**UNICEF OPSCEN Brief - Tuesday, 24 September 2013**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| GENERAL | **Across Regions** | Liberia's Charles Taylor faces war crimes appeals verdict |
|  |  | DRC neighbors call for quick accord with rebels |
| EAPR | **Across EAPR** | Child labour falls in Asia Pacific but numbers still high - ILO |
|  | **Cambodia** | Hun Sen renamed PM as opposition boycotts |
|  | **China** | Authorities move to curb sexual assaults against children |
|  | **Philippines** | New rebel attack in the south |
|  |  | Heavy rains leave 18 dead |
|  | **Thailand** | Floods inundate a quarter of country's provinces, warnings issued |
| ESAR | **Across ESARO** | Ethiopia could face ‘large-scale’ attacks from Somalia’s Al-Shabaab |
|  | **Kenya** | Government says all hostages freed in mall siege, gunfire heard |
|  |  | Somali militant group says hostages in mall alive |
|  | **Madagascar** | As food crisis looms, locust control campaign launched |
|  | **Namibia** | Drought hits poor hardest - UNICEF mention |
|  | **Somalia** | UN envoy calls for stepping up fight against al Shabaab |
| MENA | **Across MENA** | Syria crisis endangering development across Arab world, UN report finds |
|  |  | Gaza-Egypt border restrictions worsening humanitarian situation of Palestinians, says UN |
|  | **Algeria** | Two armed militants killed east of Algiers |
|  | **Egypt** | Authorities ban all Muslim Brotherhood activities |
|  | **Iran** | 80 prisoners freed ahead of Rouhani's UN visit |
|  | **Iraq** | Two blasts kill 16 people in mainly Sunni district of Baghdad |
|  | **Lebanon** | Security forces deploy in Hezbollah stronghold |
|  | **Tunisia** | Government resist proposal to step down |
|  | **Syria** | Children at risk of malnutrition |
|  |  | Dozens of nuns, orphans trapped in Maalula: church |
|  | **Yemen** | Gunmen kill Yemeni air force colonel in Sanaa |
| ROSA | **Afghanistan** | 16 police killed in Kandahar attacks |
|  | **Maldives** | Supreme court postpones election run-off |
|  |  | Protests over delay of presidential runoff election |
|  | **Sri Lanka** | Food insecurity, debt rise in north |
| TACR | **Chile** | Ex-army chief in child torture probe |
|  | **Colombia** | Rebels recruited 13,000 minors during conflict |
|  | **Mexico** | Five bodies pulled from massive mudslide |
|  |  | 10 killed in massacre near border city |
| WCAR | **Across WCAR** | West Africa's disabled children face abuse, risk of death - UNICEF mention |
|  | **CAR** | UN to tackle 'forgotten crisis' |
|  | **Guinea** | Policeman killed, 51 people hurt in pre-poll clashes |
|  |  | Country postpones elections to 28 September |
|  | **Mali** | UN peacekeepers accused of misconduct |
|  |  | FAO and WFP appeal for immediate support for north |

GENERAL

**Across Regions**

**Liberia's Charles Taylor faces war crimes appeals verdict**

Liberia's ex-president Charles Taylor is to hear his fate before a UN-backed court on Thursday when it hands down an appeals judgment against his 50-year sentence for arming Sierra Leone rebels. Taylor, 65, was found guilty last year of lending support to rebels from neighbouring Sierra Leone who waged a terror campaign during a civil war that claimed 120,000 lives between 1991 and 2001, in exchange for "blood diamonds" mined by slave labour. Presiding Judge George King is to hand down a verdict at 0900 GMT at the Special Court for Sierra Leone in Leidschendam, a suburb just outside The Hague.

**AFP -** [**http://www.expatica.com/nl/news/dutch-news/liberia-s-charles-taylor-faces-war-crimes-appeals-verdict\_274620.html**](http://www.expatica.com/nl/news/dutch-news/liberia-s-charles-taylor-faces-war-crimes-appeals-verdict_274620.html)

**DRC neighbors call for quick accord with rebels**

African leaders called on the DRC government and opposition rebels to quickly make an accord to end renewed conflict in the east of the country. While condemning attacks by M23 rebels, the heads of state and government at a meeting at the UN headquarters called for a "swift conclusion" to talks being held in Kampala which are currently deadlocked. The talks started on 10 September in the Ugandan capital but there have still not been any direct meetings between the government and M23 representatives. UN leader Ban Ki-moon called the meeting to review an accord signed by 11 African nations in February. The 11 promised not to interfere in each other's affairs as part of efforts to end decades of strife in DRC, much caused by meddling neighbors.

**AFP -** [**http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5i\_Nu1z4Ml9jcG60zGO1Ao1C1gPCA?docId=CNG.f8f18ad70ee617cd563f9c78b8c15b2f.431**](http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5i_Nu1z4Ml9jcG60zGO1Ao1C1gPCA?docId=CNG.f8f18ad70ee617cd563f9c78b8c15b2f.431)

EAPR

**Across EAPR**

**Child labour falls in Asia Pacific but numbers still high – ILO**

Asia Pacific has more child labourers than any other region in the world, despite recording the largest drop in child labour in the past four years, the ILO said in a report on Monday.There were 78 million child labourers in the world’s most populous region in 2012, down from 114 million in 2008, the ILO said. Asia Pacific also has the largest number of children engaged in hazardous work – 33.9 million. This is work that directly endangers a child’s health, safety and moral development. Globally, child labour has decreased by one third since 2000, falling from 246 million children to 168 million, according to the report. Still, more than one in 10 children between five and 17 are engaged in child labour and 85 million of those children are doing hazardous work. The international community has said it will eliminate the worst forms of child labour by 2016 but the report said this target will not be met, despite the progress made, and meeting this target “is going to require a substantial acceleration of efforts at all levels.”

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20130923114236-cw7bo/?source=hptop&utm\_source=MailingList&utm\_medium=email&utm\_campaign=Expresso+24+Sept+2013**](http://www.trust.org/item/20130923114236-cw7bo/?source=hptop&utm_source=MailingList&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Expresso+24+Sept+2013)

**Cambodia  
Hun Sen renamed PM as opposition boycotts**   
Ruling party lawmakers in Cambodia officially extended Hun Sen’s rule for another five years Tuesday, renaming the longtime strongman PM of the nation in a parliamentary vote boycotted by the opposition. The vote was considered a formality, and Hun Sen (who has ruled virtually unchallenged for nearly three decades) will take the oath of office in front of King Norodom Sihamoni at the Royal Palace later in the day. The opposition stayed away from parliament’s opening session Monday and boycotted the legislature again Tuesday over allegations the country’s disputed July ballot was marred by fraud. The parliamentary vote Tuesday saw all 68 ruling party lawmakers rename Hun Sen to his post. All 55 seats held by the opposition were empty.   
**AP -** [**http://www.boston.com/news/world/asia/2013/09/23/cambodian-opposition-boycotts-parliament-over-vote/IfpWiksoaAr3Xa3EMVu8JK/story.html**](http://www.boston.com/news/world/asia/2013/09/23/cambodian-opposition-boycotts-parliament-over-vote/IfpWiksoaAr3Xa3EMVu8JK/story.html)

**China**

**Authorities move to curb sexual assaults against children**China on Tuesday asked its schools to educate their children on self-protection against sexual assaults and tighten the review of their teachers' credentials after a spate of sexual assault cases shocked the nation. The Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Public Security, the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League of China (CYLC) and the All-China Women's Federation, jointly issued guidelines on the prevention of sexual assaults against children. The guidelines said campaigns must be launched to educate parents on how to protect their children, to raise awareness among children, and to tell victims how to seek help. School principals, teachers and support staff must have the required qualifications, and schools must include ethics into training programs for their staff, according to the guidelines.   
**Xinhua -** [**http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90882/8408815.html**](http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90882/8408815.html)

**Philippines**

**New rebel attack in the south**

Rebels clashed with troops and took hostages in a fresh outbreak of violence in the southern Philippines, officials said. The fighting in the centre of Mindanao island came as a standoff with another armed group elsewhere in Mindanao entered its third week. Members of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) attacked pro-government volunteers in the town of Midsayap before dawn but retreated when military reinforcements arrived, reported a regional army spokesperson. Four soldiers were killed while residents reported seeing four dead BIFF guerillas being carried away by their comrades, he added. The rebels then took 15 schoolteachers and farmers to use as human shields against pursuit although all of them were later freed, he said. Both the army spokesperson and BIFF spokesperson said the latest fighting was not related to the conflict with another rebel group in Zamboanga City, 273km from Midsayap.

**AFP -** [**http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/130923/new-muslim-rebel-attack-southern-philippines-0**](http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/130923/new-muslim-rebel-attack-southern-philippines-0)

**Heavy rains leave 18 dead**  
Monsoon rains worsened by Typhoon Usagi pounded the Philippines for the third day on Monday, causing floods and landslides that left 18 people dead and others stranded on rooftops, officials said. The most severely affected area was the province of Zambales, about 80km northwest of Manila where heavy rains caused rain-soaked soil to cascade down, killing 17 people in different parts of the province, said assistant civil defence director Nigel Lontoc.   
**AFP -** [**http://reliefweb.int/report/philippines/heavy-rains-leave-18-dead-philippines**](http://reliefweb.int/report/philippines/heavy-rains-leave-18-dead-philippines)

**Thailand**

**Floods inundate a quarter of country's provinces, warnings issued**

More than 600,000 Thais have been affected by flooding since July and more than a quarter of Thailand's provinces have been inundated, prompting officials to issue landslide warnings and begin evacuation measures. Four people have been killed in this year's flooding. More rainfall is expected later this week. "Due to a heavier-than-usual monsoon season, 21 provinces are now experiencing flooding. We have issued a warning about landslides and have told boats in the Gulf of Thailand to be vigilant," the chief of Thailand's Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation, reported. At least 10 provinces in Thailand's central plains, the main rice-growing region, have been affected by the floods but the extent of any damage is not yet known.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20130923055308-11zh4/?source=hpbreaking**](http://www.trust.org/item/20130923055308-11zh4/?source=hpbreaking)

ESAR

**Across ESAR  
Ethiopia could face ‘large-scale’ attacks from Somalia’s Al-Shabaab**  
An official from Ethiopia's biggest opposition group, Medrek, said on Saturday that Ethiopia could face a similar attack to this weekend's assault on a shopping mall in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi that has killed at least 68 people and injured hundreds others. Ethiopia and Kenya both have deployed their armies to neighboring Somalia to address what they said was a threat to regional security caused by the al-Qaeda-linked Somali Al-Shabaab movement, the group which has claimed responsibility for the attack.  
**Sudan Tribune -** [**http://allafrica.com/stories/201309230996.html**](http://allafrica.com/stories/201309230996.html)

**Kenya  
Government says all hostages freed in mall siege, gunfire heard**   
Kenya said its security forces were in control of the Nairobi shopping mall where militants killed at least 62 people, and police were doing a final sweep of shops early on Tuesday after rescuing the last hostages. An overnight silence outside the large, upmarket Westgate mall was broken at daybreak with a loud burst of gunfire from inside, suggesting the complex had not yet been fully secured. "Our forces are combing the mall floor by floor looking for anyone left behind. We believe all hostages have been released," the Ministry of Interior said on Twitter early on Tuesday, adding his forces were "in control" of the building. A trickle of survivors left on Monday, but the fate of the missing was unclear four days after a group of between 10 and 15 militants stormed the mall.  
**Reuters -** [**http://www.jpost.com/International/Kenya-says-all-hostages-freed-in-mall-siege-gunfire-heard-326923**](http://www.jpost.com/International/Kenya-says-all-hostages-freed-in-mall-siege-gunfire-heard-326923)  
  
**Somali militant group says hostages in mall alive**   
Somalia's al Shabaab said on Tuesday its militants were still holding out in a Kenyan shopping centre they attacked over the weekend, and said hostages they held in the Westgate mall in Nairobi were still alive. "There are countless number of dead bodies still scattered inside the mall, and the Mujahideen (fighters) are still holding their ground #Westgate," the group said on its new Twitter feed @HSM\_PR. "The hostages who were being held by the Mujahideen inside #Westgate are still alive, looking quite disconcerted but, nevertheless, alive."   
**Reuters -** [**http://www.thestar.com.my/News/World/2013/09/24/Somali-militant-group-says-hostages-in-Kenya-mall-alive.aspx**](http://www.thestar.com.my/News/World/2013/09/24/Somali-militant-group-says-hostages-in-Kenya-mall-alive.aspx)

**Madagascar  
As food crisis looms, locust control campaign launched**  
A locust control campaign is starting in Madagascar against a plague of the Malagasy Migratory Locust, which threatens the food security and livelihoods of 13 million people or nearly 60% of the island's population. Aerial survey operations to identify and map out the areas requiring treatment by pesticides are expected to get underway this week. In the meantime, ground surveys, conducted on a monthly basis since February, continue. Procurement of pesticides, vehicles and equipment for survey and control operations is in progress. Spraying operations are expected to start by late October, after the onset of the rainy season. So far, FAO has raised $23 million towards the programme, which will cost $41.5 million over three years. Negotiations for further funding are at an advanced stage although millions of dollars are still needed to complete the full programme.  
**FAO -** [**http://reliefweb.int/report/madagascar/madagascar-food-crisis-looms-locust-control-campaign-launched**](http://reliefweb.int/report/madagascar/madagascar-food-crisis-looms-locust-control-campaign-launched)

**Namibia  
Drought hits poor hardest - UNICEF mention**  
The people most affected by Namibia's drought are in the northern rural areas, which are also the most impoverished. The Ovahimba's pastoral way of life is under strain. UNICEF, the Red Cross and the Council of Churches have launched an appeal but the response from the international community has been disappointing; UNICEF's Deputy Representative Marcus Bett believes this is because Namibia is considered a middle income country. But he says "some pockets are rich, particularly with the mining sector but what it hides is huge inequality. It's also naturally dry, so convincing people there's a drought is a challenge." Yet a million people have registered with the government for assistance.  
**Al Jazeera -** [**http://blogs.aljazeera.com/blog/africa/drought-hits-namibias-poor-hardest**](http://blogs.aljazeera.com/blog/africa/drought-hits-namibias-poor-hardest)

**Somalia  
UN envoy calls for stepping up fight against al Shabaab**   
The UN envoy for Somalia called on Tuesday for additional African troops to counter al Shabaab, which he said numbered some 5,000 people and posed an international threat. Nicholas Kay, UN special representative for Somalia, condemned the deadly attack on Westlake mall in Kenya, which the Islamist militant group has claimed responsibility for, and said that there was a "once-in-a-generation" opportunity to help bring peace to Somalia. "Security remains the number one challenge, the control and defeating of al Shabaab is key to this," Kay told a Geneva news briefing. "The amount of money that we're talking about that's required for the extra effort in Somalia would be very small. But the cost of walking away would be very expensive."   
**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/24/us-kenya-attack-militants-kay-idUSBRE98N0A820130924**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/24/us-kenya-attack-militants-kay-idUSBRE98N0A820130924)

MENA

**Across MENA**  
**Syria crisis endangering development across Arab world, UN report finds**  
Recent turmoil in the Arab world imperils progress towards achieving the MDG’s in the region, stated a UN report released Monday. It noted that while the Arab region has made progress towards many of the Goals since 2010, progress has slowed since then and the major cause is the widespread impact of the ongoing conflict in Syria. “The crisis in Syria is a crisis for development across the Arab region,” said Sima Bahous, Chair of the UNDG in the Arab States Region and Director of UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States. “The impact goes far beyond even the tragic and terrible widespread death and destruction in that country: it is also slowing the region’s progress on development,” she stated in a news release. School enrolment rates have plunged and access to health care has also significantly reduced, added the report, which comes in advance of a more detailed UNDP study to be released in October showing the impact of the Syrian crisis on development in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon. Also, the report stated that the overall climate of instability and insecurity in the Arab region is dragging on progress more broadly across the region.

**UN News Centre -** [**http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=45945&Cr=syria&Cr1**](http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=45945&Cr=syria&Cr1)

**Gaza-Egypt border restrictions worsening humanitarian situation of Palestinians, says UN**  
Severe restrictions on movement between the Gaza Strip and Egypt through the Rafah Crossing have worsened an already fragile humanitarian situation for the territory’s 1.7 million Palestinians, including increasing fuel shortages and limiting access to health services abroad, the UN said Monday. The Egyptian-controlled Rafah Crossing is Gaza’s main gateway to the outside world. recent action by Egypt to counter illegal activities and insecurity in the Sinai have included imposing “severe” restrictions on the movement of people through the Rafah Crossing and closing down smuggling tunnels under the Egyptian-Gaza border. At the same time, there has been only limited easing of the ongoing restrictions imposed at legitimate crossing points from Israel. “Consequently, an already fragile humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip has worsened,” stated an OCHA report.  
**UN News Centre -** [**http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=45938&Cr=&Cr1**](http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=45938&Cr=&Cr1)=

**Algeria  
Two armed militants killed east of Algiers**  
Algerian troops killed two armed militants in the Boumerdes province east of Algiers where al-Qaida forces are active, a security source reported. The two men were killed in an army ambush in the Baghlia area of Boumerdes, some 50km outside Algiers. The ambush comes exactly a fortnight after two militant gunmen were killed in separate military operations in Boumerdes province, and a bomb attack targeting an army convoy reportedly killed two soldiers southeast of Tizi Ouzou, the main Kabylie city.  
**AFP -** [**http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/99317-two-armed-islamists-killed-east-of-algiers**](http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/99317-two-armed-islamists-killed-east-of-algiers)

**Egypt  
Authorities ban all Muslim Brotherhood activities**   
An Egyptian court on Monday banned the Muslim Brotherhood from carrying out any activities in the country, widening a campaign to debilitate the Islamist movement of deposed President Mohamed Mursi. "The court bans the activities of the Muslim Brotherhood organisation and its non-governmental organisation and all the activities that it participates in and any organisation derived from it," said the presiding judge Mohammed al-Sayed.   
**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/23/us-egypt-brotherhood-idUSBRE98M0QR20130923**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/23/us-egypt-brotherhood-idUSBRE98M0QR20130923)  
  
**Iran  
80 prisoners freed ahead of Rouhani's UN visit**Iranian authorities have pardoned 80 prisoners ahead of President Hassan Rouhani's visit to the UN in New York this week, Iranian media reported on Monday. In a tentative sign that hardline policies are starting to soften following moderate conservative Rouhani's inauguration last month, authorities freed prominent human rights lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh and at least 10 other prisoners last week. On Monday, judiciary spokesman Mohseni Ejei told a news conference 80 prisoners had been pardoned, including some arrested over protests that followed the disputed re-election of former hardline President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in 2009. Ejei's comments suggest the total of 80 includes those freed last week in a move seen as intended to dampen Western criticism of Iran's human rights record ahead of Rouhani's address to the UN General Assembly.  
**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20130923141014-svfkt/**](http://www.trust.org/item/20130923141014-svfkt/)

**Iraq**

**Two blasts kill 16 people in mainly Sunni district of Baghdad**

Two bombs planted inside a funeral tent in a mainly Sunni district of Baghdad killed at least 16 people, police and medical sources said, the third attack on a funeral in Baghdad in as many days. The violence raises the spectre of the bloody sectarian conflict that peaked in 2006-2007 and killed thousands of people. There are persistent fears, bolstered by a spate of sectarian attacks this year, of a return to all-out conflict between Iraq's majority Shiite and minority Sunni communities.

**Reuters -** [**http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/09/23/uk-iraq-violence-idUKBRE98M0V320130923**](http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/09/23/uk-iraq-violence-idUKBRE98M0V320130923)

**Lebanon**

**Security forces deploy in Hezbollah stronghold**

A joint force of 800 Lebanese army soldiers and policemen began to deploy in Beirut‘s southern suburbs, a stronghold of the Shiite Hezbollah movement, for the first time in years. The security forces will take over security at checkpoints set up by the movement following two blasts that hit the area in the past two months. Security inside Beirut‘s southern suburbs, where most Hezbollah leaders reside, is usually manned by members of the movement. Hezbollah set up checkpoints after the blasts in July and August, angering officials and political rivals, who accuse the party of undermining the Lebanese state. Caretaker interior minister Marwan Charbel said the joint security force "will have the primary goal of checking suspect vehicles and the identities of suspicious persons."

**DPA -** [**http://en.europeonline-magazine.eu/lebanese-security-forces-deploy-in-hezbollah-stronghold\_298321.html**](http://en.europeonline-magazine.eu/lebanese-security-forces-deploy-in-hezbollah-stronghold_298321.html)

**Syria**

**Children at risk of malnutrition**  
More than two million children are at risk of malnutrition in Syria, a charity has warned. Those caught up in the conflict have been left unable to produce or buy enough food, while prices have soared and the food production industry has collapsed, Save the Children says. In rural areas Damascus 1 in 20 children is severely malnourished with 14% classed as acutely malnourished. Food shortages are leading to a huge increase in food prices with the cost of the most basic supplies increasing by 100%. Meanwhile Save the Children said Syria's agricultural output has dramatically decreased, with grain production falling to less than half of what was typical before the war.   
**AAP -** [**http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2013/09/24/malnutrition-risk-syrian-children**](http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2013/09/24/malnutrition-risk-syrian-children)

**Dozens of nuns, orphans trapped in Maalula: church**  
Nearly 40 nuns and orphans are trapped inside a convent in the Syrian Christian town of Maalula, where regime troops are battling rebel forces, the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate said Tuesday. "The Mar Takla convent is living through painful days because it is in the middle of the zone where fire is being exchanged, which makes getting supplies difficult and dangerous," the Damascus-based Patriarchate said in a statement. "The generator has gone out because of the fighting, halting the supply of water to the convent and threatening the lives of those inside," the statement added. It issued an "urgent appeal" to humanitarian groups to "ensure the necessary supplies to residents of the convent, nuns and orphans who number close 40 people." The convent is located half-way between the hills of Maalula, which are still under rebel control, and the centre of the town, which has been retaken by the army.   
**AFP -** [**http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2013/Sep-24/232381-dozens-of-nuns-orphans-trapped-in-syrias-maalula-church.ashx#axzz2fnnn9zOu**](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2013/Sep-24/232381-dozens-of-nuns-orphans-trapped-in-syrias-maalula-church.ashx#axzz2fnnn9zOu)

**Tunisia**

**Government resist proposal to step down**

Tunisia's ruling Islamists rejected on Monday a proposal under which they would step down pending elections, a decision likely to deepen confrontation with secular opponents demanding their immediate resignation. Tunisia, whose 2011 uprising was the first of a series across the Arab world, has been in turmoil since an opposition leader was assassinated in July, threatening a democratic transition once seen as the most promising in a troubled region. The country's powerful UGTT union had been pushing both sides to accept a plan for the Islamist-led government to step down after three weeks of talks to decide on a date for elections and the composition of a new caretaker administration.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/23/us-tunisia-crisis-idUSBRE98M0JS20130923**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/23/us-tunisia-crisis-idUSBRE98M0JS20130923)

**Yemen  
Gunmen kill Yemeni air force colonel in Sanaa**  
A Yemeni air force officer was shot dead on Monday by an unidentified gunman in the capital Sanaa, medics and a security official said, in the latest in a series of assassinations of security and military officers. The security official said one of two men riding a motorbike opened fire at Colonel Abdul Wahab Azzam as he was driving a car. He said without elaborating that the attack, in which the officer was shot as his car slowed at an intersection, bore the hallmarks of al Qaeda. Dozens of Yemeni security and military officers have been assassinated in the past two years, many by bombs planted in their cars or in drive-by shootings, often blamed on al Qaeda or affiliated groups.  
**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20130923112832-fuznc/**](http://www.trust.org/item/20130923112832-fuznc/)

ROSA

**Afghanistan  
16 police killed in Kandahar attacks**At least 16 policemen have been killed in two separate incidents in southern Kandahar province, officials said on Monday. Eleven border policemen were killed late on Sunday when militants equipped with heavy weapons sneaked from Pakistan and stormed a security post in Shurabak district. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the incident. In a separate incident in Zherai district, 5 Afghan local police officers were killed after a member of the ALP opened fire on his comrades.   
**KP -** [**http://www.khaama.com/attack-on-afghan-police-leaves-16-dead-in-kandahar-province-1889**](http://www.khaama.com/attack-on-afghan-police-leaves-16-dead-in-kandahar-province-1889)  
  
**Maldives**

**Supreme court postpones election run-off**

The Maldives Supreme Court has postponed the presidential run-off election after the of the third place finisher alleged irregularities. The court's decision postpones the run-off scheduled for 28 September. The Jumhooree Party which fielded as its candidate Qasim Ibrahim, filed the case last week, seeking an annulment of the result, saying the voter's registry contained the names of dead or imaginary people. The 7 September vote did not finish with a clear winner, and Ibrahim finished third, narrowly missing the run-off.

**AP -** [**http://www.nzherald.co.nz/world/news/article.cfm?c\_id=2&objectid=11129072**](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/world/news/article.cfm?c_id=2&objectid=11129072)

**Protests over delay of presidential runoff election**   
The main opposition party in the Maldives launched a protest Tuesday over a Supreme Court decision to indefinitely postpone a runoff vote to elect a new president, a spokesman said. Supporters of the Maldivian Democratic Party, whose leader Mohamed Nasheed is one of the main presidential contenders, protested in the capital Male and vowed to demonstrate elsewhere as well. On Monday, four of seven judges ordered the Elections Commission to delay the vote until a petition filed by Jumhoory Party seeking annulment of the first-round results alleging vote rigging is heard.   
**DPA**

**Sri Lanka**

**Food insecurity, debt rise in north**  
In two northern districts of Sri Lanka, now slowly recovering from decades of conflict, almost seven out of 10 households are “food insecure”, according to a recent survey. Of the 300 households interviewed over two days in Vavuniya and Mullaitivu districts in August 2013, half reported selling jewellery to cope with falling income and rising debt. Food cost 10 to 30% more in local markets in the two surveyed districts than in the Northern Province’s central markets, which have better road access. This is on top of an estimated 12% increase in the average cost of food nationwide. While there is still enough food in the smaller number of villages surveyed, fewer people can afford it, said Kathy Derore, head of the programme unit at WFP in Sri Lanka.   
**IRIN -** [**http://www.irinnews.org/report/98807/food-insecurity-debt-rise-in-sri-lanka-s-north**](http://www.irinnews.org/report/98807/food-insecurity-debt-rise-in-sri-lanka-s-north)

TACR

**Chile**

**Ex-army chief in child torture probe**

A Chilean judge ordered a probe into allegations that a former army commander was responsible for the abduction and torture of three children during the dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet. At the time of the alleged torture in 1973, the children were aged one, three and 12. The defendant, Juan Emilio Cheyre, was then a lieutenant in the army but he later served as army commander in chief, from 2002 to 2006. Two other men are also being investigated under the order released by Judge Jaime Franco in the town of La Serena, 480km north of Santiago.

**AFP -** [**http://au.news.yahoo.com/a/-/world/19080060/chile-ex-army-chief-in-child-torture-probe/**](http://au.news.yahoo.com/a/-/world/19080060/chile-ex-army-chief-in-child-torture-probe/)

**Colombia**

**Rebels recruited 13,000 minors during conflict**

Since its founding nearly 50 years ago Colombia's rebel group FARC has recruited some 13,000 minors, some as young as eight, a newspaper reported. The rebel group has been in peace talks with the government since November, and leaders will be charged over recruiting child soldiers even if a peace accord is reached and some kind of amnesty for other offenses is applied, the prosecutor told the newspaper El Espectador.

**AFP -** [**http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/130923/colombia-rebels-recruited-13000-minors-during-conflict**](http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/130923/colombia-rebels-recruited-13000-minors-during-conflict)

**Mexico**

**Five bodies pulled from massive mudslide**   
Rescuers have pulled five bodies from a massive mudslide that buried part of a village in southwestern Mexico, where 68 people were reported missing, the interior minister said Monday. Interior Minister Miguel Angel Osorio Chong did not indicate whether the bodies belonged to any of the people who were declared missing in La Pintada following deadly storms that battered Mexico last week. President Enrique Pena Nieto said over the weekend that there was little hope of finding anybody alive in the village, which was swamped by a mudslide.

**AFP -** [**http://www.foxnews.com/world/2013/09/23/five-bodies-pulled-from-massive-mexico-mudslide/**](http://www.foxnews.com/world/2013/09/23/five-bodies-pulled-from-massive-mexico-mudslide/)

**10 killed in massacre near border city**

A gunman burst into a home east of the Mexican border city of Ciudad Juarez where people were celebrating a baseball victory and killed 10 people, authorities said Monday. The killings occurred Sunday night in Loma Blanca, a town in the Juarez Valley. The dead included a 7-year-old girl, her mother, three teenage boys and five adult men, said a spokesman for the Chihuahua state prosecutors' office.

**AP -** [**http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/10-killed-massacre-mexican-border-city-20345607**](http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/10-killed-massacre-mexican-border-city-20345607)

WCAR

**Across WCAR**

**West Africa's disabled children face abuse, risk of death – UNICEF mention**

Disabled children across West Africa face widespread discrimination, violence and abuse, and can be victims of infanticide and sacrificial killings, a child rights organisation said. In a report based on research carried out in Guinea, Sierra Leone, Niger and Togo, Plan International said it was common for children with disabilities to be regarded as "supernatural", "bizarre" or "demons" and blamed community perceptions for endemic violence and discrimination against them. "Three key factors influence the depth of stigma of individual children with disabilities - the gender, the impairment type and the severity of the impairment," said Alice Behrendt, Plan International's West Africa researcher. She was speaking at the release of the report,'Outside the circle', which coincides with the first ever High Level Meeting of the UN General Assembly on development and disability, in New York this week. Girls were at greater risk from discrimination and violence, Behrendt said.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20130924104729-lopnb/?source=hptop**](http://www.trust.org/item/20130924104729-lopnb/?source=hptop)

**CAR**

**UN to tackle 'forgotten crisis'**   
The UN will turn its attention this week to the violent near-collapse of CAR. Widespread murder, rape and looting by lawless armed groups have for months characterised this "forgotten crisis", eclipsed by issues such as the Syrian conflict. Warnings by relief agencies and rights organisations that CAR is becoming a failed state have been largely falling on deaf ears. Basic infrastructure and services scarcely exist outside the capital Bangui in the southwest, while former rebels, armed movements from neighbouring Chad and Sudan and bandit groups run riot in large tracts of the country. Some 1.6 million (or a third of the population) need emergency humanitarian aid and nearly 300,000 are internally displaced or have fled to neighbouring countries, according to UN figures.   
**AFP -** [**http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/130924/un-tackle-c-africas-forgotten-crisis**](http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/130924/un-tackle-c-africas-forgotten-crisis)

**Guinea**

**Policeman killed, 51 people hurt in pre-poll clashes**

Opposition protesters shot dead a trainee policeman and wounded two other officers as renewed violence broke out in Conakry, five days ahead of elections, the government said. The demonstrators opened fire as the police were breaking through one of numerous barricades put up across the city as the anti-government protests spiraled out of control, a spokesman for the administration said. The spokesman said 49 people had sustained minor injuries and several cases of assaults and robberies had been reported, citing hospital and security sources. The violence followed clashes between pro- and anti-government protesters across Conakry which left 24 wounded over the weekend.

**AFP -** [**http://www.nst.com.my/latest/policeman-killed-51-hurt-in-guinea-pre-poll-clashes-govt-1.361874**](http://www.nst.com.my/latest/policeman-killed-51-hurt-in-guinea-pre-poll-clashes-govt-1.361874)

**Country postpones elections to 28 September**

Guinea's long-delayed legislative election has been postponed by four days to 28 September following talks between the opposition and government in Conakry, a UN mediator said. Guinea's main opposition leader had threatened to call supporters into the streets if authorities pushed ahead with the election without fully addressing complaints over preparations. He said he was satisfied with the delay announced. The poll, meant to cap Guinea's transition back to civilian rule, has been delayed repeatedly since President Alpha Conde was elected three years ago, sowing doubts among Guineans, investors and donors over political progress in the country.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/21/us-guinea-election-idUSBRE98K0DH20130921**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/21/us-guinea-election-idUSBRE98K0DH20130921)

**Mali**

**UN peacekeepers accused of misconduct**

The UN is investigating allegations of serious misconduct by peacekeeping troops in Mali, including one accusation of sexual assault. The UN spokesperson reported that the peacekeeping mission in the country opened an investigation as soon as it received the information. The peacekeeping mission known as MINUSMA aims to secure northern Mali after a French-led military intervention ousted radical jihadists from the region. The alleged incidents are said to have happened in Gao.

**AP -** [**http://www.edmontonjournal.com/news/world/peacekeepers+Mali+face+accusations+serious+misconduct/8948649/story.html**](http://www.edmontonjournal.com/news/world/peacekeepers+Mali+face+accusations+serious+misconduct/8948649/story.html)

**FAO and WFP appeal for immediate support for north**

An emergency food security assessment conducted jointly by the Government of Mali, the FAO, the WFP, and 15 other partners shows that three out of four households living in northern regions of the country are food insecure and heavily reliant on food assistance. The most vulnerable people in northern Mali, estimated to number around 1.3 million, have had little chance to recover following the recent conflict and last year’s food and nutrition crisis as a result of erratic rains. As internally displaced people and refugees begin to return to their home communities, the limited resources will be further strained and the number of people requiring assistance is likely to increase.

**WFP -** [**http://www.wfp.org/news/news-release/fao-and-wfp-appeal-immediate-support-northern-mali?utm\_content=buffer3d972&utm\_source=buffer&utm\_medium=twitter&utm\_campaign=Buffer**](http://www.wfp.org/news/news-release/fao-and-wfp-appeal-immediate-support-northern-mali?utm_content=buffer3d972&utm_source=buffer&utm_medium=twitter&utm_campaign=Buffer)

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: