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GENERAL

**Across Regions**

**Malta rescued 13,400 migrants in 10 years: minister**

The Maltese military has rescued almost 13,400 migrants over the past 10 years, Interior Minister Manuel Mallia told parliament on Wednesday. Mallia said the Armed Forces of Malta carried out 954 rescue operations over this period of time. The busiest year was 2008 when the AFM rescued 2,108 people rescued in 105 rescue operations. The previous year was the busiest in terms of rescue operations, when 148 were carried out. There was a lull in 2010 when the AFM carried out 26 rescue operations and rescued 54 people. But the figure climbed to 1,640 in 2011 - at the height of the

Arab Spring revolts in North Africa - and again to 1,896 last year. So far this year, the AFM has rescued 1,644 people in 88 rescue operations. Malta is 333km from Libya and 284km from Tunisia.

**AFP -** [**http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/103076-malta-rescued-13-400-migrants-in-10-years**](http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/103076-malta-rescued-13-400-migrants-in-10-years)

**DR Congo/Rwanda**

**DR Congo talks in Kampala to continue for peace deal: US envoy**

Peace talks between the government of the DR Congo and the M23 rebels in the Ugandan capital Kampala have not collapsed, the US special envoy for the Great Lakes region says, Rusell D. Feingold. At a press conference held Wednesday in the Congolese capital Kinshasa, US envoy Rusell D. Feingold said the "talks will continue until parties to the conflict can sign a peace agreement. " The US diplomat, whose mission is to promote peace in DR Congo, said his country was helping restore peace in the Great Lakes region. "But it is upon DR Congo to take appropriate measures to restore its territorial integrity," he said. He expressed confidence that the US government, the AU and other countries involved in the Kampala talks will ensure a positive outcome in the end.

**Xinhua -** [**http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/africa/2013-10/24/c\_132827563.htm**](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/africa/2013-10/24/c_132827563.htm)

CEE/CIS

**Bosnia-Herzegovina**

**Hundreds more victims found in Bosnian wartime mass grave**

Bosnian forensic teams exhumed the remains of 268 people believed to have been killed by Serb forces two decades ago and buried in mass graves, the state prosecutor of Bosnia and Herzegovina said Thursday. The grave at Tomasica near Prijedor, some 220 km north-west of Sarajevo, contained 200 whole skeletons and the partial remains of 68 more people. They were likely Muslims and Croats executed in the summer of 1992, early in the Bosnian war that raged until late 1995. The partial remains were probably relocated from their original burial site, in an effort to hide the atrocity, the prosecutor said. Other locations with multiple victims are still being processed in the area, the state prosecutor's office said. The region of Prijedor was home to several concentration camps under control of Bosnian Serbs where inmates were starved, tortured and killed.

**DPA -** [**http://en.europeonline-magazine.eu/hundreds-more-victims-found-in-bosnian-wartime-mass-grave\_302360.html**](http://en.europeonline-magazine.eu/hundreds-more-victims-found-in-bosnian-wartime-mass-grave_302360.html)

**Georgia**

**Ex-Soviet Georgia elects new president after decade of change**

Georgia votes in a presidential election Sunday to choose a successor to flamboyant reformer Mikheil Saakashvili, with a loyalist of his billionaire rival Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili favourite to claim victory in the ex-Soviet state. The poll marks the end of US-ally Saakashvili's legally permitted two terms in power and his rancorous year-long political cohabitation with nemesis Ivanishvili, who has also pledged to step down shortly after the vote. The election in the tiny Western-backed republic -- which under Saakashvili fought a brief 2008 war with Russia over separatist region South Ossetia -- will then see constitutional changes shift a raft of key powers from the next president to the prime minister.

**AFP -** [**http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/131024/ex-soviet-georgia-elects-new-president-after-decade-change**](http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/131024/ex-soviet-georgia-elects-new-president-after-decade-change)

EAPR

**Across EAPR**

**Western Pacific region faces population aging**

Population aging is posing a great challenge for the Western Pacific region as life expectancy in the region prolonged from 69 years to 75 years in the 1990-2009 period, the WHO said. "This is an important and urgent issue for our Region," Shin Young-soo, WHO Regional Director for the Western Pacific, said in a report released on Thursday. While acknowledging longer life expectancy is a progress due to disease prevention and health promotion, he said population aging is a complex issue with unique challenges. Statistics showed that in 2010, there were more than 235 million people aged 60 years and above in the region, accounting for 13.1 percent of the total population. Of these, 77 percent lived in low- and middle-income countries.

**Xinhua -** [**http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2013-10/24/c\_132827613.htm**](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2013-10/24/c_132827613.htm)

**DPR Korea**

**DPRK to return six S.Koreans detained in Pyongyang to Seoul**

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) said Thursday that it will return six South Korean nationals who have been detained in Pyongyang for unlawfully entering the country back to Seoul through the truce village of Panmunjom on Friday afternoon. Seoul's Unification Ministry said in a press release that the DPRK sent such notice in the name of its National Red Cross chairman. According to the press release, the DPRK's Korea Central News Agency (KCNA) said on Feb. 26, 2010 that four South Korean people were detained in the country and questioned for illegally entering Pyongyang. South Korea requested the DPRK to verify the identification of those detained at that time, but Pyongyang refused to respond to it, the ministry said. The ministry also said that while the DPRK actions to release those detained come too late, Seoul welcomed such a move.

**Xinhua -** [**http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2013-10/24/c\_132827584.htm**](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2013-10/24/c_132827584.htm)

**Indonesia**

**Indonesian volcano spits powerful burst of ash**

A disaster official says a volcano in western Indonesia has unleashed a column of dark volcanic material high into the air weeks after villagers fled from an earlier eruption. National Mitigation Agency spokesman Sutopo Purwo Nugroho says Thursday's explosion at Mount Sinabung, located in North Sumatra province, shot black ash 3 kilometers into the air. There were no reports of injuries or damage. The spokesman says villages, farms and trees around the 2,600-meter volcano were covered in thick gray ash, forcing authorities to evacuate more than 3,300 people from 11 hard-hit villages. Last month, more than 15,000 people were forced to flee when the volcano rumbled to life. Mount Sinabung is among 129 active volcanoes in Indonesia, which is prone to seismic upheaval.

**AP -** [**http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/indonesian-volcano-spits-powerful-burst-ash-20665958**](http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/indonesian-volcano-spits-powerful-burst-ash-20665958)

**Philippines**

**Aquino warns of disease outbreak in quake-hit C. Philippines**

Philippine President Benigno S. Aquino III warned Thursday of a possible disease outbreak in central Philippine province of Bohol if the earthquake-displaced families there would continue to stay in evacuation centers. Aquino, who again visited the most quake-devastated province and stayed there overnight, ordered the concerned government agencies to speed up rebuilding efforts that will enable displaced residents to return to their homes the soonest possible time. The displaced victims of the quake would be exposed to harm with their prolonged stay in the tents, said Aquino, while admitting that he was concerned that an outbreak of disease could take place.

**Xinhua -** [**http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2013-10/24/c\_132827585.htm**](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2013-10/24/c_132827585.htm)

**Mass breastfeeding record attempt in Philippines**

Thousands of lactating mothers across the Philippines simultaneously breast fed their babies on Thursday in an attempt to break a world record and break down social taboos. Organised by the advocacy group Breastfeeding Philippines, the event was held in 1,000 cities across the conservative, largely Catholic country, where advocates say there remained a stigma against women who breast feed in public. “When women bare their chests for sex in movies or wear skimpy clothes the public thinks it’s okay, but when a mother bares her breast to feed a child, people generally think it’s gross,” group director Nona Andaya-Castillo told AFP. “One of our members was once told to breastfeed her child in the toilet. This thinking and attitude has got to stop.” Organisers said the event also aimed to remind legislators to resist lobbying by infant formula companies seeking to reverse a law promoting breast feeding.

**AFP -** [**http://www.capitalfm.co.ke/news/2013/10/mass-breastfeeding-record-attempt-in-philippines/**](http://www.capitalfm.co.ke/news/2013/10/mass-breastfeeding-record-attempt-in-philippines/)

**Thailand**

**Thailand suffers worst dengue epidemic in more than 20 years**

Thailand is experiencing its largest dengue epidemic in more than two decades, with a record number of people infected by the mosquito-borne disease and 126 fatalities so far this year, health experts said on Thursday, pointing to climate change as a factor behind the spike in cases. "We are experiencing the highest number of cases in over 20 years, but the fatalities are not alarming compared to previous years, which shows our medical response is improving," said Sophon Mekthon, deputy director-general at the Ministry of Public Health. More than 136,000 cases of dengue fever, the world's [fastest-spreading](http://www.trust.org/item/20130116100700-eunva/) tropical disease, have been confirmed so far this year, with the highest concentration of cases in and around the capital Bangkok and in the northern province of Chiang Mai.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20131024100249-aqxiv/?source=hpbreaking**](http://www.trust.org/item/20131024100249-aqxiv/?source=hpbreaking)

ESAR

**Kenya**

**Kenya seeks delay in trials of President, Deputy**

Kenya is asking the UN Security Council to delay the International Criminal Court trials of its two top leaders for crimes against humanity for a year, citing the terrorist threat in east Africa. Kenyan opposition to the trials of President Uhuru Kenyatta and Deputy President William Ruto have gained traction since last month's deadly terror attack by militants on an upscale Nairobi shopping mall, which underscored the country's strategic importance in eastern Africa. The ICC has charged Kenyatta and Ruto with crimes against humanity for their alleged roles in Kenya's 2007-08 postelection violence that killed more than 1,000 people. Both deny the charges.

**AP -** [**http://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/kenya-seeks-delay-trials-president-vp-20656515**](http://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/kenya-seeks-delay-trials-president-vp-20656515)

**Madagascar**

**Madagascar seeks to blot out bitter past in key vote - UNICEF mention**

Madagascar votes Friday in long-delayed elections meant to pull the island nation out of a devastating political crisis that plunged millions into misery after a 2009 coup. The much-awaited polls, plagued by years of postponement, will see 33 candidates vying for head of state, after radio DJ-turned-strongman Andry Rajoelina and the leader he ousted, Marc Ravalomanana, were barred from the race. At stake is the return to democratic rule, needed to bring back desperately needed donor funding and investment to the impoverished Indian Ocean island off the coast of southeast Africa. International aid agencies are also pinning their hopes on the vote. "These elections are an opportunity to get things on track," said Steven Lauwerier, **UNICEF** representative in Madagascar.

**AFP -** [**http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/131023/madagascar-seeks-blot-out-bitter-past-key-vote**](http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/131023/madagascar-seeks-blot-out-bitter-past-key-vote)

**Malawi**

**Government corruption “cripples” Malawi's health sector**

Extensive looting of public funds by government officials in Malawi has dangerously undermined the country’s public health sector, with hundreds of public health workers striking in recent weeks to protest late payments of their September salaries. The delays were the result of a financial scandal involving government officials who exploited loopholes in a government payment system to make fraudulent deposits into the accounts of companies that did not have government contracts. Up to 20 billion kwacha ($5.3 million) was siphoned from public funds, according to the Financial Intelligence Unit, a government organ. The health worker strike, which started in early October, crippled operations at public hospitals, which are also experiencing depleted budgets for essential medical equipment and drugs.

**IRIN -** [**http://www.irinnews.org/report/98990/government-corruption-cripples-malawi-s-health-sector**](http://www.irinnews.org/report/98990/government-corruption-cripples-malawi-s-health-sector)

**Mozambique**

**UN urges calm in Mozambique**

UN chief Ban Ki-moon called on Mozambique's government and the former Renamo rebels to stop violence and engage in dialogue amid an escalation in violence. The ex-rebels declared a 1992 peace deal over on Tuesday, although they later reaffirmed they wanted to avoid a return to war. Ban "calls on all parties to refrain from any act that can threaten the peace and stability that has prevailed during the past 21 years," his office said in a statement. "He urges them to fully engage in an inclusive dialogue to resolve differences within the established democratic order and to ensure that the country continues to achieve social inclusion and sustainable development for all." Two days of tit-for-tat violence since the Renamo's announcement have raised fears the country could plunge back civil war, two decades after the end of one of Africa's bloodiest conflicts in which around a million people were killed.

**AFP -** [**http://www.nst.com.my/latest/un-urges-calm-in-mozambique-1.383788**](http://www.nst.com.my/latest/un-urges-calm-in-mozambique-1.383788)

**Somalia**

**Al-Shabaab imposes blockade on bay region town of Qansah Dhere**

Al-Shabaab since Saturday (October 19th) has instituted a blockade on the town of Qansah Dhere in Somalia's Bay region. Al-Shabaab has turned back vehicles leaving Qansah Dhere en route to Baidoa, Burdhubo and Bardhere, and also refused to allow entry of vehicles into the town, Qansah Dhere District Commissioner Abdi Adam Qoqane told Sabahi. "Al-Shabab wants to sanction the people and prevent them from trading or living. They are terrorists," Qoqane said. "They have threatened motorists causing them to cancel their trips as a result." He said goods used in Qansah

Dhere come from Mogadishu and pass through Baidoa, but al-Shabaab has refused to let the goods going to Qansah Dhere through.

**AllAfrica -** [**http://allafrica.com/stories/201310240089.html**](http://allafrica.com/stories/201310240089.html)

**South Sudan**

**South Sudan rejects unilateral referendum vote on Abyei**

South Sudan said on Wednesday that it does not support the conduct of a unilateral referendum to determine the final status of the oil-contested border region of Abyei, questioning what its outcome would achieve if it is not recognised by either country. “The government of South Sudan is not a part of the activities ongoing in Abyei. What is happening there is the work of the pressure group. It is the work of the civil society from Abyei. It is the people of Abyei who are doing that and not the government of South Sudan”, South Sudanese information and broadcasting minister Michael Makuei Lueth said on Wednesday. Speaking to journalists at a press conference, Lueth questioned how a unilateral vote could help break the deadlock over the future of Abyei if the result was not formally recognised by either Sudan or South Sudan.

**Sudan Tribune -** [**http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article48546**](http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article48546)

LAC

**Colombia**

**FARC sees promise in armistice proposal**

The FARC guerrilla group on Wednesday praised a proposal that calls for declaring an armistice before a peace agreement is reached in Colombia's near half-century-old conflict. The proposal by conservative politician Alvaro Leyva came as negotiators for the rebels and the government of President Juan Manuel Santos began another round of peace talks in Havana, their 16th. Andres Paris, a member of the FARC negotiating team, urged the government to allow Leyva to expand on his proposals at the talks, calling it an "interesting initiative." Paris told reporters the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC as the Marxist-inspired rebel group is known, is "very interested" in learning more about Leyva's ideas, saying "they could play an important role at this juncture." "This proposal is a hope and a light, but obviously we hope to hear more about it and that the government delegation listens to it," he said.

**AFP -** [**http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/103110-farc-sees-promise-in-colombia-armistice-proposal**](http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/103110-farc-sees-promise-in-colombia-armistice-proposal)

**Mexico**

**Authorities urged to rein in security forces, trace missing people**

Mexico must rein in its security forces to stop them committing grave crimes against civilians, members of the UN Human Rights Council said on Wednesday. At a hearing in Geneva, European and some Latin American countries were the most vocal in their criticism, and in demanding that Mexico thoroughly investigate all disappearances, particularly of women and migrants. Dozens of delegations raised concerns about deadly attacks on activists and journalists. Others denounced widespread violence against women and limited access to safe abortions, even for rape victims. Swiss representative Michael Meier said: "Despite Mexico's will to improve the training of relevant authorities, the number of officials suspected of being involved in enforced disappearances is very alarming." In one recent example, authorities said on October 8 they had detained a gang of 18 suspected kidnappers - the majority of whom were members of the federal police - in Acapulco. The Pacific tourist resort is one of the country's most violent cities, with a murder rate of 77 homicides per 100,000 people.

**Reuters -** [**http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/10/23/uk-mexico-un-rights-idUKBRE99M0PP20131023**](http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/10/23/uk-mexico-un-rights-idUKBRE99M0PP20131023)

**Raymond weakens to tropical storm, spares Mexico**

Tropical Storm Raymond moved away from Mexico's Pacific coast Wednesday, granting relief to a region devastated by a storm last month. At its peak, Raymond was a Category 3 hurricane with winds of 125 mph (205 kph) that threatened to collide with the Mexican coast. But it spun in place offshore for more than a day before heading out to sea, largely sparing the already sodden region. The US National Hurricane Center said Raymond's maximum sustained winds decreased to near 45 mph (75 kph) by Wednesday night. It was centered about 300 miles (485 km) south of the port city of Manzanillo and was moving west-southwest at 9 mph (15 kph). On its current track it will continue to move away from Mexico, but could gain some strength in the coming days, the center said.

**AP -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/raymond-weakens-tropical-storm-spares-mexico-212208280.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/raymond-weakens-tropical-storm-spares-mexico-212208280.html)

MENA

**Bahrain**

**Bahraini court temporarily releases Shiite opposition leader**

A senior Bahraini opposition politician was temporarily freed on Thursday by the court trying him on charges that include inciting terrorism, in a surprise conciliatory ruling in the US-allied Gulf Arab state. Khalil al-Marzouq, a former parliament member, was detained in September by police investigating his alleged promotion of terrorism, angering his Shi'ite Islamist al-Wefaq party, Bahrain's largest opposition group. Unrest has gripped Bahrain since a 2011 uprising led by its Shi'ite majority demanding reforms and more share in government in the kingdom ruled by the Sunni Muslim al-Khalifa dynasty.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20131024114254-emsyp/?source=hpbreaking**](http://www.trust.org/item/20131024114254-emsyp/?source=hpbreaking)

**Egypt**

**Gunmen kill policeman in Egypt's Sinai**

Suspected Islamists militants killed a policeman in a drive-by shooting Thursday in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, where troops are battling to contain near daily violence, security officials said. The attack in the North Sinai provincial capital of El-Arish came a day after militants killed a soldier in the central Sinai, and two days after roadside bombs killed a security force member and a civilian. Egypt has poured troops and armor into the Sinai in a bid to crush militant activity, which has surged since Islamist president Mohammed Morsi was overthrown in a July 3 military coup.

**AFP -** [**http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/103193-gunmen-kill-policeman-in-egypt-s-sinai**](http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/103193-gunmen-kill-policeman-in-egypt-s-sinai)

**Egyptian Islamists call for protests over Mursi trial**

Supporters of deposed Islamist President Mohamed Mursi have called on Egyptians to hold mass protests on November 4, the day he goes on trial for inciting murder, raising the prospect of more bloodshed as the country's political crisis drags on. The trial could further inflame tensions between Mursi's Muslim Brotherhood and the army-backed government and deepen the instability that has decimated tourism and investment in the most populous Arab state. Islamists have staged numerous demonstrations calling for the reinstatement of Mursi, prompting the government to consider imposing severe restrictions on protests, a move that has drawn fire from human rights groups.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/10/24/us-egypt-protests-idUSBRE99N0CM20131024**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/10/24/us-egypt-protests-idUSBRE99N0CM20131024)

**Iraq**

**Launching new trust fund, UN chief urges relocation of Champ Hurriya residents**

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today called on Member States to offer safe relocation for residents of Camp Hurriya, located near the Iraqi capital, Baghdad, and to contribute to a trust fund launched today to cover costs related to the relocation process. He added that the UN chief has taken note of the letters and other expressions of concern over the residents’ well-being and safety from parliamentarians, political figures, civil society groups, and private individuals. Camp Hurriya has served as a transit facility for 3,174 people, most of them members of a group known as the People’s

Mojahedeen of Iran, where a process to determine their refugee status is being carried out by the UNHCR, and resettle them outside of the country, in line with an agreement signed in December 2011 between the UN and the Iraqi Government. About 10 per cent of the camp’s residents now have offers to relocate to third countries.

**UN News Centre -** [**http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=46317&Cr=iraq&Cr1**](http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=46317&Cr=iraq&Cr1)**=**

**Lebanon**

**4 days of clashes in Northern Lebanon kill 6**

Lebanese security officials say at least six people have been killed and 50 wounded in fighting in the northern city of Tripoli over the past four days. The officials said Thursday the clashes are between two Tripoli neighborhoods that are home to opponents and supporters of Syrian President Bashar Assad. The fighting broke out on Monday. The Bab Tabbaneh district is largely Sunni Muslim, like Syria's rebels. The other neighborhood, Jabal Mohsen, has mostly residents of Assad's Alawite sect, a Shiite Islam offshoot. The neighborhoods have been at odds for decades, but the fighting between them has intensified since the start of the Syrian conflict in a sign of how the civil war next door has spilled into Lebanon. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity in line with regulations.

**AP -** [**http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/days-clashes-northern-lebanon-kill-20666199**](http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/days-clashes-northern-lebanon-kill-20666199)

**Libya**

**Libyan air force colonel gunned down in Benghazi**

Libyan security officials say gunmen have shot dead an air force colonel as he left his home in the eastern city of Benghazi. It was the latest in a spate of assassinations in Benghazi recently. The killings are blamed on militiamen who fought against Moammar Gadhafi's forces but now operate outside state control. The officials say Col. Adel Khalil al-Tawahi from Benghazi's Beninah air base died instantly when gunmen shot him in the chest and head on Thursday.

**AP -** [**http://www.businessweek.com/ap/2013-10-24/libyan-air-force-colonel-gunned-down-in-benghazi**](http://www.businessweek.com/ap/2013-10-24/libyan-air-force-colonel-gunned-down-in-benghazi)

**Sudan**

**Sudan's Darfur region facing insecurity, limited progress in peace process**

Sudan's Darfur region is facing limited progress in the peace process, a troubling security situation and the continued need for substantial humanitarian assistance, officials representing the United Nations and the AU said here Wednesday. The officials made the statements as they took the floor at an open meeting of the UN Security Council on the current situation in Darfur. "The security situation in Darfur and threats to UNAMID and humanitarian personnel continue to be a serious concern," said Joint Special Representative Mohammed Ibn Chambas, who is also head of the African Union-UN Hybrid operation in Darfur (UNAMID). Tribal conflicts are a major problem confronting the Sudanese government, which have so far failed to solve it despite the inter- tribe reconciliation conferences it had held. The Darfur community consists of different African and Arab tribes, among whom unrest frequently erupts due to disputes on pastures and water resources.

**Xinhua -** [**http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/africa/2013-10/24/c\_125588497.htm**](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/africa/2013-10/24/c_125588497.htm)

**Syria**

**Syria releases 61 women detainees: activists**

Syrian authorities have released a total of 61 women detainees, an activist group said Thursday, the latest in a three-way prisoner exchange that was one of the more ambitious negotiated deals in the country's civil war in which rival factions remain largely opposed to any bartered peace. Meanwhile, electricity returned to parts of Damascus, hours after a power cut plunged the capital and other parts of the country into darkness. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said Thursday the government of President Bashar Assad had freed the women over the past two days. There was no immediate comment from Syrian officials, nor details on who the women are or their current location.

**AP -** [**http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/syria-releases-13-women-detainees-20659231**](http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/syria-releases-13-women-detainees-20659231)

**Syrian Kurds and jihadists clash near Iraq border: NGO**

Fierce clashes erupted in Syria overnight between Kurdish fighters and jihadists near the Iraqi border, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said Thursday. "The clashes began around midnight (2100 GMT Wednesday) and lasted around 12 hours, with the Kurds advancing in the direction of Al-Yaarubia, an area controlled by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and other jihadist groups," the Britain-based monitor said. "The Kurds have managed to take two villages controlled by the jihadists but it will be difficult to capture Al-Yaarubia from ISIL," Observatory director Rami Abdel Rahman told AFP. The Al-Yaarubia border crossing with Iraq is seen as a key supply route for arms and fighters. ISIL has carried out attacks on both sides of the border.

**AFP -** [**http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/2/8/84660/World/Region/Syrian-Kurds-and-jihadists-clash-near-Iraq-border-.aspx**](http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/2/8/84660/World/Region/Syrian-Kurds-and-jihadists-clash-near-Iraq-border-.aspx)

**Tunisia**

**6 police killed; protests hit capital**

Suspected Islamic militants killed six Tunisian policemen in the impoverished south of the country on Wednesday, while thousands of protesters in the capital called for the government's resignation, citing growing insecurity in the country. Members of the National Guard converged on an isolated home in the southern village of Sidi Ali Bououn, where they had been tipped off that a suspicious group was hiding, said Lotfi Hidouri, a spokesman for the Ministry of Interior. They were met with gunfire, and in the ensuing clash at least one alleged militant was killed and one wounded, he added. Four other policemen were injured. Thousands of opposition supporters protested in the center of

the capital, Tunis, on Wednesday to keep pressure on the government and ensure that it would keep its promise to resign.

**AP -** [**http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/thousands-tunisians-call-govt-resignation-20656898**](http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/thousands-tunisians-call-govt-resignation-20656898)

**Yemen**

**Security forces foil Al-Qaeda jailbreak in Sanaa**

Yemeni security forces foiled an attempt by some 300 Al-Qaeda inmates to escape after they mutinied in their Sanaa prison, a security official said Wednesday. The mutiny broke out on Tuesday afternoon when "almost 300 Al-Qaeda prisoners, armed with knives and iron bars, attacked prison guards, injuring some of them," the official said, adding that an interrogation officer was among those wounded. The prisoners, who smashed the doors of their cells and broke down the prison's first security barrier, seized weapons and took some guards hostage. Using the weapons, they clashed with guards manning the second security barrier, who returned fire and managed to "foil the group's attempt to flee," the official said. A number of inmates were wounded but none were killed, several sources said.

**AFP -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/yemen-security-forces-foil-al-qaeda-jailbreak-sanaa-194609016.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/yemen-security-forces-foil-al-qaeda-jailbreak-sanaa-194609016.html)

**Yemen intelligence officer gunned down in Sanaa**

Gunmen shot dead a Yemeni intelligence officer outside his Sanaa home on Thursday, a police official told AFP. The unidentified assailants in a vehicle "opened fire at Colonel Abdulrahman al-Shami, killing him as he was leaving his house" in central Sanaa, the source said, adding that the gunmen sped off. The attack came two days after Yemeni security forces foiled an attempt by some 300 Al-Qaeda inmates to escape in a mutiny at their intelligence-run Sanaa prison. Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) has intensified its attacks on security forces in Yemen, mainly in its lawless southern and eastern provinces where jihadist groups are active.

**AFP -** [**https://now.mmedia.me/lb/en/gulfnews/517194-yemen-intelligence-officer-gunned-down-in-sanaa**](https://now.mmedia.me/lb/en/gulfnews/517194-yemen-intelligence-officer-gunned-down-in-sanaa)

ROSA

**Afghanistan**

**Despite billions in aid, Afghans can't find work**

Despite billions of dollars from abroad to develop this impoverished country since the US-led invasion toppled the Taliban regime in 2001, roughly 12 million people, or eight out of every 10 working-age Afghan are unskilled day laborers, according to an International Labor Organization report. Most land only temporary jobs. In rural areas, work is also temporary - but it's also seasonal and often illegal, the report said. Some of the biggest employers, opium-producing poppy farmers, provide tens of thousands of short-term jobs. But almost everywhere, the pay is meager. The ILO report, released last year, offered several grim statistics: nearly half of Afghans don't have enough to eat; 18 percent of children under 15 years old are working; and 82 percent of Afghans are illiterate.

**AP -** [**http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/billions-aid-afghans-find-work-20665599**](http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/billions-aid-afghans-find-work-20665599)

**Taliban kill 4 police in Afghanistan**

An Afghan official says a nighttime Taliban attack on a security outpost has killed four policemen in the country's west. Police chief Sharafuddin Sharaf said on Thursday that the attack the previous night took place in the Bla Murghab district of Badghis province. Sharaf says the Taliban tried to storm the security outpost, triggering a three-hour-long gunbattle and killing four members of the local police force. Three policemen were also wounded in the attack. The attack was the latest in a wave of violence across Afghanistan as the Taliban intensify their campaign ahead of the US-led foreign forces' withdrawal from the country in 2014.

**AP -** [**http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/taliban-kill-police-afghanistan-20666195**](http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/taliban-kill-police-afghanistan-20666195)

**India**

**Minor girl gangraped in Indian capital**

In yet another shocking incident, a minor girl was allegedly gangraped by three men on a moving car in the Indian capital late Tuesday night, a senior police officer said Thursday. "The 17-year-old girl was offered a lift by a 22-year-old man and two of her friends in their 20s for a drive. She was first given sedative-laced drinks and then gangraped at an isolated place by the trio in a posh area in the south of the national capital," he said, on condition of anonymity. One of the three accused has been arrested after the girl lodged a complaint Wednesday, the officer said, adding that a massive manhunt was underway to nab the other two men. This gangrape came barely two months after a fast-track

court sentenced to death four men - out of six - for the brutal and fatal gangrape of a 23-year-old medical student in the Indian capital in December last year.

**Xinhua -** [**http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2013-10/24/c\_132826737.htm**](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2013-10/24/c_132826737.htm)

**Pakistan**

**Two policemen, one terrorist killed in shooting in Pakistan's Karachi**

At least two policemen were killed and one other was injured on early Thursday morning when some unknown assailants attacked police personnel in Pakistan's southern port city of Karachi, local media and officials said. Superintendent of Police Irfan Baloch said that the incident took place when some unknown terrorists opened fire at three policemen when they were sitting at a restaurant for tea in the city. One alleged attacker was also killed in the attack when the injured policeman retaliated with firing. The attacker killed in the shooting could not be identified yet. The attackers who reached the restaurant on motorcycles managed to escape after the attack.

**Xinhua -** [**http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2013-10/24/c\_132827136.htm**](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2013-10/24/c_132827136.htm)

WCAR

**Across WCAR**

**Mali’s security top concern as West African leaders meet Friday in Dakar**

A senior official of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) said, while Friday’s heads of state summit in Dakar will focus on the region’s economy, it will also take up political and security crises. This comes as ECOWAS President, Kadre Desire Ouedraogo, Wednesday called on the international community to send more troops to Mali in the wake of a recent upsurge of attacks by Islamist insurgents. Abdel Fatau Musah, ECOWAS director for external relations, said the security situation remains a top concern to the regional body, especially as the country prepares for next month’s legislative elections.

**VoA -** [**http://www.voanews.com/content/ecowas-leaders-meet-friday-in-dakar/1775835.html**](http://www.voanews.com/content/ecowas-leaders-meet-friday-in-dakar/1775835.html)

**Cameron**

**Mobile phones update Cameroon farmers on crop prices, weather**

As Cameroon’s cocoa and coffee farmers struggle with difficult environmental conditions and global competition, an information scheme introduced a year ago using mobile phone text messaging is helping them cope with the effects of climate change and find fair prices for their crops. Ndongo, a 48-year-old farmer in Ebolowa, in Cameroon’s South region, checks his mobile phone regularly to get news on the latest market price for his crop. Farmers say their telephones are no longer just gadgets for making and receiving calls, but an essential tool to learn new farming methods, update their skills, cope with the effects of climate change and boost production and sales.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20131023112426-eayuq/?source=hpbreaking**](http://www.trust.org/item/20131023112426-eayuq/?source=hpbreaking)

**CAR**

**United Nations set to send mission guards to Central African Republic**

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has recommended 560 troops be sent to the Central African Republic to protect a UN political mission in the virtually lawless country. The landlocked, mineral-rich country has slipped into chaos since northern Seleka rebels seized the capital, Bangui, and ousted President Francois Bozize in March. UN officials and rights groups say both sides may have committed war crimes. The UN Security Council adopted a resolution this month urging the United Nations to consider establishing a full-fledged peacekeeping force and asking Ban for interim plans for a guard force to protect the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office, known as BINUCA.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/10/23/us-centralafrica-un-idUSBRE99M1IF20131023**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/10/23/us-centralafrica-un-idUSBRE99M1IF20131023)

**Chad**

**Amnesty reports killings, illegal detention in Chad**

Rights group Amnesty International says hundreds of people have been illegally detained in Chad in an ongoing crackdown on critics of the government. Chadian authorities have been targeting members of the opposition since breaking up an alleged coup attempt in May of this year. Amnesty says up to eight people were killed in a shoot-out with the supposed conspirators near the capital N’Djamena, and many others were detained, including members of parliament. Christian Mukosa, Amnesty’s Chad researcher, says the whereabouts of 30 people arrested in the crackdown are still unknown. Amnesty says hundreds of people are detained in the country and are often held in deplorable conditions. The group is calling for the release of all prisoners detained without charge.

**VoA -** [**http://www.voanews.com/content/amnesty-reports-killings-illegal-detention-in-chad/1775792.html**](http://www.voanews.com/content/amnesty-reports-killings-illegal-detention-in-chad/1775792.html)

**Mali**

**Conflict inflames ethnic tensions**

Mali’s recent conflict has degraded social relations, leading to fears of reprisals among some of the displaced and posing major hurdles to reconciliation, observers say. "There is this overall feeling that there has been a major degradation of social relationships," said Steve Cockburn, Oxfam’s West Africa campaigns and policy manager. "There is quite a strong fear to return home." The collapse of social cohesion is visible in the tendency to generalize blame. Sixty percent of respondents who believe that social relations have worsened blamed whole ethnic groups rather than individuals, said Oxfam’s report, which also noted that threats, violence and stigmatization have contributed to the

strained relations. Mistrust is highest among the displaced, who have undergone the hardships of fleeing and living in refuge. For some, it is not the first time they have been forced from their homes, said Oxfam’s Cockburn.

**IRIN -** [**http://www.irinnews.org/report/98987/mali-conflict-inflames-ethnic-tensions**](http://www.irinnews.org/report/98987/mali-conflict-inflames-ethnic-tensions)

**Suicide bomber kills two Chadian UN troops, one child in north**

A suicide bomber killed two Chadian troops from the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali and injured six others in an attack on a checkpoint at the entry to the northern town of Tessalit on Wednesday, a UN spokesman said. Hours after the late-morning raid, gunfire rang out across the desert town as Chadian and Malian troops hunted down other attackers believed to have been dropped off before the explosion, officials said. No group has claimed the attack. Al Qaeda-linked Islamists, who occupied northern Mali last year, have carried out a number of suicide attacks on northern towns in recent months since they were scattered by a French offensive launched in January. Olivier Salgado, spokesman for the UN mission that is deploying in Mali to take over security responsibilities from French troops, said the bomber drove an explosive-laden vehicle to the checkpoint before blowing himself up.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/10/23/us-mali-un-attack-idUSBRE99M0KB20131023**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/10/23/us-mali-un-attack-idUSBRE99M0KB20131023)

**Niger**

**Drop in Niger child deaths, says Save the Children**

Niger has made the greatest strides worldwide in reducing child mortality, a new study by Save the Children suggests. Other countries that reported progress in tackling child deaths include Liberia and Rwanda, the charity said. Child mortality rates in Niger fell by almost two thirds because of government policies to curb hunger and poor healthcare, it added. Niger was hit by a severe drought in 2005, causing widespread hunger. It led to aid agencies launching an international campaign to feed hundreds of thousands of people. However, Niger has managed to reduce the deaths of children under the age of five from 326 in 1,000 in 1990 to 114 in 1,000 in 2012, Save the Children says.

**BBC -** [**http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-24638366**](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-24638366)

**Nigeria**

**536 cholera cases, 50 deaths: official**

Officials say an outbreak of cholera in Nigeria's northwest Zamfara state has infected 536 people and killed 50 in the past week. Medical director of the state hospital, Dr. Labaran Anka, blamed contaminated water in rural areas that have no clean running water. Villagers rely on handmade ponds where animals and people share water. Anka said more than 420 patients have been treated and discharged since the first victims arrived Friday. Medical authorities also have reported a cholera outbreak that had killed eight people by Monday in a village of central Plateau state overcrowded

with refugees from communal violence. UN figures indicate half of Nigeria's 160 million people do not have safe water and a third do not have proper sanitation.

**AP -** [**http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/official-536-cholera-cases-50-deaths-nigeria-20655606**](http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/official-536-cholera-cases-50-deaths-nigeria-20655606)

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