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GENERAL

**Across Regions**

**Space-age technology to reduce maternal deaths**

Space-age technology, neoprene (the same material used for wet suits) and Velcro have gone into an experimental garment health experts hope can treat postpartum haemorrhage, the leading cause of maternal mortality worldwide. A non-pneumatic anti-shock garment (NASG) - also called a “lifewrap” - is a half-body suit that is strapped onto a woman’s lower legs and abdomen to slow bleeding and prevent shock due to blood loss. “It [the lifewrap] works in two ways: it compresses the blood vessels in the lower part of the body, reversing shock by giving back oxygen to the heart, lungs and brain which are very oxygen-dependent tissues,” said Suellen Miller, director of the Safe Motherhood Programme/Bixby Centre for Global Reproductive Health at the University of California San Francisco (UCSF) in the USA. If it works as intended, pressure on the abdomen decreases the radius of the blood vessels and reduces overall bleeding.

**IRIN -** [**http://www.irinnews.org/report/98265/space-age-technology-to-reduce-maternal-deaths#**](http://www.irinnews.org/report/98265/space-age-technology-to-reduce-maternal-deaths#)

**Scientists warn against complacency on deadly H7N9 bird flu**

A new and deadly strain of bird flu that emerged in China in February but seems to have petered out in recent months could reappear later this year when the warm season comes to an end - and could spread internationally, scientists said on Monday. A study by researchers in China and Hong Kong found only one human case of the H7N9 bird flu strain has been identified since early May. In the preceding months, the virus, which was unknown in humans until February, has infected more than 130 people in China and Taiwan, killing 37 of them, according to WHO. "The warm season has now begun in China, and only one new laboratory-confirmed case of H7N9 in human beings has been identified since 8 May 2013," the researchers wrote in a study published in The Lancet medical journal. But they added: "If H7N9 follows a similar pattern to H5N1, the epidemic could reappear in the autumn."

**Reuters -** [**http://in.reuters.com/article/2013/06/23/us-birdflu-deaths-idINBRE95M0IE20130623#**](http://in.reuters.com/article/2013/06/23/us-birdflu-deaths-idINBRE95M0IE20130623#)

**Eritreans continue fleeing to Ethiopia and Sudan: UNHCR**

Eritrean refugees crossing to neighbouring Ethiopia are on the rise, while the number entering Sudan has dropped compared to the previous year, according to the United Nation Higher Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Eritrean refugees flee to Ethiopia in larger numbers via 16 entry points where they get primary assistance and provided with temporary shelters before they are transferred to one of the many refugee camps in the country’s two bordering regions, Tigrai and Afar. Since January, the UNHCR and the government’s refugee agency, the Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA), have registered over 4,000 Eritrean refugees. Currently Ethiopia hosts a record high nearly 72,000 Eritrean refugees in four camps in the northern Tigrai region and two others in the Afar region in north-eastern Ethiopia.

**Sudan Tribune -** [**http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article47043#**](http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article47043#)

**Algeria/Mali**

**Islamists offer freedom deal for Algerian hostages**

A West African Al-Qaeda-linked militant group on Sunday offered to free one of a group of Algerian diplomats kidnapped last year in exchange for the release of three "mujahedeen" held in Algeria. The Mali-based Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) said in a statement it was asking the Algerian government "for the release of one of its diplomat hostages, to release three mujahedeen" detained on Algerian territory. "If Algeria rejects the proposal, the Algerian hostages' lives will be in danger," said the statement, signed by MUJAO spokesman Abu Walid Sahraoui. It did not specify the identity of the "mujahedeen" or where in Algeria they were being held. The group is

holding Algerian diplomats from a group of seven seized on 5 April in Gao, northern Mali, as several armed groups descended on the region in the wake of a coup in the capital Bamako.

**AFP -** [**http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/International/2013/Jun-23/221354-mali-islamists-offer-freedom-deal-for-algerian-hostages.ashx#axzz2X4lvgy5q#**](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/International/2013/Jun-23/221354-mali-islamists-offer-freedom-deal-for-algerian-hostages.ashx#axzz2X4lvgy5q#)

**DR Congo/Rwanda**

**Congo delays end to Rwandan refugee status**

The government of Congo says it will not immediately apply a cessation clause ending refugee status for more than 120,000 Rwandans who fled to Congo after the 1994 Rwandan genocide, and are still there. The Congolese Interior Minister Richard Muyej said Saturday Rwanda had proposed an abrupt cessation of the refugees' status from 30 June but has now accepted Congo's arguments in favor of a more gradual approach. Muyej said he met with Rwandan counterparts and UNHCR in the Rwandan capital and they had agreed on the next steps to resolve the refugee issue. They plan to meet again in October to assess progress. The Rwandan government has said that since peace has returned to the country, its citizens no longer need to live in exile.

**AP -** [**http://www.miamiherald.com/2013/06/23/3466171/congo-delays-end-to-rwandan-refugee.html#**](http://www.miamiherald.com/2013/06/23/3466171/congo-delays-end-to-rwandan-refugee.html#)

CEE/CIS

**Albania**

**Deadly shootout mars vote**

An opposition activist was killed in an apparently politically motivated shooting in Albania on Sunday during a crucial election that could determine whether one of Europe's poorest countries has a chance of joining the EU. The shootout in the northern town of Lac "might be related to the vote," police spokeswoman Alma Katragjini told AFP, declining to give further information about the incident. The dead man was identified as a 53-year old activist with the Socialist-led coalition of former Tirana mayor Edi Rama, while among three people wounded was a candidate from the ruling Democratic party of conservative PM Sali Berisha. Rama -- whose coalition has a slight edge in the election race

according to analysts -- branded the shooting a "serious political incident... aimed at intimidating the voters." Accusations of vote-buying and electoral roll irregularities have been flying between the rivals, raising concerns of a repeat of the 2009 polls which triggered months of political turmoil and government paralysis. Around 6,000 police were on duty on Sunday to try to keep the peace.

**AFP -** [**http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/world/356521/deadly-shootout-mars-albania-vote#**](http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/world/356521/deadly-shootout-mars-albania-vote#)

**Bulgaria**

**EU "concerned" over rule of law**

European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso expressed concern Friday over political developments and the rule of law in Bulgaria after protests followed the appointment of the country's national security chief. "Some of the recent developments in Bulgaria were not good, and they raised concerns not only in Bulgarian society but among the European partners of Bulgaria," Barroso said during PM Plamen Oresharski's inaugural trip to Brussels. Barroso highlighted the appointment of media mogul Delyan Peevski, who lacked experience in security matters, as head of the state security agency DANS. The nomination prompted a wave of anti-government protests over what critics said was a lack of transparency. The parliament, which had initially approved the appointment, later reversed it unanimously.

**DPA -** [**http://en.europeonline-magazine.eu/eu-concerned-over-rule-of-law-in-bulgaria\_287056.html#**](http://en.europeonline-magazine.eu/eu-concerned-over-rule-of-law-in-bulgaria_287056.html#)

**Moldova**

**Authorities urge int'l help to resolve border row**

Moldova's Parliament has called on international partners negotiating a settlement with a breakaway republic to stop separatists from seizing territory in eastern Moldova. Lawmakers adopted a statement late Friday urging the US, EU, Russia, Ukraine and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to "resolve the situation in Trans-Dniester through political and peaceful means, respecting democratic…principles." Trans-Dniester, wedged between Moldova and Ukraine, is a narrow strip of land separated by from the rest of Moldova by the River Dniester. Last week separatist leader Yevgeny Shevchuk signed legislation that would expand the region to include eight Moldovan villages, saying he would do everything possible to make sure the legislation came into effect. Moldovan Defense Minister Vitalie Marinuta said the army would respond to any attack on its territory, adding he did not think the situation would escalate into an armed conflict.

**AP -** [**http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/moldova-urges-intl-resolve-border-row-19462693#**](http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/moldova-urges-intl-resolve-border-row-19462693#)

**Russia**

**Russian police beat up top rights activist, party leader**

The head of a top Russian rights group and an opposition leader said Saturday they had been assaulted by riot police during a raid on the NGO, in the latest crackdown on activists during Vladimir Putin's new term. In a night-time raid, dozens of men swept the offices of the group For Human Rights and assaulted some 10 people including the group's head Lev Ponomaryov and leader of the Yabloko liberal opposition party Sergei Mitrokhin. Mitrokhin, who plans to run against the incumbent pro-Kremlin Moscow mayor in polls this fall, showed up at the group's offices in a sign of support after they were told to vacate the premises in a dispute with the city authorities over rent. The liberal politician suggested representatives of Russian special services were coordinating the raid and accused the Kremlin of being behind the attack.

**AFP -** [**http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/130622/russian-police-beat-top-rights-activist-party-leader#**](http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/130622/russian-police-beat-top-rights-activist-party-leader#)

**Turkey**

**Authorities face pressure to advance Kurdish militant peace process**

Turkey's main pro-Kurdish party is pressing Ankara to advance a peace process with Kurdish militants before a parliament recess, drawing a government accusation on Friday that it was exploiting unrelated unrest to extract concessions. Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) fighters began pulling out of Turkish territory to bases in northern Iraq last month under a deal between the state and the group's jailed leader Abdullah Ocalan to end a conflict which has killed 40,000. In exchange for that withdrawal, the pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) now expects the government to enact reforms to boost the rights of the Kurdish minority, which makes up some 20 percent of Turkey's 76 million-strong population. But there has been little evidence of progress on the issue this month with public attention focused instead on three weeks of often violent anti-government demonstrations in several cities across the country.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20130621112522-qhz7i/?source = hpbreaking#**](http://www.trust.org/item/20130621112522-qhz7i/?source%20=%20hpbreaking%23)

EAPR

**China**

**At least 160,000 people affected by Xinjiang floods**

Hailstorms and torrential rain-triggered floods have left about 160,000 people affected in the southern part of northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, local authorities reported. The floods have affected more than 101,000 people in Aksu Prefecture and led to nearly 3,000 of them being relocated. About 12,000 hectares of croplands have been damaged, 1,638 houses toppled and 6,197 houses damaged by the floods, according to the regional civil affairs department. Hailstorms have stricken 19 towns in Kashi Prefecture, leaving 60,000 people affected in the area, said the prefecture's flood control and drought relief headquarters. The hail has also injured 84 people and killed 89 heads of livestock and 11,200 domestic birds in the prefecture. Relief supplies such as quilts, tents as well as food have been sent to the areas. Relocation of the affected people is under way.

**Xinhua -** [**http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-06/21/c\_132475515.htm#**](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-06/21/c_132475515.htm#)

**DPR Korea**

**Authorities demand dissolution of UN command in Skorea**

North Korea's envoy is demanding the dissolution of the UN command in South Korea to guarantee peace and stability in the Korean Peninsula. Ambassador Sin Son Ho told reporters Friday that the UN command in South Korea is merely a tool of the US and "has nothing to do with the unanimous will of the UN." The three-year Korean War, ended in a truce in 1953, not a peace treaty, and left the Korean Peninsula divided by a heavily fortified border monitored by the US-led UN Command. Washington also stations 28,500 American troops in South Korea to protect its ally against North Korean aggression. The ambassador's statement follows Pyongyang's surprise offer Sunday for direct nuclear disarmament talks with the US.

**AP -** [**http://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/nkorea-demands-dissolution-command-skorea-19456744#**](http://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/nkorea-demands-dissolution-command-skorea-19456744#)

**Indonesia**

**Indonesia neglects fate of migrant children: HRW**

A watchdog group is criticizing Indonesia over its treatment of children who are migrants or seeking asylum. Human Rights Watch says Indonesia has detained hundreds of such children each year without giving them a way to challenge their detention. In an 86-page report released Monday, the group says they are often detained in sordid conditions, sometimes beaten, while others are left to fend for themselves without assistance with food or shelter. The report is based on interviews with 102 migrants aged five to 66 years. It says almost 2,000 asylum-seeking and refugee children were in Indonesia as of March and more than 1,000 of them arrived last year. Indonesia is a major transit point for migrants trying to make their way to Australia.

**AP -** [**http://www.wral.com/hrw-indonesia-neglects-fate-of-migrant-children/12584941/#**](http://www.wral.com/hrw-indonesia-neglects-fate-of-migrant-children/12584941/#)

**Indonesia makes first arrests amid Sumatra fires**

Indonesian police on Monday arrested two farmers for illegally starting fires to clear land in Sumatra, the first detentions linked to blazes that have blanketed neighboring Singapore and Malaysia with thick smog for days. Police said the two farmers were not linked to any of the eight companies the government suspects are responsible for Southeast Asia's worst air pollution crisis in years. The parent companies of those firms included Malaysia-listed Sime Darby, which has denied wrongdoing.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/06/24/us-southeastasia-haze-idUSBRE95I0WW20130624**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/06/24/us-southeastasia-haze-idUSBRE95I0WW20130624)

**Malaysia**

**Malaysia declares state of emergency over smog in south**

Malaysia has declared a state of emergency in two southern districts after smog triggered by forest fires in Indonesia reached hazardous levels. The coastal towns of Muar and Ledang are in shutdown, and residents have been advised to stay indoors. Air pollution has also worsened in the capital, Kuala Lumpur, shrouding its landmark Petronas Towers in hazy smoke. Malaysia's environment minister is to meet his Indonesian counterpart on Wednesday to discuss the problem. Smog has become an annual problem in Malaysia, but this is the first time in eight years that a state of emergency has been called, the BBC's Jennifer Pak, in Kuala Lumpur, reports.

**BBC -** [**http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-23018947##**](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-23018947##)

**Protesters detained as Malaysian parliament convenes**

Malaysian police on Monday detained at least two dozen people protesting alleged election fraud as parliament convened for the first time since divisive polls last month. About 300 people, clad mostly in the black colour of a post-election protest campaign, demonstrated on a road leading to parliament in the capital Kuala Lumpur, calling for a re-balloting. Police, backed up by a dozen riot officers armed with shields, batons and tear gas, moved in after several hours, dragging away protesters and bundling them into police trucks. Khalid Samad, an opposition lawmaker, said at least 25 people were arrested. A police spokesman, when contacted, could not immediately confirm the number.

**AFP -** [**http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/protesters-detained-as/722408.html**](http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/protesters-detained-as/722408.html)

**Thailand**

**Nearly 49,000 infected with dengue, 59 dead**

According to Public Health Minister Pradit Sintavanarong, dengue situation in Thailand is still of concern given nearly 49,000 people have so far been afflicted by the disease. 59 patients have died of dengue fever since the beginning of 2013, and more than half of the number were children. The minister has, therefore, urged all hospitals to diagnose their patients carefully and thoroughly. The minister has also urged related agencies nationwide to step up prevention measures, including cleaning all water containers and sewer drains, using mosquito-killer sprays, and eliminating all

mosquito breeding grounds. He has also warned those who experience flu, headache, or body ache, to consult a doctor immediately as they could be infected by the deadly dengue virus.

**NNT -** [**http://thainews.prd.go.th/centerweb/newsen/NewsDetail?NT01\_NewsID=WNSOC5606210010003#**](http://thainews.prd.go.th/centerweb/newsen/NewsDetail?NT01_NewsID=WNSOC5606210010003#)

ESAR

**Kenya**

**At least 15 killed in grenade attack in north**

At least 15 people were killed in a grenade attack on Sunday in a remote village in northern Kenya where low-key clan clashes have displaced hundreds of people in the past week, the Kenya Red Cross and local officials said. Pastoralist communities in northern Kenya have long wrangled over the control of highly valuable grazing land. But the fighting, in which more than 20 villagers have been killed in the past two days in Mandera county, near the east African nation's frontier with Ethiopia and Somalia, has marked an escalation in tension. Residents say the political class in the area is using clan militia to jostle for top positions in the local administration and to settle old scores. The epicenter of the fighting is located about 800 km from the capital Nairobi.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/06/23/us-kenya-attack idUSBRE95M09K20130623?feedType=RSS&feedName=topNews**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/06/23/us-kenya-attack%20idUSBRE95M09K20130623?feedType=RSS&feedName=topNews)

**Namibia**

**No rain, no planting, no food – drought concern**

It’s the end of the harvest season in Namibia. People should be busy storing food for the year ahead. Instead 14% of the population is in need of urgent food assistance as drought grips the country. A national emergency has been declared by the government in Namibia, after significantly below average rainfall across most of the country caused crop failure, maize production to drop by 40% and livestock to die. An estimated 330,925 people are food insecure and 447,577 moderately food insecure. And it is expected to worsen before it gets better. Currently 30% of families affected by drought have enough food for only one meal a day. Stanley Ndhlovu, disaster management coordinator for IFRC in southern Africa, says the biggest concern as the drought progresses is the impact on nutrition and the negative behaviours people may adopt in order to cope.

**AllAfrica -** [**http://allafrica.com/stories/201306220018.html**](http://allafrica.com/stories/201306220018.html)

**Rwanda**

**Opposition group seeks registration, political freedoms**

Hundreds of opposition supporters packed a hall in the Rwandan capital on Friday saying they were determined to register their party after what the group has said was years of obstruction by the government of President Paul Kagame. Kagame has won international praise for rebuilding Rwanda after the 1994 genocide, but critics accuse him of being authoritarian and trampling on political freedoms, charges he rejects. Members of the Democratic Green movement gathered for their "founding conference" - a key part of the formal registration process - saying they were hoping to run in parliamentary elections scheduled for September.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/06/21/us-rwanda-politics-idUSBRE95K0WI20130621#**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/06/21/us-rwanda-politics-idUSBRE95K0WI20130621#)

**Somalia**

**Al Shabab attacks Sierra Leone bases**

Heavy artilleries hit bases belonging to the Sierra Leone troops in the lower Juba regions as Alshabab troops attacked the new Amisom peace keeping force in the lower Juba region of Somalia. The AMISOM bases in Taabto were attacked using RPGs by Alshabab fighters last night. Taabto residents said that they heard deafening sounds during the attacks followed by gunfire battles. The casualties resulting from the attacks have not yet been confirmed as for now. However Alshabab has claimed responsibility for the attacks as it was posted in Alshabab's website.

**AllAfrica -** [**http://allafrica.com/stories/201306230296.html#**](http://allafrica.com/stories/201306230296.html#)

MENA

**Egypt**

**Deaths reported in Egypt sectarian attack**

Sunni Muslim villagers have killed four Shia Muslim men in Egypt after accusing them of trying to spread their version of Islam, according to security officials. The four were beaten to death on Sunday in Giza province, near the capital Cairo, in one of the most serious sectarian incidents in Egypt in recent months. The Health Ministry confirmed the death toll, adding that scores of Shias were seriously injured in the attack. About 3,000 angry villagers, including ultraconservative Sunni Salafists, surrounded the house of Hassan Shehata, a Shia leader, threatening to set it on fire if 34 Shias inside did not leave the village before the end of the day, according to the officials. The Shias were performing religious rituals outside the house when they were attacked, according to the officials.

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/06/201362421255465595.html#**](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/06/201362421255465595.html#)

**Egyptian army 'ready to intervene to stop conflict'**

The army in Egypt has warned it will not allow the country to descend into "uncontrollable conflict". The comments by army chief Gen Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi came a week ahead of planned mass protests by opponents of Islamist President Mohammed Morsi. He said the army was obliged to stop Egypt plunging into a "dark tunnel". The remarks are seen as one of the strongest interventions since the army handed over power to President Morsi last year.

**BBC -** [**http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-23021611##**](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-23021611##)

**Iraq**

**Suicide attacks in Iraq kill at least 3: Officials**

Iraqi officials say two separate suicide attacks north of Baghdad have killed at least three people. A police officer in the city of Mosul says one attacker rammed his explosive-laden car into an army patrol on Monday, killing a soldier and a police officer. He says seven, including two civilians, were wounded. Mosul is 360 kilometers (220 miles) northwest of Baghdad. Another officer said a second bomber blew set off his explosive-rigged belt inside a university campus in the city of Tikrit, killing a police officer. The city is 130 kilometers (80 miles) north of Baghdad.

**AP -** [**http://bigstory.ap.org/article/officials-suicide-attacks-iraq-kill-least-3**](http://bigstory.ap.org/article/officials-suicide-attacks-iraq-kill-least-3)

**Jordan**

**Many teenagers 'support honour killings'**

A significant proportion of teenagers in Jordan think that honour killing is morally right, a study by researchers in the UK suggests. One third of those interviewed for the study said murder was a justified punishment for women or girls if they shamed their families. The researchers from Cambridge University's Institute of Criminology interviewed more than 850 students. "The sample is large enough to draw valid conclusions about adolescents in the capital of Jordan, Amman," Professor Manuel Eisner, the main supervisor of the study, told the BBC. The researchers say the study, released on Thursday, is one of the first to attempt to gauge cultural attitudes to honour killings in the region. The UN estimates that around 5,000 women are killed annually in honour-related crimes. Women's advocacy groups, however, suspect that more than 20,000 women are killed worldwide each year.

**BBC -** [**http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-22992365**](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-22992365)

**Lebanon**

**Lebanon clashes rage overnight; 12 soldiers dead**

Lebanese army units battling followers of a hard-line Sunni Muslim cleric closed in Monday on the mosque complex where they were holed up in a southern coastal city, the national news agency said. It said a total of 12 soldiers had been killed since fighting erupted a day earlier. The clashes in Sidon, Lebanon's third-largest city some 40 kilometers (25 miles) south of Beirut, is the latest bout of violence in Lebanon linked to the conflict in neighboring Syria. It is the bloodiest yet involving the army at least three of those killed are officers. The Lebanese media has depicted the clashes as a test for the state in containing armed groups that have taken up the cause of the warring sides in Syria, whose sectarian makeup mirrors that of its smaller neighbor.

**AP -** [**http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/lebanon-clashes-rage-overnight-12-soldiers-dead-19470338**](http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/lebanon-clashes-rage-overnight-12-soldiers-dead-19470338)

**Underage marriage on the rise for Syrian refugees: UNHCR**

The United Nations refugee agency warned Friday that underage marriage among displaced Syrians in Lebanon had become a worrying phenomenon, affecting girls as young as 13. In its weekly update, the UNHCR said more than 23,000 Syrians had registered with the agency over the last seven days, bringing the total figure to over 553,600 – broken down into 473,500 people who have registered, and 80,000 awaiting registration. The Bekaa Valley town of Arsal alone was receiving some 200 refugees a day. The majority of these arrivals have moved to Arsal’s Bebine settlement, where the UNHCR said discussions with arrivals revealed the “increased number of refugee parents marrying off their young girls aged around 13.

**Daily Star -** [**http://www.zawya.com/story/UNHCR\_Underage\_marriage\_on\_the\_rise\_for\_Syrian\_refugees-DS22\*06\*2013\_dsart\*221211/**](http://www.zawya.com/story/UNHCR_Underage_marriage_on_the_rise_for_Syrian_refugees-DS22*06*2013_dsart*221211/)

**Saudi Arabia**

**Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) update**

The Ministry of Health in Saudi Arabia has announced an additional four laboratory-confirmed cases with Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV). The first case is a woman in the Eastern Region who has recovered. The other three cases are women health care workers from Taif governorate who cared for two previously confirmed MERS-CoV cases and were detected as part of the outbreak investigation and contact tracing. Two of these three cases were asymptomatic and all three tested weakly positive by PCR. Globally, from September 2012 to date, WHO has been informed of a total of 68 laboratory-confirmed cases of infection with MERS-CoV, including 38 deaths.

**WHO -** [**http://www.who.int/csr/don/don\_updates/en/index.html#**](http://www.who.int/csr/don/don_updates/en/index.html#)

**State of Palestine**

**Israel hits back after Gaza rockets**

Israeli warplanes have attacked targets in the Gaza Strip after missiles were fired into southern Israel late on Sunday night. At least six rockets were fired from northern Gaza, but no damage or injury was reported. Hours later, Israeli aircraft hit three areas, a BBC reporter said. The reason for the flare-up is unclear but sources blame tension in Gaza after an Islamic Jihad leader was killed by Hamas police on Saturday. Raed Qassim Jundeyeih, 32, died after he was shot during a gun battle involving police and members of his family. Unconfirmed reports said he was a commander of the militant group's military wing, the Al-Quds brigades. Islamic Jihad was believed to have been behind Sunday night's rocket attack on Israel, which came after a period of relative calm.

**BBC -** [**http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-23025865#**](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-23025865#)

**UN relief officials sound alarm over deepening food insecurity in Palestine**

The heads of two United Nations aid agencies on Friday raised the alarm over the worsening food insecurity in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, where one in three Palestinian households now struggle to feed their families. Preliminary results of a joint UN survey carried out by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, WFP, UNRWA, and FAO found that 1.6 million people – or 34% of households – were food insecure in 2012. This represents a “dramatic” rise from 27% in 2011, stated a joint news release from WFP and UNRWA.

**UN News Centre -** [**http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=45240&Cr=palestin&Cr1=#**](http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=45240&Cr=palestin&Cr1=#)

**Sudan**

**UN expert voices concern at human rights situation in Kordofan, Blue Nile states**

While welcoming overall positive human rights developments in Sudan, an independent United Nations expert today expressed concerns about specific situations in Darfur, Blue Nile and South Kordofan states, which have been plagued by ongoing clashes and hostilities. Wrapping up his third visit to Sudan, Mashood Adebayo Baderin, Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Sudan, acknowledged the Government’s commitment to meet its international human rights obligations, but stressed that major challenges still need to be addressed. In a press release issued by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Mr. Baderin also urged the international community to provide technical assistance and capacity building to the Sudanese authorities.

**UN News Centre -** [**http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=45243&Cr=sudan&Cr1=#**](http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=45243&Cr=sudan&Cr1=#)

ROSA

**Afghanistan**

**Worsening violence against children - UNICEF mention**

One of the victims of last month’s attack on the IOM compound in the Afghan capital is still to be identified - a six year old boy. The child's body, found near the attack site, has not been claimed and the police have not been able to find the boy's parents. As a result of the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan, the number of child casualties in the first four months of 2013 was 414 - a 28% jump from the 327 last year, according to the UN Secretary-General’s Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict. Of the 414 child casualties, 121 were killed and 293 injured. "Afghanistan remains

one of the world's most difficult and dangerous places to be a child,” UNICEF spokesman Alistair Gretarsson told IRIN. From 2010 to 2012, the UN report says 4,025 children were killed or seriously wounded as a result of the conflict in Afghanistan. Child casualties for the country totalled 1,304 for 2012. However, the reported 28% increase in child casualties in the first four months of this year is fuelling concern that 2013 could be one of the deadliest years yet for children in Afghanistan.

**IRIN -** [**http://www.irinnews.org/report/98262/worsening-violence-against-children-in-afghanistan#**](http://www.irinnews.org/report/98262/worsening-violence-against-children-in-afghanistan#)

**India**

**Rescue efforts hampered by bad weather**

Bad weather hampered efforts Sunday to evacuate thousands of people stranded in the northern India state of Uttarakhand, where at least 1,000 people have died in monsoon flooding and landslides, army officials said. The army resumed helicopter flights to rescue stranded people late Sunday after rain stopped and dense fog lifted in the Himalayan region, Brig. Uma Maheshwar said. Thousands of people were still stranded in high mountain passes in the temple town of Badrinath and rescue efforts were concentrated on getting them to safety. Troops built makeshift bridges at several places, Maheshwar said. Despite poor visibility, more than 2,000 people were transported by helicopter to relief camps in the state capital, Dehradun, said Priya Joshi, an air force spokeswoman. India's national disaster response force used drone aircraft to locate survivors in remote areas that remained inaccessible.

**AP -** [**http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/06/23/india-floods-2013-rescue-efforts\_n\_3486599.html**](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/06/23/india-floods-2013-rescue-efforts_n_3486599.html)

**4 killed, 8 injured as militants open fire on army convoy near Srinagar**

At least four army personnel have been killed and eight injured as militants opened fire at an Army convoy near Bemina on the outskirts of Srinagar on Monday. Jammu and Kashmir Police said that the encounter took place along the Srinagar-Baramulla Highway. Police sources were quoted by India Today and other media, as saying that at least one militant was holed up in the area, which was cordoned off following the attack.The attack came a day before the scheduled arrival of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and UPA Chairperson on a two-day visit to Srinagar. Dr.Singh is expected to announce a package for the border districts of the state. The package will be for development and reconstruction of the border areas.

**ANI-** [**http://www.newstrackindia.com/newsdetails/2013/06/24/255-Four-killed-eight-injured-as-militants-open-fire-on-army-convoy-near-Srinagar.html**](http://www.newstrackindia.com/newsdetails/2013/06/24/255-Four-killed-eight-injured-as-militants-open-fire-on-army-convoy-near-Srinagar.html)

**Pakistan**

**Bomb kills two government allies: officials**

A bomb killed two members of a Pakistani pro-government militia Saturday in a tribal region near the Afghanistan border, officials said. The blast went off in Chamarkand town, 40km (25 miles) northwest of Khar, the main town of Bajaur tribal region in the northwest of the country. "Two members of a pro-government tribal peace committee were killed when an improvised explosive device (IED) went off near them," local administration official Ghulam Saeedullah told AFP. He said that the men were inspecting the site of an earlier IED blast when a second device went off. The attack came two days after about a dozen insurgents attacked the homes of two tribal elders near Khar and later killed them. Also Saturday, security agencies intercepted a truck in Pakistan's southwestern city of Quetta and recovered 50 rockets with fuses.

**AFP -** [**http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/130622/bomb-kills-two-pakistan-government-allies-officials#**](http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/130622/bomb-kills-two-pakistan-government-allies-officials#)

**Pakistani Taliban claims attack on foreigners**

Pakistan's umbrella Taliban movement claimed responsibility for killing nine foreign climbers in the Himalayas, saying it had created a new wing to attack foreigners to avenge US drone strikes. Gunmen had stormed a base camp on Saturday night in a remote part of northern Pakistan and killed nine tourists and one Pakistani guide who were part of a Nanga Parbat mountaineering expedition, police officials said. Spokesman Ehsanullah Ehsan telephoned the AFP news agency to say that the killings were intended to avenge the death of the second in command of the umbrella Tehreek-e-Taliban (TTP) in a US drone strike late last month. "We did it and we claim responsibility for this attack," Ehsan said in the call from an undisclosed location. "One of our factions, Junood ul-Hifsa, did it. It is to avenge the killing of Maulvi Wali ur-Rehman," he said. "We want to convey to the world that this is our reply to US drone attacks," he added.

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2013/06/20136234309866467.html#**](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2013/06/20136234309866467.html#)

**WFP says Pakistan has food 'emergency', but donors look elsewhere**

Hunger in Pakistan is at emergency levels after years of conflict and floods, but funding has dwindled as new crises such as Syria grab donors' attention, the WFP chief said on Sunday. Fighting in tribal areas bordering Afghanistan compounded problems caused by three consecutive years of floods that destroyed crops and forced millions of people to temporarily abandon their homes. Although most have now returned, about half of Pakistan's population still does not have secure access to enough food, up from a little over a third a decade ago, the WFP said. Fifteen percent of children are severely malnourished, and some 40 percent suffer from stunted growth.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/06/23/us-pakistan-hunger-idUSBRE95M0D420130623**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/06/23/us-pakistan-hunger-idUSBRE95M0D420130623)

TACR

**Brazil**

**Anti-corruption protests continue**

About 150,000 anti-government demonstrators have taken to the streets in several Brazilian cities in opposition to bad public transport and healthcare, corruption and the billions of dollars of spending on World Cup preparation. Police and protesters clashed in several isolated incidents on Saturday. In Belo Horizonte, police used tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse protesters who tried to pass through a barrier and hurled rocks at a car dealership. Salvador also saw protests turn violent. Calls to protest have also spilled over into social media, with a deluge of tweets, Facebook comments and thousands of pictures posted on Instagram. Anger over political corruption has emerged as the unifying issue for the demonstrators, who pledged to stay in the streets until concrete steps are taken to reform the political system.

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/news/americas/2013/06/201362311236450839.html**](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/americas/2013/06/201362311236450839.html)

**Colombia**

**At least 2 killed, 12 injured in farmer protests**

At least two people have been killed and 12 more injured in farmers' protests in northeastern Colombia near the border with Venezuela, official sources confirmed Sunday. The farmers from Catatumbo zone, in the northeastern region of Norte de Santader, set up highway blockades and plundered official institutions on Saturday, demanding the government to declare the zone as peasant reservation and to suspend the eradication of coca plants and poppy. According to Rodolfo Palomino, Citizen Security director of the Colombian National Police, "There are two people killed. One of them was from the neighboring municipality of Convencion."

**Xinhua -** [**http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2013-06/24/c\_132479469.htm**](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2013-06/24/c_132479469.htm)

WCAR

**Across WCAR**

**Terror threat still high in Sahel: EU envoy**

The threat of terrorism in Africa’s Sahel remains high despite the weakening of Islamist groups in northern Mali, the EU’s representative for the region said on Friday. Michel Reveyrand de Menthon told a media conference in the Senegalese capital Dakar that a French-led military intervention launched against Al Qaeda-linked militant groups in January had not eliminated the danger. "There has been a considerable weakening of these groups with Operation Serval but it is clear that they have the capacity for very fast reconstruction, which shows that the threat remains high," he said. De Menthon said suicide attacks in May claimed in part by the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa in which 20 people died proved that the threat remained ever-present.

**AFP -** [**http://www.nst.com.my/latest/terror-threat-still-high-in-africa-s-sahel-eu-envoy-1.305011#**](http://www.nst.com.my/latest/terror-threat-still-high-in-africa-s-sahel-eu-envoy-1.305011#)

**10 dead, 20 missing as boat sinks off Gabon**

Ten people drowned and another 20 remain unaccounted for after a boat carrying West African clandestine migrants sank off the coast of Gabon, a police official said on Friday. The boat had left Nigeria and was within 15 minutes of arriving in Gabon's capital Libreville when it went down late on Tuesday night. Gabonese authorities rescued 23 survivors and the search continued into Friday. Police said the survivors from Benin, Nigeria and Burkina Faso claimed to have each paid the boat's crew up to 500,000 CFA francs ($1,000) to take them to Gabon, where they hoped to find work. Local newspapers reported that the human traffickers attempted to extort more money from the

immigrants and had begun throwing those who could not pay overboard. Gabonese authorities said they were investigating the cause of the sinking.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/06/21/us-gabon-accident-idUSBRE95K0W020130621#**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/06/21/us-gabon-accident-idUSBRE95K0W020130621#)

**DR Congo**

**Rebels defend parallel justice system**

A rebel group in eastern Congo has defended its right to organize criminal trials despite concerns from the country's UN mission. Kabasha Amani, a civilian spokesman for the M23 rebel movement that briefly occupied Goma last November after routing the government army, said Friday that the rebels could not ignore criminals in the areas they control. Roger Meece, the head of the UN mission in Congo, has expressed concern about the rebels' plans to try 11 young men accused of illegally possessing weapons. He says the rebels could not guarantee a fair trial that adhered to international standards. Although Amani defended the group's efforts to crack down on criminality, M23 military

spokesman Vianney Kazarama declined to say whether the trial would go ahead.

**AP -** [**http://www.nwitimes.com/news/world/africa/congo-rebels-defend-parallel-justice-system/article\_4bfe34b2-2f1b-5260-bfaa-8cdf5773eb89.html#**](http://www.nwitimes.com/news/world/africa/congo-rebels-defend-parallel-justice-system/article_4bfe34b2-2f1b-5260-bfaa-8cdf5773eb89.html#)

**Nigeria**

**Militants in north force thousands to flee**

Islamic extremists threatening a bloodbath forced thousands of people from villages along Nigeria's northeast, where refugees said Saturday the fighters have regrouped following a month-long military crackdown. People who escaped the bush near Nigeria's border with Cameroon fled to the Borno state capital of Maiduguri said militants from the Boko Haram terrorist network also have written letters warning government workers to resign their jobs or face death. Other villagers left for Cameroon.

**AP -** [**http://bigstory.ap.org/article/militants-north-nigeria-force-thousands-flee#**](http://bigstory.ap.org/article/militants-north-nigeria-force-thousands-flee#)

**Sierra Leone**

**Country back on global aid list after graft probe**

Sierra Leone has been granted more than $5 million towards its vaccination programme, the government said Friday, just months after the aid was frozen when $1 million in donations went missing. The Geneva-based Global Alliance for Vaccine Immunisation (GAVI) approved the $5.4 million grant after being satisfied that the country was cracking down on corruption, the health ministry said. GAVI halted its aid late last year after an internal audit showed that $1,099,640 (750,000 euros) in funds it had granted Sierra Leone had disappeared.

**AFP -** [**http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5hGsC8ViUP4JdQmTmdf0BnKGB6DRw?docId=CNG.618c4c8ba04ca8a8cb7bf185c48a3177.401#**](http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5hGsC8ViUP4JdQmTmdf0BnKGB6DRw?docId=CNG.618c4c8ba04ca8a8cb7bf185c48a3177.401#)

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