www.seattlepi.com/news/world/article/Sri-Lankan-students-protest-closing-universities-4966867.php**](http://www.seattlepi.com/news/world/article/Sri-Lankan-students-protest-closing-universities-4966867.php)

WCAR

**Across WCAR**

**Nigeria says needs Cameroon's help to fight Boko Haram**

Nigeria said it needed help from Cameroon to police their shared border as it seeks to win a drawn-out battle to crush Boko Haram Islamist militants, a Nigerian official said. President Goodluck Jonathan's military crackdown announced in May has driven Boko Haram fighters back into Nigeria's north towards the border with Niger and into the remote hills bordering Cameroon to the east. But Boko Haram fighters have proved resilient. At least 70 civilians have been killed in attacks on villages in Nigeria's northeastern Borno state in recent days. Boko Haram has killed thousands during four years of rebellion. The 1,700 km (1,060 mile) border between Nigeria and Cameroon stretches from the Atlantic coast to Lake Chad.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/11/07/us-cameroon-nigeria-idUSBRE9A60S620131107**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/11/07/us-cameroon-nigeria-idUSBRE9A60S620131107)

**Burkina Faso**

**In Burkina Faso, UN SG urges cooperation to help Sahel countries tackle climate change impacts**

UN SG Ban Ki-moon today underscored the importance of preparing for extreme weather patterns in Burkina Faso, which as has much of the Sahel region, been impacted by climate change, and urged national leaders to work with the UN and the international community to obtain the necessary resources to mitigate and adapt to the impacts. “Extreme weather patterns have shown that climate change is fast approaching – much, much faster than one may expect,” Mr. Ban said ahead of his meeting with Prime Minister Luc-Adolphe Tiao. Noting that the country is among those “most impacted” by the changing weather patterns, Mr. Ban also urged a push for the AU to champion this cause, “If you are not speaking up, then who will.”

**UN News Centre -** [**http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=46443&Cr=sahel&Cr1=#.Unyxg80o7cs**](http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=46443&Cr=sahel&Cr1=#.Unyxg80o7cs)

**DR Congo**

**Congo says to sign peace deal with M23 rebels on Monday**

Democratic Republic of Congo will sign a peace deal on Monday with the M23 rebel group after it laid down its arms this week following a string of defeats, Congo's Foreign Minister Raymond Tshibanda told Reuters on Friday. "It was decided one day after the M23 declaration renouncing the rebellion that the government would give them five days before the signing," Tshibanda said during a visit to Paris. "Those five days end on Monday, so the signing is on Monday." "This signature is important because it in essence focuses on M23 going into barracks and demobilising, and to resolve other problems," he said in an interview.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20131108123714-sc6v7/?source=hpbreaking**](http://www.trust.org/item/20131108123714-sc6v7/?source=hpbreaking)

**Mauritania**

**Mauritania election campaign underway despite opposition boycott**

The campaign for Mauritania's elections began on Friday in a carnival atmosphere despite a boycott by a large part of the opposition which has dismissed the process as a sham. The election commission said 1,096 candidates had registered to vie for the leadership of 218 local councils across the west African nation while just 438 people were contesting 147 seats in parliament. Activists set off fireworks in the capital Nouakchott at the midnight (0000 GMT) launch of the two-week campaign period while the noise of honking horns and loud music filled the streets. The ruling Union for the Republic staged an all-night party featuring dance troupes and poetry readings while its leader Mohamed Mahmoud Ould Mohamed Lemine led a rallying cry for supporters to deliver a comfortable majority "for the good of all".

**AFP -** [**http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/131108/mauritania-election-campaign-underway-despite-opposition-boycott**](http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/131108/mauritania-election-campaign-underway-despite-opposition-boycott)

**Niger**

**Government statistics show sharp increase of displaced persons from Nigeria in Diffa region**

The regional authorities in Diffa estimate the number of displaced persons that have left the three northern states of Nigeria under emergency rule (Bornio, Yobe, and Adamawa) and entered Niger territory to be 37,000. Following newly published figures by the Diffa regional civil registry office, the number of Niger nationals that returned to their country stands now at 29,000 while the number of Nigerian refugees increased to 8,000. In addition, an earlier count by the Niger Red Cross counted 150 third country nationals.

**UNHCR -** [**http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/SharpIncreaseofDisplacedPersonsinDiffaRegion.pdf**](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/SharpIncreaseofDisplacedPersonsinDiffaRegion.pdf)

The Brief is produced by UNICEF's Emergency Operations Centre (OPSCEN) and is a daily compilation of the main humanitarian, political and security-related media stories from around the world. It aims to provide field offices and senior decision-makers with critical information related to humanitarian emergencies and staff security.

Disclaimer: The views presented here are those of the original authors and are not necessarily shared by UNICEF. Please note that these news stories should be used solely for official purposes. Our license agreement does not permit users to store, post or redistribute the contents beyond personal use. We kindly ask that UNICEF colleagues be responsible users of copyrighted material. For information on this service please contact: