**UNICEF OPSCEN Brief - Thursday, 17 October 2013**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| GENERAL | **Across Regions** | Girls fare worse in disasters - UNICEF mention |
|  |  | Thirty million people are slaves, half in India - survey |
|  |  | Call for better food systems to fight hunger and malnutrition |
|  |  | Poor suffer digital deficit in disasters - IFRC |
|  |  | World won't end poverty without tackling disasters - report |
|  |  | Turkey revealed Israeli spy ring to Iran-report |
|  |  | Millions to take part in global earthquake drill |
| CEE/CIS | **Belarus** | EU helping prop up president Lukashenko, says opposition |
|  | **Bosnia** | Police arrest 8 war crimes suspects |
|  | **Serbia** | Postman goes the extra mile |
| EAPR | **China** | Flood victims protest in east, attack media and police vehicles |
|  |  | Authorities hold two bloggers as it expands crackdown on rumours |
|  | **Lao PDR** | Bad weather being blamed for Laos Airlines crash which killed 49 |
|  | **Myanmar** | Bomb blasts in east kill 1 |
|  | **Philippines** | Thunderstorms to impact aid and rescue following earthquake |
|  |  | Authorities clear roads, counts cost, as quake deaths reach 158 |
| ESAR | **South Sudan** | 800 displaced by floods in Twic East County |
| LAC | **Colombia** | One person dead as rebels attack bus |
|  | **Mexico** | Floods devastate an already bankrupt and blood-soaked Acapulco |
| MENA | **Across MENA** | Al Qaeda's rise in northern Syria leaves Turkey with dilemma |
|  |  | Israeli army taking steps to change Palestinian child arrest policy- UNICEF mention |
|  | **Iraq** | Suicide bomber kills 15 in north |
|  | **Syria** | Official says Geneva peace conference planned 23-24 Nov |
|  |  | Chemical weapons watchdog says confident on deadlines |
|  |  | Canadian UN worker released - state TV |
| ROSA | **India** | Floods follow storm havoc in east |
|  |  | 15 killed, power supply snapped in Bihar |
|  |  | Three policemen killed in Maoist attack |
|  | **Pakistan** | Provincial minister among several killed in blast |
| WCAR | **CAR** | France to boost troops as crisis deepens |
|  | **Cote d'Ivoire** | Country sees sharp rise in banditry |
|  | **DR Congo** | Rebels suspend direct talks with government after attack |
|  | **Mali** | UN peace force 'needs troops and equipment' |
|  |  | For many, especially those uprooted by conflict, life Is fragile |
|  |  | Despite recent progress, urgent challenges remain to restore stability |
|  | **Mauritania** | Country tops Global Slavery Index |
|  | **Niger** | 2,500 children die of malnutrition in 2013: UNICEF |
|  | **Nigeria** | Boko Haram attack fears, 3,000 residents flee one state to another |

GENERAL

**Across Regions**

**Girls fare worse in disasters - UNICEF mention**

During disasters, girls fare worse than the rest of the population, according to a new report released in October by child rights NGO Plan International. The report entitled *The State of the World’s Girls 2013: In Double Jeopardy: Adolescent Girls and Disasters* argues that a combination of political, economic, social and cultural attitudes can lead to discrimination of girls during disasters. “Gender-based violence in and around school is a major issue that needs to be addressed and teachers are often exploiting rather than protecting girls, according to various studies,” said Elke Wisch, deputy regional director for UNICEFEastern and South Africa.

**IRIN -** [**http://www.irinnews.org/report/98949/girls-fare-worse-in-disasters**](http://www.irinnews.org/report/98949/girls-fare-worse-in-disasters)

**Thirty million people are slaves, half in India – survey**

Some 30 million people are enslaved worldwide, trafficked into brothels, forced into manual labour, victims of debt bondage or even born into servitude, a global index on modern slavery showed on Thursday. Almost half are in India, where slavery ranges from bonded labour in quarries and kilns to commercial sex exploitation, although the scourge exists in all 162 countries surveyed by Walk Free Foundation, an Australian-based rights group. Its estimate of 29.8 million slaves worldwide is higher than other attempts to quantify modern slavery. ILO estimates that almost 21 million people are victims of forced labour. "Today some people are still being born into hereditary slavery, a staggering but harsh reality, particularly in parts of West Africa and South Asia," the report said.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20131016225318-vctba/?source=hptop**](http://www.trust.org/item/20131016225318-vctba/?source=hptop)

**Call for better food systems to fight hunger and malnutrition**

Better food systems are required in order defeat hunger and malnutrition around the globe was the key message coming from the observance of World Food Day at FAO headquarters. World Food Day, commemorated in 150 countries, is also the anniversary of FAO's founding in 1945. This year's observance takes place under the shadow of new hunger figures that show a total of 842 million people are chronically undernourished. We cannot improve nutrition without food security and we cannot achieve food security if we don't have the right food systems," FAO Director-General Jose Graziano da Silva said. He said that although food systems produce enough food for everyone, over half of the world's population is affected by either over- or under-consumption.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20131016130741-8t852/?source=hptop**](http://www.trust.org/item/20131016130741-8t852/?source=hptop)

**Poor suffer digital deficit in disasters - IFRC**

Information and communication technologies can save lives in emergencies and help communities prepare better for disasters, but many of the most vulnerable people are still unable to benefit from them, the Red Cross said on Thursday. In its annual World Disasters Report, IFRC charts the revolutionary impact of technology on humanitarian aid, but also explores the barriers to its adoption. From text message warnings about coming storms and mobile apps telling survivors where to find relief, to online services that map needs in crises and digital collection of data on health or displaced families, the global expansion of mobile telephones and the internet has enabled two-way communication between people hit by disasters and the aid workers who help them.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20131017033543-8pi6y/?source=hpbreaking**](http://www.trust.org/item/20131017033543-8pi6y/?source=hpbreaking)

**IFRC Report -** [**http://worlddisastersreport.org/en/**](http://worlddisastersreport.org/en/)

**World won't end poverty without tackling disasters - report**

Governments must step up efforts to protect the poor from natural disasters if they are to have any real chance of ending extreme poverty, a report said on Wednesday. New research from the London-based Overseas Development Institute (ODI) found that, in 2030, up to 325 million extremely poor people will be living in the 49 countries most exposed to climate extremes and natural hazards - including floods, droughts, storms and earthquakes. Most of them will be in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. A high-level panel appointed by the UN SG proposed earlier this year that the next set of global development goals - which are due to run from 2016 to 2030 and are now under discussion - should aim to eradicate extreme poverty. "Disasters pose a really critical threat to this goal of ending extreme poverty, and it would only take a handful of disasters in some of these countries of concern to blow that target out of the water, almost before it has even started," Tom Mitchell, head of climate change for ODI and one of the report's authors said.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20131016082602-8rl4e/?source=hpagehead**](http://www.trust.org/item/20131016082602-8rl4e/?source=hpagehead)

**Turkey revealed Israeli spy ring to Iran-report**

Turkey deliberately blew the cover of an Israeli spy ring working inside Iran in early 2012 and dealt a significant blow to Israeli intelligence gathering, according to a report in the Washington Post on Thursday.

There was no immediate comment from Israel or Turkey, but Israeli ministers have accused Turkish PM Recep Tayyip Erdogan of adopting an anti-Israeli stance in recent years to bolster his country's standing in the Muslim world. Once-strong relations between Turkey and Israel hit the rocks in 2010 after Israeli commandos killed nine Turkish activists who were seeking to break Israel's long-standing naval blockade of the Gaza Strip. Washington Post columnist David Ignatius said Israel apparently used to run part of its Iranian spy network out of Turkey, giving Turkish secret services the opportunity to monitor their movements. The paper quoted US officials as saying Israel believed that the Turks would never turn on the Jewish state after years of cooperation. However, it said that in early 2012 Erdogan disclosed to Tehran the identities of 10 Iranians who had travelled to Turkey to meet Israeli spies.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20131017092721-2b4w2/?source=hpbreaking**](http://www.trust.org/item/20131017092721-2b4w2/?source=hpbreaking)

**Millions to take part in global earthquake drill**

Hoping to survive an earthquake, many Californians and people in earthquake prone regions around the world were gearing up for a major earthquake drill. More than 24 million people, including 9 ½ million in California, have signed up to duck under their desks at 10:17 a.m. local time Thursday, cover their heads and hold on to something sturdy. The exercise allows first responders to dust off their emergency response plans and transportation departments to practice slowing down trains in the event of real shaking. The Great ShakeOut was first held in California in 2008 and participation has since spread around the globe. This year, Japan, Canada, Italy and Guam planned to join the US in the drill.

**AP -** [**http://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/millions-part-global-earthquake-drill-20594119**](http://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/millions-part-global-earthquake-drill-20594119)

CEE/CIS

**Belarus**

**EU helping prop up president Lukashenko, says opposition**

The EU is playing a key role in propping up the rule of [Alexander Lukashenko](http://www.theguardian.com/world/alexander-lukashenko), widely seen as "[Europe](http://www.theguardian.com/world/europe-news)'s last dictator", according to one of the country's leading opposition figures who spent a year in jail after challenging the leader for the presidency. A policy paper has been delivered to all 28 EU foreign ministries this week, along with a letter calling on ministers to back a broadening of sanctions against Belarusian individuals and companies. It is signed by a number of NGOs and activists, including Andrei Sannikov, who stood for the presidency in 2010, in elections widely seen as rigged.

**The Guardian -** [**http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/17/eu-sanctions-belarus-lukashenko-opposition**](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/17/eu-sanctions-belarus-lukashenko-opposition)

**Bosnia**

**Police arrest 8 war crimes suspects**

Police in Bosnia have detained eight Serb men suspected of taking part in looting, expulsions and killing of civilians during the country's 1992-95 war. The prosecutor's office in Bosnia said Thursday the men were arrested in the eastern town of Rogatica where the alleged crimes were committed in September 1992. One of the arrested men is suspected of gunning down 20 Muslim civilians, including women and children, in a barn where they had been hiding from the Serb soldiers.

**AP -** [**http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/bosnian-police-arrest-war-crimes-suspects-20594788**](http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/bosnian-police-arrest-war-crimes-suspects-20594788)

**Serbia**

**Postman goes the extra mile**

When Filip Filipovic was named postman for a cluster of isolated villages deep in the mountains of southern Serbia, he soon knew his job would not stop at delivering the mail. "When I saw children having to walk to school 10, 15 km every day, who live without water and electricity, often in a single room with their parents, I decided to do something to help," he reported. Kursumlijska Banja is some 300 km south of Belgrade. Filipovic started by renovating the post office, in a shabby building which also hosts the local primary school, using his own money to repaint the premises. At the same time, chipping away at his salary of barely $400 per month, he was bringing chocolates and sweets to children in remote villages, for whom such luxury was unheard of. Around midday he knocked at the door of the Dragicevic family in a remote house on a meadow, surrounded by dense forest. That day, he picked up their boys Milomir, 7, and Radomir, 9, and drove them on to school so they would not have to walk the eight-kilometre journey.

**AFP -** [**http://www.sknvibes.com/news/newsdetails.cfm/80233**](http://www.sknvibes.com/news/newsdetails.cfm/80233)

EAPR

**China**

**Flood victims protest in east, attack media and police vehicles**

Hundreds of flood victims protested, clashed with police and trashed vehicles in eastern China on Friday, furious about what they called biased media reporting on their suffering. A crowd that swelled to almost one thousand people attacked a satellite truck belonging to Ningbo TV, which protesters claimed had not reported the severity of the worst flooding the area has seen in a century. Dozens of police, including riot police, were sent to Yuyao City to control the mob, which then turned on them, trashing and overturning their vans, a witness reported. Some 800,000 residents were affected, but local authorities have issued no casualty figures.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20131017084748-xnv7z/?source=hpeditorial**](http://www.trust.org/item/20131017084748-xnv7z/?source=hpeditorial)

**Authorities hold two bloggers as it expands crackdown on rumours**

Police in China have arrested an influential blogger and are holding a cartoonist in a widening crackdown on online "rumour-mongering", friends and a lawyer for one of them said on Thursday. Hundreds of people have been detained since August, say Chinese media and rights groups, as the government has stepped up its campaign to banish rumours. Most have been released, but some are still being held on criminal charges. The latest moves targeting the bloggers appear to suggest the new government, led by President Xi Jinping, is expanding its crackdown on dissent, although some critics have warned the move could backfire on Communist Party leaders.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20131017102826-e4o21/?source=hpbreaking**](http://www.trust.org/item/20131017102826-e4o21/?source=hpbreaking)

**Lao PDR**

**Bad weather being blamed for Laos Airlines crash which killed 49**

Bad weather is being blamed for the crash of a Laos Airlines plane which plunged into the Mekong river in southern Laos killing all 49 people on board, among them nationals of 10 countries. The ATR-72 turboprop plane flying from the capital Vientiane crashed at about 4.10 p.m. (0910 GMT) on Wednesday just 8km short of its destination Pakse, which is near the borders of both Thailand and Cambodia. A Laos Airlines official, who did not wish to be named, told Reuters that 44 passengers and five crew members were on Flight QV301 from the capital, Vientiane, to Pakse in the country's south when it ran into bad weather.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20131017034305-q2xqw/?source=hpbreaking**](http://www.trust.org/item/20131017034305-q2xqw/?source=hpbreaking)

**Myanmar**

**Bomb blasts in east kill 1**

Police say two small bombs have exploded in eastern Myanmar, killing one person and wounding several others. They are the latest in a series of unexplained explosions to hit the country. The latest bombs went off in Namkham, the northern part of Shan state late Wednesday and early Thursday. A police officer said the investigation is still ongoing. He said: "It looks like they may have been time bombs, we are not sure." Myanmar has been rocked by 10 small bombs in the last week that have killed three people.

**AP -** [**http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/police-bomb-blasts-eastern-myanmar-kill-20594290**](http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/police-bomb-blasts-eastern-myanmar-kill-20594290)

**Philippines**

**Thunderstorms to impact aid and rescue following earthquake**

Scattered showers and thunderstorms impacted some rescue efforts on Tuesday and Wednesday and the threat for showers and thunderstorms will continue across the region for the next several days. Although no widespread heavy rainfall is expected, localized downpours can lead to episodes of flash flooding. The latest report from the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council of the Philippines indicated that in addition to the fatalities, more than 275 others have been injured.

**Accuweather-** [**http://www.accuweather.com/en/weather-news/death-toll-continues-to-climb/18873020**](http://www.accuweather.com/en/weather-news/death-toll-continues-to-climb/18873020)

**Authorities clear roads, counts cost, as quake deaths reach 158**

The Philippines started to clear roads blocked by debris on Thursday as it reckoned up the cost of this week's powerful earthquake, with the death toll rising to at least 158. Tens of thousands of residents of Bohol island, which took the brunt of Tuesday's 7.2 magnitude quake, remained living outdoors, for fear of aftershocks bringing down damaged homes. Authorities have recorded more than 1,200 aftershocks including one of magnitude 5.5. Nearly 17,000 people have yet to return home in the town of Loboc, where the island's second oldest church, the Church of St Peter, was pulverised in the quake.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20131017063644-zv3ak/?source=hpbreaking**](http://www.trust.org/item/20131017063644-zv3ak/?source=hpbreaking)

ESAR

**South Sudan**

**800 displaced by floods in Twic East County**

Authorities in Twic East County, Jonglei State said at least 800 households have been displaced by floods. County Commissioner, Dau Akoi Jurkuch said Kongor Payam is the most affected area where buildings including the Payam’s headquarters were destroyed. Commissioner Akio said the displaced people are now looking for high ground to settle. “The water has entered all the houses so everyone was moved away by the water and the situation is really bad,” he said. “Latrines and offices have collapsed and we are now appealing to state and national authorities to urgently interve.” Days of heavy rains have caused the River Nile to burst its banks, forcing water into residential areas. Last week authorities reported that floods forced people from their homes at Panyagor in Twic East county of Jonglei State.

**Radio Mairaya -**

[**http://www.radiomiraya.org/news-202/south-sudan/12255-800-displaced-by-floods-in-twic-county.html#gsc.tab=0**](http://www.radiomiraya.org/news-202/south-sudan/12255-800-displaced-by-floods-in-twic-county.html#gsc.tab=0)

LAC

**Colombia**

**One person dead as rebels attack bus**

Guerrillas of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) opened fire on a bus in Colombia, killing one person and wounding six others after its driver ignored orders to stop, police reported. The attack occurred near the town of Valdivia in the department of Antioquia where FARC guerrillas had blocked a road with a parked truck, police said. Police said the rebels flagged down the bus, but the driver tried to drive on, triggering the attack. The bus was on a route between the town of San Carlos and Medellin, 420 kilometers northwest of Bogota.

**AFP** - [**http://colombiareports.co/rebels-fire-upon-bus-killing-one-wounding-five/**](http://colombiareports.co/rebels-fire-upon-bus-killing-one-wounding-five/)

**Mexico**

**Floods devastate an already bankrupt and blood-soaked Acapulco**

Gangland violence and looming bankruptcy had already all but obliterated the glitter of Acapulco before catastrophic flooding last month drove crocodiles onto the streets of the Mexican beach resort and turned much of it into a mud bath. Once a playground for the rich and famous, by 2012 Acapulco had become the murder capital of Mexico, mired in a cycle of brutal slayings, kidnappings and extortion as drug gangs fought for control of the former pirate cove. Acapulco was still battling to contain the violence when in September it was hit hard by the worst storm damage ever in Mexico. The rains swamped the city's airport, stranding thousands of tourists who are crucual to the health of the local economy.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20131017045009-wfoxk/?source=hpbreaking**](http://www.trust.org/item/20131017045009-wfoxk/?source=hpbreaking)

MENA

**Across MENA**

**Al Qaeda's rise in northern Syria leaves Turkey with dilemma**

The rise of al Qaeda in parts of Syria's north has left Turkey facing a new security threat on its already vulnerable border and raised questions about its wholesale support for rebels battling President Bashar al-Assad. Turkey has long championed more robust backing for Syria's fractious armed opposition, arguing it would bring a quicker end to Assad's rule and give moderate forces the authority they needed to keep more radical Islamist elements in check. But with Islamist groups such as Jabhat al-Nusra and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) taking territory in parts of the north near the border in recent weeks, it is a strategy that increasingly looks to have been a miscalculation. Ankara has found itself facing accusations that indiscriminate support for the rebels has allowed weapons and foreign fighters to cross into northern Syria and facilitated the rise of radical groups.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20131017052241-kfecm/?source=hpbreaking**](http://www.trust.org/item/20131017052241-kfecm/?source=hpbreaking)

**Israeli army taking steps to change Palestinian child arrest policy- UNICEF mention**

The Israel Defense Forces is introducing changes to its policies regarding the arrest and interrogation of Palestinian minors in the West Bank, UNICEF said in a statement issued Monday. The agency called the statement a first progress report after the March 2013 publication of a briefing paper, “Children in Israeli military detention,” that has led to ongoing cooperation on the matter between UNICEF and Israel’s Military Advocate General, among other Israeli and Palestinian government agencies and organizations. According to the latest statement, in September the IDF Central Command agreed to pilot-test a new approach in two unspecified regions of the West Bank. Instead of arresting children wanted for questioning at their homes at night, any such arrests will take place during daylight hours.

**Haaretz -** [**http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/1.552831**](http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/1.552831)

**Iraq**

**Suicide bomber kills 15 in north**

A suicide bomber detonated an explosives-rigged vehicle in a village in northern Iraq on Thursday, killing 15 people, police and a doctor said. The blast hit a residential area of Al-Muwaffaqiyah, a village east of Mosul that is mainly populated by members of the small Shabak minority. The 30,000-strong Shabak community mostly lives near Iraq's border with Turkey. With the latest attack, more than 330 people have been killed so far this month, and over 5,000 since the beginning of the year, according to AFP figures based on security and medical sources.

**AFP -** [**http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5iWpLM\_SXbcACn4hUHY94L-upvWsg?docId=e9277f23-1e52-4996-8df6-0c18b39a3aa7&hl=en**](http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5iWpLM_SXbcACn4hUHY94L-upvWsg?docId=e9277f23-1e52-4996-8df6-0c18b39a3aa7&hl=en)

**Syria**

**Official says Geneva peace conference planned 23-24 Nov**

Syrian Deputy PM Qadri Jamil said on Thursday that a long-delayed international conference aimed to bring the Syrian government and opposition together to seek an end to the country's civil war is scheduled to be held 23-24 November. Jamil named the dates when he was asked at a news conference in Moscow whether plans for the "Geneva 2" conference, which Russia and the US have been trying to organise since May, had been pushed back from mid-November to late November or December.

**Reuters -** [**http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/10/17/syuria-crisis-conference-idUKL6N0I717220131017**](http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/10/17/syuria-crisis-conference-idUKL6N0I717220131017)

**Chemical weapons watchdog says confident on deadlines**

The world's chemical weapons watchdog is confident it will be able to meet deadlines to destroy Syria's toxic stockpile even though some sites are in disputed or rebel-held territory, a special adviser to the organisation's director general said. Inspectors from the Hague-based Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), have visited nearly half of more than 20 sites declared by Damascus, Malik Ellahi, special adviser to Director General Ahmet Uzumcu, said on Thursday. "We are on track. The team is confident, the morale is high and cooperation from the Syrian authorities has been forthcoming," he said. Under a Russian-American brokered deal, Syria has until 1 November to destroy or render unusable all chemical agent production and weapon filling facilities.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20131017095023-o1gal/?source=hptop**](http://www.trust.org/item/20131017095023-o1gal/?source=hptop)

**Canadian UN worker released - state TV**

A Canadian national working for the UN peacekeeping mission in the Golan Heights has been released, Syrian state television reported on Thursday, eight months after he was reported to have been captured by rebel fighters. The television channel said the Foreign Ministry handed him over to a UN representative in Syria.

**Reuters –** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20131017102555-63b3h/?source=hpbreaking**](http://www.trust.org/item/20131017102555-63b3h/?source=hpbreaking)

ROSA

**India**

**Floods follow storm havoc in east**

Millions of people across eastern India are bracing themselves for more flooding as Cyclone Phailin's effects continue to be felt along the coast. Emergency services are struggling to deliver aid as rising water levels sweep away roads. Phailin menaced India for days, and while the states where the fierce storm made landfall were well prepared for its fury, the surrounding areas have been caught by surprise. Across eastern Indian, 12 million people have been affected by heavy rain and flooding.

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/video/asia/2013/10/millions-affected-east-india-cyclone-flood-2013101711921784916.html**](http://www.aljazeera.com/video/asia/2013/10/millions-affected-east-india-cyclone-flood-2013101711921784916.html)

**15 killed, power supply snapped in Bihar**

Altogether 15 persons died and many districts in the state plunged into darkness as power supply was snapped due to strong wind and heavy rain caused in the state by cyclone 'Phailin' during the past three days. While four deaths were reported from Vaishali, the districts of Bhagalpur, Darbhanga, Madhubani and Buxar claimed two deaths each. Three persons, including two children, died in Samastipur district in the last 48 hours.

**Times of India -** [**http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-10-16/patna/43105863\_1\_power-supply-purnia-and-kosi-divisions-purnia-district**](http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-10-16/patna/43105863_1_power-supply-purnia-and-kosi-divisions-purnia-district)

**Three policemen killed in Maoist attack**

At least three policemen were killed in an ambush by suspected Maoist rebels in India's western state of Maharashtra on Thursday, police said. The attack targeting a police patrol took place in forests in the Gadhchiroli district. "The insurgents opened indiscriminate fire and later triggered a landmine, killing three police commandos," police official Dharamdas Bhusari said from the Gadhchiroli police control room. There were reports that four more policemen were injured in the attack but this was yet to be confirmed, Bhusari said. Gadchiroli is a Maoist stronghold and has witnessed several rebel attacks on police and officials in recent years.

**VoA/DPA -** [**http://voiceofrussia.com/news/2013\_10\_17/Three-policemen-killed-in-Maoist-attack-in-India-7307/**](http://voiceofrussia.com/news/2013_10_17/Three-policemen-killed-in-Maoist-attack-in-India-7307/)

**Pakistan**

**Provincial minister among several killed in blast**

Authorities in northwestern Pakistan say that a suicide bomber has killed a provincial minister and at least seven others as the nation marked the festival of Eid al-Adha. The deadly bombing occurred in the town of Kulachi in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Local authorities say that the regional law minister, Israrullah Khan Gandapur, was apparently the target. A spokesperson for the provincial administration says that the slain minister was holding a meeting in connection with the Eid celebrations when the suicide bomber struck.

**VoA -** [**http://www.voanews.com/content/pakistani-media-provincial-minister-killed-in-suicide-attack/1770743.html**](http://www.voanews.com/content/pakistani-media-provincial-minister-killed-in-suicide-attack/1770743.html)

WCAR

**CAR**

**France to boost troops as crisis deepens**

France will boost its military presence in CAR by the end of the year to stop the country from [spiralling out of control](http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2013/aug/15/central-african-republic-failed-state-un), the French FM has said. "President Hollande we want your help!" read one banner as locals in Bangui, the capital, welcomed Laurent Fabius at the weekend. The promise of increased French intervention comes two months after the [WFP bolstered its operations in the country](http://www.wfp.org/news/news-release/insecurity-increasing-hunger-central-african-republic-car). The UN agency says ongoing insecurity has fuelled [hunger](http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/hunger) among the population, many of whom have fled their homes and land. Most of the displaced are farmers, who may not return in time for the planting seasons.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2013/oct/16/france-boost-troops-central-african-republic**](http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2013/oct/16/france-boost-troops-central-african-republic)

**Cote d'Ivoire**

**Country sees sharp rise in banditry**

In the three months since June, Côte d’Ivoire has seen twice as many armed highway attacks as in the whole of 2012. Observers say that a slow pace of security sector reforms is prompting ex-fighters to take to banditry. Twenty-two people were killed in at least 18 attacks between June and early September, according to the Ministry of Defence statistics. More than half of the victims were soldiers, gendarmes or police. Initially, the bandits, commonly known in Côte d’Ivoire as ‘coupeurs de route’, laid logs on the highway to halt vehicles before attacking occupants, but witnesses say they are increasingly using AK-47 rifles, grenades and rocket launchers.

**IRIN -** [**http://www.irinnews.org/report/98944/c%C3%B4te-d-ivoire-sees-sharp-rise-in-banditry**](http://www.irinnews.org/report/98944/c%C3%B4te-d-ivoire-sees-sharp-rise-in-banditry)

**DR Congo**

**Rebels suspend direct talks with government after attack**

The Congolese rebel group, M23 which has been involved in peace talks in Kampala suspended direct talks with the government in Kinshasa after an attack on their positions. The attack left one soldier dead and two others injured, the chief rebel negotiator said. "We condemn this attack which happened despite the talks that were going on. It shows that the government is not interested in the talks," said rebel negotiator Rene Abandi. "They used land forces during the attack on our positions south of Goma. We are stopping direct contact with the government in the talks unless they withdraw the forces within 48 hours from the position they are occupying," the rebel official told a news briefing. In the latest incident the rebels claim that government forces made an offensive and overran the rebel positions in the village of Kamahoro, 20km from Goma.

**Xinhua -**

[**http://www.africareview.com/News/DR-Congo-rebel-group-suspends-talks-over-attack/-/979180/2035134/-/665x0x/-/index.html**](http://www.africareview.com/News/DR-Congo-rebel-group-suspends-talks-over-attack/-/979180/2035134/-/665x0x/-/index.html)

**Mali**

**UN peace force 'needs troops and equipment'**

The UN has appealed for more troops and equipment for its peacekeeping force in Mali. The UN force, which took over security duties in July, has less than half of its mandated strength of more than 12,000 military personnel. Bert Koenders, the UN's special representative to Mali, said recent attacks had been a "wake-up call." He said the force, known as MINUSMA, needed more resources in order to stabilise the north of the country.

**BBC -** [**http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-24560559**](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-24560559)

**For many, especially those uprooted by conflict, life Is fragile**

As conflicts go, it was relatively short. An ethnic rebellion that began in northern Mali in January 2012 spread like wildfire when armed militant groups linked to Al Qaeda usurped control. A military coup in March 2012 further weakened the government’s ability to respond. Timbuktu and Gao were overrun by rebels, and their citizens suffered such acts of terror and atrocities that many still cannot speak about them. Others cannot sleep without being awakened by horrific dreams of those days. The IDP situation is causing severe societal problems. There are strains on the host families, which are supporting as many as 20 IDPs each. One factor pulling people to return to the north is the reopening of schools there. But because of the conflict, more than half of the schools in Gao and Timbuktu were damaged or destroyed. Last Friday, an overcrowded boat carrying as many as 400 people capsized at night on the Niger River, as it made its way north between Mopti and Timbuktu. Many of the passengers were children, returning for the opening of the school year. Scores are still not accounted for. It is reasonable to assume that some of those on the boat were IDP families that had finally decided to return home.

**RI -** [**http://www.refintl.org/blog/many-malians-especially-those-uprooted-conflict-life-fragile**](http://www.refintl.org/blog/many-malians-especially-those-uprooted-conflict-life-fragile)

**Despite recent progress, urgent challenges remain to restore stability**

Important steps have been taken recently to help restore constitutional order and stability in Mali, including successful presidential elections, the top UN envoy there said, while noting some key remaining tasks such as addressing security and humanitarian challenges. “The new authorities are confronted with numerous challenges that need to be addressed urgently to enable Malian men, women and children to live in security and to benefit from peace dividends,” Bert Koenders told the UNSC as he briefed the body on the latest developments. He said he was “shocked” by the malnutrition levels in the country, and noted that the $477 million humanitarian appeal is only 37% funded, at $177 million. He added that while the UN is striving to support the Malian Government and people, it is faced with a number of severe challenges. “The Mission lacks critical enablers – such as helicopters – to facilitate rapid deployment and access to remote areas to ensure the protection of civilians.

**UN News Centre -** [**http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=46271&Cr=+mali+&Cr1**](http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=46271&Cr=+mali+&Cr1)**=**

**Mauritania**

**Country tops Global Slavery Index**

Mauritania placed first in a new slavery index ranking 160 countries according to the prevalence of modern day slavery, child marriage and trafficking. About 150,000 people are enslaved in Mauritania, which has a population of about 3.8 million - meaning the country has twice as many slaves per capita as the next placed country, Haiti, the Global Slavery Index revealed. Other countries have larger absolute numbers of slaves, such as India with some 13 million slaves in its 1.2 billion population. Other sources put the prevalence of slavery in Mauritania as high as 20%. Despite laws in Mauritania outlawing trafficking in 2003 and slavery in 2007 - making them punishable by a prison term of up to 10 years or a fine - few have been convicted or punished for these crimes.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20131017071619-jnq1y/?source=hpbreaking**](http://www.trust.org/item/20131017071619-jnq1y/?source=hpbreaking)

**Global Slavery Index -** [**http://www.globalslaveryindex.org/**](http://www.globalslaveryindex.org/)

**Niger**

**2,500 children die of malnutrition in 2013: UNICEF**

More than 2,500 children under five have died of malnutrition in Niger this year, the UNICEF said Wednesday. The child mortality rate has declined over recent years but still stands at one percent and UNICEFsaid the impoverished country was one of the world most aid-reliant. "Without international aid in Niger, we would see children dying by their tens of thousands" each year, Guido Cornale, the UNICEF representative in Niger, told AFP by phone. Niger, which has been hit by several famines in recent years and ranked last on the UN's Human Development Index in 2012, has received close to $900 million since 2010 to combat food crises. "It is undeniable that the government is trying to combat malnutrition… But the level of… dependence is alarming," an expert said on condition of anonymity. The food problem in Niger is compounded by its location between the desert and several strife-torn countries, and the world's highest fertility rate which means its population doubles every 18 years.

**AFP-**

[**http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5hMr7VTRpzoucMTT2qz0SCXzV-pOg?docId=79cdb131-c4ad-483e-bb9e-87115ee61f80&hl=en**](http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5hMr7VTRpzoucMTT2qz0SCXzV-pOg?docId=79cdb131-c4ad-483e-bb9e-87115ee61f80&hl=en)

**Nigeria**

**Boko Haram attack fears, 3,000 residents flee one state to another**

Some 3,000 residents of Nigeria's northern Borno state, regarded as the spiritual base of the militant sect Boko Haram, have fled the state for Adamawa for fear of attacks by the sect. The local media quoted Adamawa State Commissioner of Border Integration as announcing the figures. He said the Borno residents, who are currently taking refuge at the Madagali local government area of Adamawa State, fled their communities in Borno in the last week, following intense attacks by the sect. He said Adamawa State government had constituted an ad hoc committee to

**Pana** - [**http://www.panapress.com/Boko-Haram-attack-fears--3,000-residents-flee-one-Nigerian-state-to-another--15-884382-32-lang2-index.html**](http://www.panapress.com/Boko-Haram-attack-fears--3,000-residents-flee-one-Nigerian-state-to-another--15-884382-32-lang2-index.html)

The Brief is produced by UNICEF's Emergency Operations Centre (OPSCEN) and is a daily compilation of the main humanitarian, political and security-related media stories from around the world. It aims to provide field offices and senior decision-makers with critical information related to humanitarian emergencies and staff security.

Disclaimer: The views presented here are those of the original authors and are not necessarily shared by UNICEF. Please note that these news stories should be used solely for official purposes. Our license agreement does not permit users to store, post or redistribute the contents beyond personal use. We kindly ask that UNICEF colleagues be responsible users of copyrighted material. For information on this service please contact: