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GENERAL

**Across Regions**

**Panama calls in U.N. to inspect North Korean arms ship**

Panama said on Wednesday it had called on the U.N. Security Council to investigate a North Korean ship caught smuggling arms from Cuba, piling more pressure on Pyongyang over a possible breach of U.N. sanctions. Panama stopped the ship last week and seized its cargo after a stand-off with the North Korean crew in which the captain tried to slit his own throat. Authorities discovered missile equipment, MiG fighter jets and other arms aboard that Cuba said were "obsolete" Soviet-era weapons being sent to North Korea for repair.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/07/18/us-panama-northkorea-idUSBRE96G0XS20130718**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/07/18/us-panama-northkorea-idUSBRE96G0XS20130718)

**UN scrambles for nearly $13 billion emergency aid**

The UN's top humanitarian official says an unprecedented $12.9 billion in emergency aid will be needed to help 73 million people globally this year - a third of it just for Syria. Valerie Amos says the "the exploding crisis in Syria" will require at least $4.4 billion to help 6.8 million people suffering inside the war-torn country and 5.3 million who are refugees or affected by the conflict in border nations. Amos told reporters Wednesday in Geneva that more than $5 billion has been raised for aid by mid-year, but she still had to persuade donors to pledge the other nearly $8 billion that's needed.   
**AP** - [**http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/scrambles-13-billion-emergency-aid-19686148**](http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/scrambles-13-billion-emergency-aid-19686148)

**United Nations**

**UN to honour 95-year-old Nelson Mandela on his birthday, July 18**

The UN General Assembly has called a special meeting on July 18 to mark the Nelson Mandela International Day. The ailing South African leader’s contributions to democracy, racial justice and reconciliation will be honoured on the occasion. “Former US President Bill Clinton, Reverend Jesse Jackson, singer, actor and social activist Harry Belafonte, and Andrew Mlangeni will be the speakers at the meeting.  
**ANI -** [**http://www.dnaindia.com/world/1862321/report-united-nations-to-honour-95-year-old-nelson-mandela-on-his-birthday-july-18**](http://www.dnaindia.com/world/1862321/report-united-nations-to-honour-95-year-old-nelson-mandela-on-his-birthday-july-18)

CEE/CIS

**Across CEE/CIS**

**Romanian president tells Moldova to go on to EU**

Romanian President Traian Basescu called for Moldova to continue its path toward the European Union saying that the neighbors shared "a blood partnership." Basescu and Moldovan President Nicolae Timofti discussed setting up electricity grids and bridges across the River Prut. Hundreds greeted Basescu as he toured downtown Chisinau, the capital, on Wednesday. Moldova hopes to be invited to start EU accession in November.

**AP** - [**http://www.nzherald.co.nz/world/news/article.cfm?c\_id=2&objectid=10899621**](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/world/news/article.cfm?c_id=2&objectid=10899621)

**Russia**

**Court convicts opposition leader**

Aleksei A. Navalny, a lawyer who became Russia’s most resonant opposition voice by crusading against rampant public corruption and a personal irritant to President Vladimir V. Putin by branding his United Russia political machine as the “party of swindlers and thieves,” was found guilty on Thursday of stealing money from a state-controlled timber company. He was sentenced to five years in prison — a punishment that immediately transformed Mr. Navalny, 37, who recently declared his candidacy for mayor of Moscow, from an opposition activist to a political dissident and prisoner.   
**NYT -** [**http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/19/world/europe/russian-court-convicts-opposition-leader-aleksei-navalny.html?pagewanted=all&\_r=0**](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/19/world/europe/russian-court-convicts-opposition-leader-aleksei-navalny.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0)

EAPR

**Across EAPR**

**Thai authorities implicated in Rohingya Muslim smuggling network**

A Reuters investigation, based on interviews with people smugglers and more than two dozen survivors of boat voyages, reveals how some Thai naval security forces work systematically with smugglers to profit from the surge in fleeing Rohingya. The lucrative smuggling network transports the Rohingya mainly into neighboring Malaysia, a Muslim-majority country they view as a haven from persecution.

Once in the smugglers' hands, Rohingya men are often beaten until they come up with the money for their passage. Those who can't pay are handed over to traffickers, who sometimes sell the men as indentured servants on farms or into slavery on Thai [fishing](http://www.reuters.com/sectors/industries/overview?industryCode=113&lc=int_mb_1001) boats. There, they become part of the country's $8 billion seafood-export [business](http://www.reuters.com/finance?lc=int_mb_1001), which supplies consumers in the United States, [Japan](http://www.reuters.com/places/japan) and Europe.

Some Rohingya women are sold as brides, Reuters found. Other Rohingya languish in overcrowded Thai and Malaysian immigration detention centers.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/07/17/us-myanmar-exodus-specialreport-idUSBRE96G02520130717**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/07/17/us-myanmar-exodus-specialreport-idUSBRE96G02520130717)

**Myanmar**

**Disbanding Nasaka, an abusive agency**

President Thein Sein of Myanmar issued notification no. 59/2013 abolishing the Nasaka border security force, which has been active mainly in Rakhine State (formerly known as Arakan) and in particular along the border with Bangladesh. This is a very positive move. Rakhine State has seen repeated violence between the Buddhist Rakhine and Muslim Rohingya communities, and official and semi-official policies of discrimination against the Muslim population. The Nasaka, or “Border Immigration Headquarters” as it is sometimes known, is an inter-agency force established in 1992 and comprised of around 1200 immigration, police, intelligence and customs officials.

**ICG -** [**http://www.crisisgroupblogs.org/resolvingconflict/2013/07/16/myanmars-nasaka-disbanding-an-abusive-agency/?utm\_source=rss&utm\_medium=rss&utm\_campaign=myanmars-nasaka-disbanding-an-abusive-agency**](http://www.crisisgroupblogs.org/resolvingconflict/2013/07/16/myanmars-nasaka-disbanding-an-abusive-agency/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=myanmars-nasaka-disbanding-an-abusive-agency)

ESAR

**Ethiopia**

**Authorities should release jailed reporters**

A delegation from the EU's parliament is calling on Ethiopia's government to release jailed journalists and political activists. Barbara Lochbihler, the head of the EU delegation, said Wednesday that Ethiopia is jailing journalists and activists for "exercising their legitimate right to freedoms of expression, association and religion." A spokesman for Ethiopia's PM said the country does not have any political prisoners. In another sign the EU call might not be heeded, the delegation was at the last minute denied a pre-approved visit to the prison where the activists are being held.

**AP** - [**http://bigstory.ap.org/article/eu-group-ethiopia-should-release-jailed-reporters**](http://bigstory.ap.org/article/eu-group-ethiopia-should-release-jailed-reporters)

**Somalia**

**Ethiopian troops leave Somali town, leaving gap**

A military spokesman in Somalia says that government forces will help to replace Ethiopian troops who vacated a Somali town in recent days. The pull-out by Ethiopian troops from the town of Baidoa on Sunday and Monday increases the pressure on AU and Somali forces to fill the vacuum before Islamist militants take over the region. Col. Ali Aden Houmed, the spokesman for the AU force in Somalia, said Wednesday that the AU and Somali forces would secure the town. Ethiopia's withdrawal raises questions as to how long Ethiopia will continue to deploy troops in western Somalia cities.

**AP** - [**http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/ethiopian-troops-leave-somali-town-leaving-gap-19685976**](http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/ethiopian-troops-leave-somali-town-leaving-gap-19685976)

**Somaliland regional administration allows UN flights to resume**

The United Nations Humanitarian Air Service announced it would resume its normal flight schedule to the Somaliland region Tuesday (July 16th). The regional Ministry of Civil Aviation and Air Transport lifted its suspension on UN flights Sunday, meaning that UN agencies and non-governmental organisations operating in the region will be able to receive humanitarian supplies such as nutrition items and vaccines for both humans and animals, according to the UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

**Sabahi -** [**http://sabahionline.com/en\_GB/articles/hoa/articles/newsbriefs/2013/07/17/newsbrief-06**](http://sabahionline.com/en_GB/articles/hoa/articles/newsbriefs/2013/07/17/newsbrief-06)

**South Sudan**

**Army says it and UN unable to protect civilians**

South Sudan's deputy defence chief has said neither his troops nor UN peacekeepers are able to protect civilians in conflict-wracked Jonglei, where thousands of rival ethnic militiamen are fighting. Video footage from Jonglei shot by UN officials and seen by AFP show columns of heavily armed fighters from the Lou Nuer people marching past, watched on by a small force of government troops and UN peacekeepers. The video was shot Sunday in the village of Manyabol in Pibor county, when the UN went to support the pickup of some 200 wounded fighters -- casualties from almost two weeks of fighting in the latest round of reprisal attacks sparked by age-old ethnic rivalry and cattle raiding.   
**AFP** - [**http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/2/9/76689/World/International/South-Sudan-army-says-it-and-UN-unable-to-protect-.aspx**](http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/2/9/76689/World/International/South-Sudan-army-says-it-and-UN-unable-to-protect-.aspx)

**UN Humanitarian chief urges access to civilians**

Alarmed by the deteriorating situation in Jonglei, where deadly clashes between multiple parties have left thousands of people cut off from aid, the top United Nations humanitarian official today urged an immediate end to the violence and appealed for access to all those in need in the strife-torn region of South Sudan. Ms. Amos said that an estimated 100,000 civilians in the area have been cut off from life-saving assistance as a result of fighting between State and non-state armed actors, and the recent resurgence of inter-communal clashes.

**UN -** [**http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=45436&Cr=South+Sudan&Cr1**](http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=45436&Cr=South+Sudan&Cr1)**=**

**Zimbabwe**

**Zimbabwe: Monitors foresee more polling chaos**

An independent Zimbabwe election monitoring group says less than 10 percent of police and officials eligible for a special vote ahead of crucial national polls managed to cast their ballots in two days of chaotic polling. The Election Resource Center said Wednesday two days of voting for 80,000 police, soldiers and officials who will be on duty on July 31 was "fraught with irregularities." Voting papers were not delivered in time at most of the 210 voting posts. The official Electoral Commission blamed delays in printing the materials.

**AP** - [**http://www.foxnews.com/world/2013/07/17/independent-zimbabwe-poll-monitors-foresee-more-poll-chaos-call-for-election/**](http://www.foxnews.com/world/2013/07/17/independent-zimbabwe-poll-monitors-foresee-more-poll-chaos-call-for-election/)

MENA

**Across MENA**

**Israel-Palestinian gaps narrowing, as per US Secretary of State**

US Secretary of State John Kerry said on Wednesday that Israelis and Palestinians are getting closer to resuming peace talks. "Through hard and deliberate work, we have been able to narrow those gaps very significantly," Kerry told a press conference. "We continue to get closer and I continue to be hopeful that the two sides will come to sit at the same table," he added after talks in Jordan with Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas and Arab envoys.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/07/17/us-palestinians-israel-kerry-peace-idUSBRE96G0SC20130717**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/07/17/us-palestinians-israel-kerry-peace-idUSBRE96G0SC20130717)

**Refugee influx into Palestinian camps may lead to catastrophe**

The influx of refugees into the Palestinian camps in Lebanon as a result of the fighting in Syria could lead to a catastrophe, a top Palestinian official said Tuesday. He said the Palestinian factions were seeking better arms control and a unified security presence in the refugee camps after recent clashes in Sidon between supporters of Salafist preacher Ahmad Assir and the Lebanese Army which involved gunmen on the outskirts of the Ain al-Hilweh refugee camp.

**AFP** - [**http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Politics/2013/Jul-17/223966-refugee-influx-into-palestinian-camps-may-lead-to-catastrophe.ashx#axzz2ZNJ8vHiT**](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Politics/2013/Jul-17/223966-refugee-influx-into-palestinian-camps-may-lead-to-catastrophe.ashx#axzz2ZNJ8vHiT)

**Algeria**

**Four troops killed in bomb attack**

Four Algerian soldiers were killed when two bombs struck their passing patrol in the region of Tipaza, west of the capital Algiers, media reports said Wednesday, adding the attack wounded another three troops. The Tuesday attack appeared to have been pre-planned but coincided with the return home of Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika from Paris after a stay of nearly three months in hospital. A similar attack in the area in late April had killed three guards.  
**AFP -** [**http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/130717/four-algerian-troops-killed-bomb-attack**](http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/130717/four-algerian-troops-killed-bomb-attack)

**Earthquake injures 11**

Algeria's state news agency says a 5.1-magnitude earthquake struck a town in the country's north, injuring 11 people and causing extensive damage. The report cited the national geophysical center as saying the quake hit at about 4 a.m. in Hammam Melouane, 40 kilometers (25 miles) south of Algiers, the capital. The U.S. Geological Survey recorded the magnitude of the tremor at 4.9.  
**AP -** [**http://abcnews.go.com/international/wirestory/algeria-hit-earthquake-11-injured-19688822#%20.ueet1nknaaa**](http://abcnews.go.com/international/wirestory/algeria-hit-earthquake-11-injured-19688822#%20.ueet1nknaaa)

**Bahrain**

**Iran-linked group claims responsibility for car blast**

Ashtr al-Sheraziya Brigade", which is closely linked to Iran, said it was behind a car explosion in Bahrain's city of Riffa on Wednesday night. The blast did not claim any casualties, according to police. The incident took place at 8:30 p.m. (local time) at a parking lot near a Sunni Muslim mosque while people were praying, police said, adding a gas cylinder was inside the vehicle. Meanwhile, Al Wafeq – the main Shiite opposition group – condemned in a statement on its website the attack.   
**Al Arabiya -** [**http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2013/07/18/Iran-linked-group-claims-responsibility-for-Bahrain-car-blast.html**](http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2013/07/18/Iran-linked-group-claims-responsibility-for-Bahrain-car-blast.html)

**Egypt**

**Policeman killed by militants in north Sinai**

Gunmen shot dead a policeman on Wednesday in El-Arish, in Egypt's restive Sinai peninsula, medical sources said. The militants opened fire on the police conscript who was standing outside a police station in north Sinai's main town, hitting him in the neck before fleeing in their vehicle. The victim died instantly, the sources said. This latest deadly attack in the increasingly lawless region, home to Egypt's luxury Red Sea resorts, came as Egyptian troops massed for an offensive against Islamist militants there. Earlier, gunmen attacked two security checkpoints near El-Arish, including one at the airport, according to the MENA state news agency.

**AFP -**

[**http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5gRNnIYxxi-m0oi8SZpK3bRDNlVMg?docId=CNG.8fcf3fa81aeb65ae27506c00e8bfc6c8.211**](http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5gRNnIYxxi-m0oi8SZpK3bRDNlVMg?docId=CNG.8fcf3fa81aeb65ae27506c00e8bfc6c8.211)

**EU calls for a national reconciliation dialogue**

The European Union (EU) High Representative for Foreign Affairs Catherine Ashton met Wednesday with interim president Adly Mansour and Vice-president Mohamed ElBaradei at the presidential palace to discuss Egypt’s transitional period. Ashton previously released a statement in which she asked the military to respect the constitutional authority of the civilian community, and the importance of holding democratic elections as soon as possible. The statement added that the EU is ready to work with the interim government as long as they uphold a democratic constitutional system.

**Daily News Egypt -** [**http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2013/07/17/eu-calls-for-a-national-reconciliation-dialogue/**](http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2013/07/17/eu-calls-for-a-national-reconciliation-dialogue/)

**Iraq**

**Attacks kill 10 people in Iraq**

Attacks in Iraq targeting diners in two cafes and swimmers in a stream killed at least 10 people on Wednesday, as violence surges during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. Violence in Iraq is now at its deadliest level in half a decade, raising fears the country is returning to the widespread bloodshed that pushed the country to the edge of civil war. More than 2,800 people have been killed since the start of April. The deadlier of the two attacks took place late at night when a bomb went off inside a café packed with people in the restive city of Mosul, killing five and wounding 14.

**AP -** [**http://www.seattlepi.com/news/world/article/Officials-Attacks-kill-10-people-in-Iraq-4669774.php**](http://www.seattlepi.com/news/world/article/Officials-Attacks-kill-10-people-in-Iraq-4669774.php)

**Syria**

**Jihadists expelled from flashpoint Kurdish town**

Kurdish fighters have expelled jihadists from the Syrian flashpoint frontier town of Ras al-Ain near Turkey, activists said Wednesday, adding that only the border crossing remains under the extremists' control.

Ras al-Ain is home to a majority Kurdish population and is of strategic importance given its location close to Turkey.

**Daily Star -** [**http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2013/Jul-17/223986-syria-kurds-expel-jihadists-from-flashpoint-border-town-activists.ashx#axzz2ZNJ8vHiT**](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2013/Jul-17/223986-syria-kurds-expel-jihadists-from-flashpoint-border-town-activists.ashx#axzz2ZNJ8vHiT)

ROSA

**Afghanistan**

**Taliban kill 8 Afghan workers en route to US base**

Taliban gunmen on Thursday shot dead eight Afghan civilians on their way to jobs at a US military base south of Kabul, officials said. “Eight Afghan workers who were working in Camp Shank were killed this morning by Taliban,” said the deputy police chief in Logar province, Rais Khan Sadeq. It was the deadliest attack since Afghanistan started observing the holy Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, traditionally a time of prayer and charity. Their bodies were found with their eyes blindfolded, the police official said, describing them as “ordinary civilian workers” on the base

**AFP -** [**http://dawn.com/news/1029930/taliban-kill-eight-afghan-workers-en-route-to-us-base**](http://dawn.com/news/1029930/taliban-kill-eight-afghan-workers-en-route-to-us-base)

**India**

**Forces shoot dead six protesters in Kashmir**

Indian paramilitary troops Thursday shot dead six people protesting outside a Border Security Force station in Kashmir, two police officers said. The incident happened in Gool, 230 kilometres (143 miles) south of the main city of Srinagar, the officers said on condition of anonymity. Protesters had gathered outside the Border Security Force (BSF) station to demonstrate against an incident involving troops at a mosque on Wednesday evening, witnesses said. The troops had entered the mosque in Gool to complain about the loud recitation of prayers by worshippers during the holy month of Ramadan, the witnesses told AFP.

**AFP -** [**http://dawn.com/news/1029956/indian-forces-shoot-dead-six-protesters-in-kashmir-police**](http://dawn.com/news/1029956/indian-forces-shoot-dead-six-protesters-in-kashmir-police)

**SC rejection of reducing juvenile age from 18 to 16 welcomed**

Crusader for womens' rights, Ranjana Kumari, on Wednesday welcomed the Supreme Court's decision to reject a plea to reduce juvenile age from 18 to 16 years. "I welcome this judgement because there is international norm of 18 years as an adult. So, everybody below that age is juvenile, is young, is child and cannot be treated as an adult. And one case cannot become the exception for changing the whole system of law and also jumping the international norms. So, I think it's very important judgement and we welcome," said Kumari.

**AN** - [**http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ani/ranjana-kumari-welcomes-sc-rejection-of-reducing-juvenile-age-from-18-to-16-113071700901\_1.html**](http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ani/ranjana-kumari-welcomes-sc-rejection-of-reducing-juvenile-age-from-18-to-16-113071700901_1.html)

**Pakistan**

**Taliban commander regrets attack on Pakistani teen**

A prominent Pakistani Taliban commander has written a letter to a teenage girl shot in the head by the group, expressing regrets that he didn't warn her before the assassination attempt that propelled her activism to the international stage. The letter from Adnan Rasheed, however, didn't apologize for the October attack that left Malala Yousafzai gravely wounded. Rasheed, who has close relations with Taliban leaders, only said that he found the shooting "shocking" and wished it hadn't happened.

**AP -** [**http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2013/07/17/taliban-regrets-attack/2525427/**](http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2013/07/17/taliban-regrets-attack/2525427/)

**Gunmen kill 2 soldiers in ambush**

Gunmen ambushed a vehicle carrying government paramilitary forces in a restive Pakistani tribal region near the Afghan border on Thursday, killing two soldiers, officials said. The attack took place in Kamar village, around 40 kilometers (25 miles) northwest of Khar, the main town of Bajaur tribal region where Taliban and al-Qaida linked militants have carved out hideouts. The Frontier Corps or FC is a paramilitary force charged with maintaining law and order and its members are frequently attacked in Pakistan's troubled northwest.

**AFP -** [**http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/90967-gunmen-kill-2-pakistani-soldiers-in-ambush**](http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/90967-gunmen-kill-2-pakistani-soldiers-in-ambush)

TACR

**Peru**

**Relatives say 8 settlers slain by Peruvian Indians**

Ashaninka Indians armed with shotguns killed eight men who encroached on their ancestral lands in an Amazon jungle region of Peru plagued by illegal logging and cocaine trafficking, relatives of the slain men said Wednesday. The eight were attempting to settle in a community called Centro Tsomanevi in the San Martin de Pangoa district and were killed last week, said Marco Velasquez, the father of one of the dead men.

**AP -** [**http://www.seattlepi.com/news/crime/article/Relatives-say-8-settlers-slain-by-Peruvian-Indians-4671069.php**](http://www.seattlepi.com/news/crime/article/Relatives-say-8-settlers-slain-by-Peruvian-Indians-4671069.php)

WCAR

**Across WCAR**

**Refugees from neighbouring countries flooding into Cameroon**

Cameroon said it is home to over 20,000 Nigerian and Central African Republic (CAR) refugees who are fleeing disorder and killings in their countries. Fears have been raised that some of the refugees, especially from the CAR, may be coming in with weapons used during the conflict that ousted that country's former president, Francois Bozize.  
**VOA -** [**http://reliefweb.int/report/cameroon/refugees-war-neighboring-countries-flooding-cameroon**](http://reliefweb.int/report/cameroon/refugees-war-neighboring-countries-flooding-cameroon)

**Chad**

**More than 1,000 sue ex-Chad dictator for war crimes**

More than 1,000 alleged victims of former dictator Hissene Habre are suing him in Senegal, where he is being tried for genocide during his eight-year rule of Chad, their lawyers said on Wednesday. Habre, 70, faces accusations of war crimes, crimes against humanity and torture during his brutal rule between 1982 and 1990, when some 40,000 people were killed, according to rights groups. Arrested in early July after more than two decades in exile in Senegal, the former dictator was placed in pre-trial detention in Dakar where he is to stand trial after years of delays by the

**AFP** - [**http://www.foxnews.com/world/2013/07/17/more-than-1000-sue-ex-chad-dictator-for-war-crimes/**](http://www.foxnews.com/world/2013/07/17/more-than-1000-sue-ex-chad-dictator-for-war-crimes/)

**Chad returnees strain aid resources**

Thousands of Chadians, most of them children, have returned home, fleeing insecurity in parts of neighbouring Central Africa Republic (CAR), Darfur, Libya and Nigeria. The returnees, most of whom are seeking shelter in their country's remote border regions, are in need of emergency assistance in the form of protection and basic services, according to a senior humanitarian official. "They lack all protection and basic needs, including food, shelter, medical [care] and education."

**IRIN -** [**http://allafrica.com/stories/201307171680.html**](http://allafrica.com/stories/201307171680.html)

**DR Congo**

**UN reviewing Congo army support over M23 abuse allegations**

The United Nations is reviewing support to Democratic Republic of Congo army units accused of desecrating the corpses of rebels and mistreating detainees, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said on Wednesday during renewed fighting in the country's east. UN peacekeepers had raised the reported abuse of M23 rebels with the Congolese army and welcomed steps by the army "to investigate these claims and to hold the perpetrators of these acts accountable," Ban's press office said in a statement. .

**Reuters -** [**http://www.chicagotribune.com/sns-rt-congo-democraticun-20130717,0,3853941.story**](http://www.chicagotribune.com/sns-rt-congo-democraticun-20130717,0,3853941.story)

**Guinea**

**Troops deployed as 54 are killed in ethnic clashes**

Government sent troops to towns in the southeast on Wednesday in a bid to stem three days of ethnic violence in which at least 54 people have been killed, the government said. Guinea's second city of Nzerekore and the surrounding region near the border with Ivory Coast have been gripped by clashes between rival communities after a man accused of being a thief was lynched on Sunday. After several days of clashes between ethnic gangs, residents said security forces arrived in Nzerekore and the nearby towns of Beyla and Koule, where the initial killing took place.

**Reuters -** [**http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/07/17/uk-guinea-violence-idUKBRE96G1AU20130717**](http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/07/17/uk-guinea-violence-idUKBRE96G1AU20130717)

**Guinea-Bissau**

**Hunger warning as cashew price dips**

A slump in cashew nut prices in Guinea-Bissau has left nearly half of the population eking out food, with families skipping meals or selling livestock to survive until the next harvest in September, aid groups say. The average price per kg of cashews is 112 CFA francs (two US cents) - the lowest yet - down from an average of 300 CFA in 2012. The 63 percent drop is due to plummeting international prices, reduced demand from Guinea-Bissau's main cashew importer (India), the April 2012 coup, disagreements between the government and traders on benchmark price as well as banks' decision to reduce loans to traders.

**IRIN -** [**http://www.irinnews.org/report/98434/hunger-warning-for-guinea-bissau-as-cashew-price-dips**](http://www.irinnews.org/report/98434/hunger-warning-for-guinea-bissau-as-cashew-price-dips)

**Mali**

**Peace accord architect quits election race**

The chief negotiator in a ceasefire deal with rebels paving the way for presidential elections across Mali said on Tuesday he had withdrawn from the race less than two weeks before the watershed vote. Tiebile Drame, architect of the Ouagadougou Accord enabling Malian troops to secure polls in the Tuareg-held northeastern city of Kidal, said the deeply-divided country was not ready to run a credible election. "I decided to withdraw my candidature for the 28 July election because the conditions for a fair vote are not in place," Drame told reporters in Bamako

**AFP** - [**http://www.foxnews.com/world/2013/07/17/mali-peace-accord-architect-quits-election-race/**](http://www.foxnews.com/world/2013/07/17/mali-peace-accord-architect-quits-election-race/)

**Nigeria**

**Authorities restore phone service to violence-hit state**

Mobile phone services returned in Nigeria's northeastern Yobe state on Wednesday, residents said, ending two months of signal blackout after a state of emergency was declared in areas struck by Islamist insurgents. President Goodluck Jonathan declared a state of emergency in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states on 14 May, ordering extra troops in to try to crush Islamist sect Boko Haram, whose insurgency has killed thousands of people in the past three years. Authorities cut the mobile network to the three states in the same week to disrupt Boko Haram's operations.

**AFP** - [**http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/07/17/nigeria-violence-idUKL6N0FN3UT20130717**](http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/07/17/nigeria-violence-idUKL6N0FN3UT20130717)

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