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GENERAL

**Across Regions**

**15 million children caught up in major conflicts: UNICEF**

The year 2014 has been one of horror, fear and despair for millions of children, as worsening conflicts across the world saw them exposed to extreme violence and its consequences, forcibly recruited and deliberately targeted by warring groups, UNICEF said today. As many as 15 million children are caught up in violent conflicts in the Central African Republic, Iraq, South Sudan, the State of Palestine, Syria and Ukraine – including those internally displaced or living as refugees. Globally, an estimated 230 million children currently live in countries and areas affected by armed conflicts.

**UNICEF: (**[**http://www.unicef.org/media/media\_78058.html**](http://www.unicef.org/media/media_78058.html)**)**

CEE/CIS

**Across CEE/CIS**

**EU tells Russia, keep Balkans out of East-West tensions**

The EU urged Russia not to drag the Western Balkans into its deepening rift with the West over Ukraine, reflecting concern that the region risks becoming another point of East-West tension. Noting "tensions" between the EU and Russia, EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini, on a visit to Bosnia, said it was in the interest of both "to find and develop ways of cooperation, and not of confrontation".

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/12/05/us-ukraine-crisis-balkans-idUSKCN0JJ1HI20141205**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/12/05/us-ukraine-crisis-balkans-idUSKCN0JJ1HI20141205)

**Bosnia Herzegovina**

**Ex-paramilitaries arrested for notorious massacre**

Fifteen former Serb paramilitary fighters were arrested in dawn raids in Serbia and Bosnia on 5 December for the 1993 murder of 20 people, mainly Muslims, seized, tortured and killed as Yugoslavia fell apart in war. The paramilitary group behind the massacre, known as the White Eagles, was led by Milan Lukic, one of only four people to have been sentenced to life imprisonment by the UN war crimes tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20141205105801-4kygt**](http://www.trust.org/item/20141205105801-4kygt)

**Leader storms out of EU meeting amid political gridlock**

The Muslim Bosnian leader Bakir Izetbegovic stormed out of a meeting with EU representatives in Sarajevo after Serbian leader Milorad Dodik accused the country‘s Muslim majority of wanting to take over the entire country. The EU-organized meeting was meant to be a new attempt to move past two decades of political gridlock in Bosnia, with EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini and the bloc‘s commissioner for neighbourhood policy Johannes Hahn meeting with the heads of state.

**AP -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/eu-urges-russia-let-bosnia-join-bloc-180444383.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/eu-urges-russia-let-bosnia-join-bloc-180444383.html)

**DPA -** [**http://en.europeonline-magazine.eu/bosniak-leader-storms-out-of-eu-meeting-amid-political-gridlock\_366947.html**](http://en.europeonline-magazine.eu/bosniak-leader-storms-out-of-eu-meeting-amid-political-gridlock_366947.html)

**Serbia**

**Ultranationalist disturbs Balkans peace**

It took just two weeks and a few inflammatory statements by Serbian ultranationalist Vojislav Seselj to put a chill in Serbia's relations with Croatia and Europe. Seselj was temporarily released from custody in mid-November while awaiting a verdict from the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia (ICTY). Upon his return to Serbia after nearly 12 years in detention in The Hague, however, Seselj resumed his noxious nationalist rhetoric by advocating creation of a "Greater Serbia" encompassing large parts of Croatia. Croatia's parliament adopted a declaration demanding the ICTY review its decision to release Seselj.

**AFP -** [**http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/141205/serbian-ultranationalist-seselj-disturbs-balkans-peace**](http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/141205/serbian-ultranationalist-seselj-disturbs-balkans-peace)

**Ukraine**

**Conflict uproots hundreds of thousands**

UNHCR reported on 5 December that fighting in the east this year has forced more than half-a-million people to flee their homes and find shelter elsewhere in the country, while hundreds of thousands

have fled to Russia and other neighbouring states. UNHCR said some 514,000 people had been internally displaced by the conflict as of the beginning of December. Ukrainians are also seeking international protection, with some 233,000 applying for refugee status or temporary asylum in the Russian Federation. So far this year, more than 317,000 Ukrainians have applied for such permits in Russia (222,000), Belarus (60,000), Poland (23,000) and other neighbouring countries.

**UNHCR -** [**http://www.refworld.org/docid/5481c4f44.html**](http://www.refworld.org/docid/5481c4f44.html)

**UNHCR -** [**http://www.unhcr.org/548190aa9.html**](http://www.unhcr.org/548190aa9.html)

**Five civilians killed in fresh east Ukraine violence**

Five civilians have been killed in fresh violence in eastern Ukraine, where more explosions and gunfire rang out on Sunday, two days before the start of a planned truce, officials said. Three civilians were killed and 10 were wounded overnight in the rebel bastion of Donetsk, where further explosions and gunfire were heard Sunday morning, local authorities said. The pro-Kiev governor of the rebel region of Lugansk meanwhile said two civilians were killed in the village of Kryakivka after a shell fell in the yard of a house. Kiev has announced a new round of talks with the pro-Russian rebels in Minsk next week to try and rescue a tattered September ceasefire.

**AFP -** [**http://www.kyivpost.com/content/ukraine-abroad/agence-france-presse-five-civilians-killed-in-fresh-east-ukraine-violence-374324.html**](http://www.kyivpost.com/content/ukraine-abroad/agence-france-presse-five-civilians-killed-in-fresh-east-ukraine-violence-374324.html)

EAP

**Across EAP**

**53,000 fled Myanmar, Bangladesh by sea in 2014: UN**

About 53,000 people left Bangladesh and Myanmar on treacherous smuggling boats bound for Thailand and Malaysia this year, about 540 of them dying on the journey, UNHCR reported. The majority are stateless Rohingya Muslims, fleeing ethnic tensions in Myanmar or poor prospects in Bangladesh, as well as Bangladeshis looking for a better life, the UNHCR said.

**AFP -** [**http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-2863061/53-000-fled-Myanmar-Bangladesh-sea-2014-UN.html**](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-2863061/53-000-fled-Myanmar-Bangladesh-sea-2014-UN.html)

**China**

**China registers 92 million people in poverty**

China has identified 128,000 impoverished villages and 92 million people living in poverty, said a senior poverty alleviation official on Saturday. Poverty has declined substantially in China, but the country still has 832 poor counties and districts. Along with overall GDP growth targets, the government is focusing on raising the income of the country's population with a current goal to double per capita income from the 2010 level by 2020.

**Xinhua -** [**http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2014-12/06/c\_133837049.htm**](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2014-12/06/c_133837049.htm)

**Philippines**

**Manila braces for storm, as Hagupit leaves 27 dead**

Typhoon Hagupit weakened to a tropical storm as it churned close to the Philippine capital on Monday, after killing 27 people on the eastern island of Samar island where it flattened homes, toppled trees and cut power and communications. Manila shut down as Hagupit took aim at the tip of the main island Luzon, just south of the capital city of 12 million people. But despite the rising death toll, there was relief that Hagupit had not brought destruction on the scale of super typhoon Haiyan, which last year killed thousands of people in the same areas of the central Philippines.

Hagupit roared in from the Pacific as a Category 3 typhoon on Saturday night, churning across Samar island and on to the smaller island of Masbate. Its effects were felt across the central Philippines, including Leyte Island and southern Luzon.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/12/08/us-philippines-typhoon-idUSKBN0JM04420141208**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/12/08/us-philippines-typhoon-idUSKBN0JM04420141208)

ESA

**Across ESA**

**Ethiopia considering to set up buffer zone inside Somalia**

Ethiopia is considering the establishment of a buffer zone inside Somalia to deter cross-border attacks from Al-Shabaab with high caution, a senior government official said. Media reports indicated this week that Ethiopia and its southern neighbor Kenya are in discussions to create a buffer zone inside Somalia along their respective borders. Ethiopia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs declined to officially comment on the issue. However, sources within the ministry told The Reporter that the country is cautiously approaching the matter due to the "sensitivity" of the issue.

**All Africa -** [**http://allafrica.com/stories/201412081019.html**](http://allafrica.com/stories/201412081019.html)

**Dozens of Ethiopian migrants drown in shipwreck off coast of Yemen**

Seventy Ethiopian migrants have drowned after their boat sank near the entrance to the Red Sea, off the coast of Yemen. Thousands of people fleeing troubled Horn of Africa states try to reach Yemen every year. In the past five years, more than 500,000 people (mostly Eritreans, Ethiopians and Somalis) have reached Yemen via the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea following treacherous journeys on vessels that are often overloaded.

**AFP -** [**http://www.businessinsider.com/afp-70-ethiopian-migrants-drown-in-shipwreck-off-yemen-coast-yemen-govt-2014-12**](http://www.businessinsider.com/afp-70-ethiopian-migrants-drown-in-shipwreck-off-yemen-coast-yemen-govt-2014-12)

**Somalia**

**Nine killed, 12 wounded in twin bomb attack in Somali town**

At least nine people were killed Friday in a twin bomb attack in the central Somali town of Baidoa, the latest in a string of attacks. A suicide bomber detonated himself amongst a crowd of people at busy teashop in the town. At least nine civilians have been killed in the attack, among them journalists. At least 12 others have been wounded.

**AFP -** [**http://www.ndtv.com/article/world/nine-killed-12-wounded-in-twin-bomb-attack-in-somali-town-630660**](http://www.ndtv.com/article/world/nine-killed-12-wounded-in-twin-bomb-attack-in-somali-town-630660)

**Fears over Somalia as Parliament approves Motion to axe the PM**

Somalia’s prime minister lost a confidence vote in parliament on Saturday after months of dispute with the country’s president and international concern that the turmoil was harming rebuilding efforts. President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud was given 30 days to name a new head of government for the nation after the vote against Abdiweli Sheikh Ahmed, who had taken over the post a year ago. Ahmed received support from only 80 lawmakers, while 153 backed a Motion to oust him.

**Daily Nation -** [**http://mobile.nation.co.ke/news/Fears-over-Somalia-as-Parliament-approves-Motion-to-axe-the-PM/-/1950946/2547422/-/format/xhtml/-/fk84k3/-/index.html**](http://mobile.nation.co.ke/news/Fears-over-Somalia-as-Parliament-approves-Motion-to-axe-the-PM/-/1950946/2547422/-/format/xhtml/-/fk84k3/-/index.html)

LAC

**Cuba**

**Caribbean nations urge US to end Cuba embargo**

Caribbean leaders have urged the US to end a 54-year-old economic embargo against Cuba, describing it as "senseless" as they convened in Havana for a regional summit. Antigua and Barbuda Prime Minister Gaston Browne on Sunday implored US President Barack Obama to end the 54-year-old economic embargo, as 15 Caribbean nations met to discuss financial assistance and economic agreements. The US imposed the economic embargo on the island in 1960 after Cuba's nationalisation of properties belonging to US citizens and corporations.

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/news/americas/2014/12/caribbean-nations-urge-us-end-cuba-embargo-201412815642194999.html**](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/americas/2014/12/caribbean-nations-urge-us-end-cuba-embargo-201412815642194999.html)

MENA

**Egypt**

**Canada joins UK in closing Cairo embassy to public over ‘security’**

Canada on Monday joined Britain in closing its embassy in Cairo to the public for security reasons, with neither country providing details about any specific threat. The move comes amid increasing attacks by Islamist militants in Egypt and calls from the extremist Islamic State (IS) group for attacks on Western targets. The Canadian embassy said in a statement that it would be closed "due to security reasons" on Monday, with a separate email to Canadian citizens in Egypt saying this would be the case "until further notice".

**Daily Mail -** [**http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-2865227/Canada-joins-UK-closing-Cairo-embassy-public-security.html**](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-2865227/Canada-joins-UK-closing-Cairo-embassy-public-security.html)

**Jordan**

**27,103 Syrian children born in Jordan since March 2011 – UNICEF mention**

More than 114,000 Syrian children were born as refugees in five host countries in the region, including Jordan, since the beginning of the crisis. According to UNICEF MENA, 114,894 children were born as refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq and Egypt since March 2011. UNICEF Jordan said 27,103 Syrian children were born in Jordan until October this year. In response to a question by The Jordan Times, the agency said its support begins as soon as the baby is born through partnerships with the government and several NGOs.

**Jordan Times -** [**http://jordantimes.com/27103-syrian-children-born-in-jordan-since-march-2011----unicef**](http://jordantimes.com/27103-syrian-children-born-in-jordan-since-march-2011----unicef)

**Lebanon**

**Gunmen open fire on refugee camp in Lebanon, two wounded**

Lebanese gunmen opened fire on and burned Syrian refugee tents in north Lebanon, wounding two refugees, security sources said on Sunday, two days after a Lebanese soldier was killed by Syrian militants to countrywide outrage. Lebanon has the highest per capita concentration of refugees in the world, with one in four residents a refugee, many of them living in the poorest areas. Resentment against Syrian refugees has grown amid accusations that the displaced population is hiding militants in tented settlements to stage attacks on the Lebanese army.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/12/07/us-mideast-crisis-lebanon-refugees-idUSKBN0JL0HH20141207**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/12/07/us-mideast-crisis-lebanon-refugees-idUSKBN0JL0HH20141207)

**Yemen**

**Roadside bombs targeting Houthis explode in Sana’a, several wounded**

Five roadside bombs targeting Shi'ite Muslim Houthi fighters exploded in Sanaa early on Monday, wounding several people. The bombs targeted Houthi checkpoints and some houses, the ministry website quoted Sanaa's director of security as saying. Two other devices were dismantled, the ministry added. A medical source said eight people had been wounded and three of them were in a critical condition. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the bombs.

**Reuters -** [**http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/12/08/uk-yemen-blasts-idUKKBN0JM0L020141208**](http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/12/08/uk-yemen-blasts-idUKKBN0JM0L020141208)

SA

**India**

**Militant attack on Indian Kashmir army base kills at least 17**

Militants sneaked into an Indian military camp in Kashmir on Friday, killing 11 soldiers and police, the worst losses for security forces in six years in the Himalayan territory. The attack was followed by a gun battle in the state capital, Srinagar, and a grenade blast in south Kashmir, prompting a call for Pakistan to do more to stop militants from crossing into Indian Kashmir. The militants cut through a fence around the artillery camp and fired rocket-propelled grenades at the security force men in their bunkers, an army officer said.

**ABC -** [**http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-12-05/militants-launch-deadly-attack-on-army-base-in-indian-kashmir/5948552**](http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-12-05/militants-launch-deadly-attack-on-army-base-in-indian-kashmir/5948552)

**Maldives**

**Country declares state of crisis as it faces water shortage**

The Maldives has declared a state of crisis after a fire at the Male's sole water sewage treatment plant has led to a shortage of drinking water in the archipelago. About 100,000 people in Male have been left without safe water to drink from the tap, according to a government minister. He said it will take a few days to fully restore the system.

**Reuters -** [**http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/12/05/uk-maldives-water-idUKKCN0JJ1YU20141205**](http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/12/05/uk-maldives-water-idUKKCN0JJ1YU20141205)

**Pakistan**

**Four new Polio cases detected**

A health official in Pakistan says four new polio cases have been detected in the country, bringing the number of children affected by the crippling disease this year to 276. A senior official at the National Institute of Health in Islamabad, said on 6 December that the new cases were registered during the week. He said most of the cases came from the northwest, where local militants often target polio teams. He said authorities will launch a new three-day vaccination campaign on 8 December to reach 35 million children across the country.

**AP -** [**http://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/official-polio-cases-detected-pakistan-27409237**](http://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/official-polio-cases-detected-pakistan-27409237)

WCA

**Central African Republic**

**Revenge killings in CAR leave at least 14 dead**

At least 14 people have been killed in tit-for-tat sectarian violence in CAR, while hundreds of Christians have sought shelter in the main church in the central town of Bambari. Muslim youths had rampaged through Christian districts after a Muslim taxi driver was killed in revenge for an ex-Seleka rebel shooting a soldier in Bambari two days before. The soldier was part of a detachment escorting the head of the transitional parliament, President Alexandre-Ferdinand Nguendet, on a visit to Bambari.

**Reuters -** [**http://in.reuters.com/article/2014/12/05/centralafrica-violence-idINKCN0JJ1XO20141205**](http://in.reuters.com/article/2014/12/05/centralafrica-violence-idINKCN0JJ1XO20141205)

**CAR humanitarian crisis among world's worst**

The situation in the CAR remains one of the world's largest humanitarian crises, with more than 187,000 refugees having fled to neighboring countries over the last year, UNHCR said Friday. This brings the total number of refugees and internally displaced people to over 850,000, about a fifth of the CAR's entire population. The security situation in the country remains volatile, with sporadic incidents of violence as witnessed in October, when clashes broke out between militias and international forces. Some 430,000 people remain internally displaced. The humanitarian crisis in CAR is at risk of becoming overshadowed by other pressing crises if more support is not provided.

**Xinhua -** [**http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/xinhua-news-agency/141205/un-refugee-agency-sees-car-humanitarian-crisis-among-worlds-**](http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/xinhua-news-agency/141205/un-refugee-agency-sees-car-humanitarian-crisis-among-worlds-)

**Hundreds of thousands of children have chance to restart education**

Hundreds of thousands of children in CAR, some of whom have missed up to two years of formal education, will have the chance to get back to school as a campaign gets underway. The initiative, supported by UNICEF, aims to help 662,000 children resume their studies, as schools gradually reopen in safer areas of the country. By the end of December UNICEF and partners will provide education supplies such as schools-in-a-box, a kit containing essentials like exercise books and pencils, and school backpacks to approximately 400,000 students, as part of nationwide efforts led by local authorities.

**UNICEF -** [**http://www.unicef.org/media/media\_78044.html**](http://www.unicef.org/media/media_78044.html)

**DR Congo**

**Ugandan rebels kill 36 people in eastern Congo village massacre**

An attack by suspected Ugandan rebels near Beni in the eastern DRC has left 36 people dead. The Allied Democratic Forces (ADF-NALU) - considered a terrorist organization by the government it opposes - entered the homes of civilians in villages near Beni wielding guns, axes and machetes. More than 200 people have been massacred by the Islamist group in the Beni area since October. The ADF-NALU has links with Somalia's al-Shabaab militants, according to the United Nations.

**AFP -** [**http://www.nation.co.ke/news/africa/-/1066/2548054/-/67ndo5z/-/index.html**](http://www.nation.co.ke/news/africa/-/1066/2548054/-/67ndo5z/-/index.html)

**Nigeria**

**Nigeria’s Boko Haram violence now comparable to IS in Iraq: CFR**

Intensifying violence perpetrated by Boko Haram and government troops in Nigeria has for the first time claimed more than 10,000 lives in just 12 months, according to new figures. The rate of violence in Africa's most populous country is comparable to the civilian death toll in Iraq, where a U.S.-led coalition is fighting IS. According to data compiled by the Council for Foreign Relations (CFR), 10,340 violent deaths between November 2013 and November 2014 were linked to Boko Haram-related violence. In that period around the same number of civilians, 10,733, were violently killed in Iraq, according to the UN.

**NBC -** [**http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/missing-nigeria-schoolgirls/nigerias-boko-haram-violence-now-comparable-isis-iraq-n260576**](http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/missing-nigeria-schoolgirls/nigerias-boko-haram-violence-now-comparable-isis-iraq-n260576)

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.

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