**UNICEF OPSCEN Brief -** **Friday, 9 August 2013**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| GENERAL | **Across Regions** | Curbing deadly bovine disease faces hurdles in Sahel |
|  |  | World powers see enough substance in Iran talks to continue |
|  |  | Malaria vaccine shows early promise in clinical trials |
|  |  | Saudi king donates $100 million to UN counterterrorism centre |
| CEE/CIS | **Serbia** | Serbia rejects Kosovo deal, begs EU for more time |
|  | **Across EAPRO** | 30 Muslim Rohingya escape jail in Thailand's south |
| EAPRO | **DPR Korea** | Responding to the needs of flood-affected communities |
|  | **Philippines** | Philippines Says 23 Rebels Killed in a Month |
|  | **Vietnam** | UN rights office criticises Vietnam over death penalty |
| ESARO | **Burundi** | Two dead, 16 wounded in Burundi prison riots |
|  | **Namibia** | Drought threatens thousands - UNICEF mention |
|  | **Somalia** | Ethiopian military plane crashes in Mogadishu |
|  | **South Sudan** | 328 killed in South Sudan attack, official says |
|  | **Tanzania** | British women attacked with acid in Zanzibar |
| MENA | **Egypt** | Egypt army says 60 militants in Sinai killed |
|  |  | Egypt's Coptic Pope concerned over risks of attacks |
|  |  | Concern at 'child martyr' symbolism - **UNICEF mention** |
|  | **Iraq** | Iraq mired in deadlock as violence worsens |
|  |  | Attack on policemen's home kills 13 people in Iraq |
|  | **Libya** | Wave of political killings hits Libya |
|  | **Saudi Arabia** | Camels become prime suspects in deadly virus outbreak |
|  | **Syria** | UN chief and Russian minister discuss Syria |
|  |  | Government increases restrictions on medical aid - **UNICEF mention** |
|  | **Yemen** | US drones kill 12 people in 3 airstrikes |
| ROSA | **Across ROSA** | India faces pressure to scrap peace talks after Kashmir attack |
|  | **Afghanistan** | Graveyard picnic bomb kills 14 women and children in the east |
|  | **Pakistan** | Taliban attack kills up to 38 people at funeral |
| TACRO | **Across TACRO** | Ecuadorian officer killed in Colombia border clash |
| WCARO | **Benin** | President dissolves government |
|  | **CAR** | Central African Republic asks soldiers to return |
|  | **Guinea Bissau** | Ousted ex-premier eyes return for presidential polls |
|  | **Mali** | In the aftermath of conflict, children remain at risk - **UNICEF mention** |
|  | **Sierra Leone** | Working to prevent cholera outbreaks - **UNICEF mention** |

GENERAL

**Across Regions**

**Curbing deadly bovine disease faces hurdles in Sahel**

Long eradicated in developed countries, contagious bovine pleuropneumonia (CBPP) - a highly infectious respiratory disease - remains a huge threat to cattle production in the Sahel and West Africa, where cross-border migration by pastoralists is customary. The disease persists in many developing countries and is particularly prevalent in West Africa, where weak regional control policies, lack of resources and technical capacity by governments, as well as lack of interest by donors have made it difficult to wipe out, experts say. “CBPP is very inherent to the region because you have this constant transhumance movement of people and animals,” said Gideon Bruckner, who heads the technical and scientific department of the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE).

**IRIN -** [**http://www.irinnews.org/report/98538/curbing-deadly-bovine-disease-faces-hurdles-in-sahel**](http://www.irinnews.org/report/98538/curbing-deadly-bovine-disease-faces-hurdles-in-sahel)

**World powers see enough substance in Iran talks to continue**

World powers believe talks with Iran over its contentious nuclear programme have been substantial enough for diplomacy to continue, a senior Western diplomat said on Monday, days after a meeting in Kazakhstan failed to yield a breakthrough. "There is enough substance for these negotiations to continue," the diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity, told reporters. "I would not expect a breakdown." The six powers - the US, Russia, China, France, Britain and Germany - want Iran to scale back its nuclear programme because of concerns it aims to give the Islamic Republic the capability of making an atom bomb.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/alertnet/news/world-powers-see-enough-substance-in-iran-talks-to-continue/**](http://www.trust.org/alertnet/news/world-powers-see-enough-substance-in-iran-talks-to-continue/)

**US reports a breakthrough in malaria vaccine**

US researchers reported a breakthrough Thursday in the search for a vaccine for [malaria](http://www.cnn.com/HEALTH/library/malaria/DS00475.html?iref=allsearch), the mosquito-borne disease that sickens millions worldwide. More than three dozen volunteers received multiple, intravenous doses of a vaccine produced with a weakened form of the disease, scientists from the National Institutes of Health, the Navy, Army and other organizations reported Thursday. Though the results were promising, more extensive field testing will be required, the researchers wrote. Nevertheless, the it marks the first time any vaccine trial has shown 100% success in protecting subjects from the mosquito-borne tropical disease, which sickens more than 200 million a year and killed about 660,000 in 2010.

**CNN -** [**http://edition.cnn.com/2013/08/08/health/malaria-vaccine/index.html**](http://edition.cnn.com/2013/08/08/health/malaria-vaccine/index.html)

**Saudi king donates $100 million to UN counterterrorism centre**

Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah announced a $100 million gift for a U.N. counterterrorism center, declaring that religious extremism in the wake of the Arab Spring posed a greater danger to the Arab community at large "than the weapons of our visible enemies." The urgent tone of the king's warning, in a statement Wednesday night marking the Islamic holiday of Eid al-Fitr, emphasized the continuing concerns by the world's leading oil producer over security in the aftermath of revolutions that started in late 2010 elsewhere in the Middle East and North Africa.

**WSJ -** [**http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323838204579000742183139728.html**](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323838204579000742183139728.html)

CEE/CIS

**Serbia**

**Serbia rejects Kosovo deal, begs EU for more time**

Serbia on Monday rejected a European Union-brokered plan to tackle the ethnic partition of its former province Kosovo, a move that could hurt Belgrade's hopes of starting membership talks with the bloc. But the coalition government called for the "urgent" continuation of negotiations to reach an accord, with the EU set to consider this month whether to recommend the start of accession talks with Serbia. Membership talks would mark a major milestone in Serbia's recovery from a decade of war and isolation under late strongman Slobodan Milosevic and provide a much-needed boost for its ailing economy, still the biggest in the former Yugoslavia.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/alertnet/news/serbia-rejects-kosovo-deal-begs-eu-for-more-time/**](http://www.trust.org/alertnet/news/serbia-rejects-kosovo-deal-begs-eu-for-more-time/)

EAPRO

**Across EAPRO**

**30 Muslim Rohingya escape jail in Thailand's south**

Police say 30 Muslim Rohingya asylum seekers from Myanmar who were detained in southern Thailand for illegally entering the country escaped from a police jail cell, 10 days after they were moved from a crowded detention center. Police Maj. Gen. Suwit Choensiri says the men used blades to cut the cell’s bars and used ropes made of clothes to escape from the Sadao district police station in Songkhla province early Friday.

He says police are checking closed circuit television footage to trace the men. More than 1,700 asylum seekers from Myanmar’s beleaguered Rohingya minority who arrived in Thailand by boat early this year are being held in crowded detention centers.

**AP -** [**http://www.boston.com/news/world/asia/2013/08/09/muslim-rohingya-escape-jail-thailand-south/DPX72XoEFDejYIctSQlnaL/story.html**](http://www.boston.com/news/world/asia/2013/08/09/muslim-rohingya-escape-jail-thailand-south/DPX72XoEFDejYIctSQlnaL/story.html)

**DPR Korea**

**Responding to the needs of flood-affected communities**

WFP has released 457 metric tons of maize to address the immediate food needs of more than 38,000 people affected by floods in DPR Korea. Over the past weeks, heavy seasonal rains have also caused extensive damage to agricultural lands and water systems across the country. According to an assessment conducted by UN agencies in two counties in North Pyongyang Province in July, more than 45,000 people lost their homes due to floods. A second assessment conducted by the Government has shown that the number of homeless people has decreased as the waters have begun to recede. WFP is dispatching food to cater for food needs of the most-affected families, and for communities where crops have been lost.

**WFP -** [**http://www.wfp.org/stories/wfp-assists-victims-floods-dpr-korea**](http://www.wfp.org/stories/wfp-assists-victims-floods-dpr-korea)

**Philippines**

**Philippines Says 23 Rebels Killed in a Month**

Philippine soldiers killed three communist rebels in a clash early Friday in a province north of the capital, bringing the number of guerrillas who have died in combat in the past month to at least 23, the military said. The three New People's Army fighters were part of a 12-man team that clashed with soldiers in Dona Remedios Trinidad township in Bulacan province, said 703rd Brigade commander Col. Henry Sabarre.

**AP -** [**http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/philippines-23-rebels-killed-month-19912827**](http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/philippines-23-rebels-killed-month-19912827)

**Vietnam**

**UN rights office criticises Vietnam over death penalty**

The UN's human rights office on Friday voiced concern about Vietnam resuming executions after a two-year hiatus in the use of capital punishment, warning that dozens more were poised to die. "We are dismayed by the resumption of the death penalty by Vietnam," the office's spokeswoman Cecile Pouilly told reporters. Vietnam executed its first prisoner - a 27-year-old murderer - by lethal injection on Tuesday, its state media said. The country had put capital punishment on ice almost two years ago due to problems procuring the chemicals for lethal injections.

**AFP -** [**http://news.malaysia.msn.com/regional/un-rights-office-criticises-vietnam-over-death-penalty**](http://news.malaysia.msn.com/regional/un-rights-office-criticises-vietnam-over-death-penalty)

ESARO

**Burundi**

**Two dead, 16 wounded in Burundi prison riots**

Rioting broke out in two overcrowded prisons in Burundi, leaving one civilian and one inmate dead and at least 16 others wounded, a police spokesman said Friday. At Mpimba prison, the country's largest, in the capital Bujumbura, police stepped in to put down the rioting on Thursday, and two people were killed by the rioters, the spokesman, Pierre Nkurikiye told AFP. The incident at Mpimba was sparked by disciplinary measures taken against 13 prisoners who had rioted in July involved between 150 and 200 of the prison's 2,700 inmates.

**AFP -** [**http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5hfIGRnwPOUiQb1w7wiDfCqUPxeQA?docId=CNG.518efad138651025da3e395a89b21b4f.191**](http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5hfIGRnwPOUiQb1w7wiDfCqUPxeQA?docId=CNG.518efad138651025da3e395a89b21b4f.191)

**Namibia**

**Drought threatens thousands - UNICEF mention**

A severe drought that sparked a state of emergency in Namibia has left 400,000 people facing hunger, the government said. The government has been criticised for failing to do enough to provide relief to people during the worst dry spell to hit the country in decades. But the chairman of the Disaster Risk Management Committee defended the government's performance as he announced the new figure. The number of people at risk from hunger has risen from 300,000 in May, when the President declared a state of emergency. **UNICEF** says more than 778,000 people including 109,000 children under the age of five are at risk of malnutrition. UNICEF says it needs about $22m to support those people.

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/weather/2013/08/20138713142946811.html**](http://www.aljazeera.com/weather/2013/08/20138713142946811.html)

**Somalia**

**Ethiopian military plane crashes in Mogadishu**

An Ethiopian military cargo plane has crashed and caught fire on landing at Mogadishu airport in Somalia.

Four of the six crew members onboard the aircraft - carrying equipment for international forces fighting Islamist militants - were killed, sources said. Cargo items could be heard exploding inside the plane as the fire spread, closing the airport. The blaze was put out after about two hours. Ethiopian troops entered Somalia in 2011 to assist AU forces. It is not known yet when the plane got into difficulties, and whether it overshot the runway, or fell short of it.

**BBC-** [**http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-23628549**](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-23628549)

**South Sudan**

**328 killed in South Sudan attack, official says**

A leader of South Sudan's Murle community says 328 people from his group were killed in recent ethnic violence. Jongolei Boyoris, a member of parliament in the Jonglei State Assembly, said Thursday most of the people killed in July clashes were women and children. Boyoris said 32 children were abducted. No central government official confirmed Boyoris' claim. The UN also has not released any death tolls from the July battles, which took place in an isolated, under-developed and hard-to-reach part of South Sudan. While the death toll sounds astoundingly high, it is not without precedent. A UN report investigating violence between Jonglei's Murle and Lou Nuer communities in late 2011 and early 2012 found that 612 Murle and 276 Bor Dinka/Lou Nuer died in that bout of ethnic vilonce.

**AP -** [**http://www.seattlepi.com/news/world/article/328-killed-in-South-Sudan-attack-official-says-4716799.php**](http://www.seattlepi.com/news/world/article/328-killed-in-South-Sudan-attack-official-says-4716799.php)

**Tanzania**

**British women attacked with acid in Zanzibar**

Two British women have had acid thrown in their faces in Zanzibar, police reported. Katie Gee and Kirstie Trup, both 18 and from London, were working as volunteer teachers on the island. The Foreign Office said it was "concerned to hear of an attack on two British nationals" and was "providing consular assistance". Police said two men on a moped threw the acid at the women, splashing their faces, chests and hands as they walked through the streets of Stone Town, Zanzibar City. The Deputy police commissioner said: "The motive for the attack on the volunteers aged 18 years, has not been established. Investigations are on until we apprehend the criminals."

**BBC -** [**http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-23611840**](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-23611840)

MENA

**Egypt**

**Egypt army says 60 militants in Sinai killed**

Egypt's military spokesman says 60 militants have been killed and 103 arrested on the Sinai Peninsula as part of the army's operations there over the past month. Col. Ahmed Mohammed Ali released the figures Wednesday on his official Facebook page. He did not name any of suspects killed or detained. The Facebook post said that authorities also destroyed 102 smuggling tunnels to the Palestinian Gaza Strip during this time. The military's figures could not be independently verified. More than 20 policemen and soldiers have been killed in near daily clashes in Sinai since President Mohammed Morsi's ouster July 3. About a dozen civilians have also been killed in violence there.

**AP -** [**http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/egypt-diplomacy-failed-resolve-crisis-19891598**](http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/egypt-diplomacy-failed-resolve-crisis-19891598)

**Egypt's Coptic Pope concerned over risks of attacks**

A bishop in Egypt's Coptic Church says Pope Tawadros II has cancelled weekly public meetings due to concerns over possible attacks on his congregation. Bishop Angaelos, who heads the Church in the UK, says in one incident the flag of al-Qaeda was raised on church property while worshippers hid inside.

Several human rights groups have criticised Egypt's authorities for failing to protect Christians.

Some Islamists say the Church backed the removal of President Morsi. Two weeks ago Bishop Angaelos told the BBC that he didn't mind what kind of government led Egypt - even an Islamist one - as long as individual rights were respected and the country was able to flourish.

**BBC -** [**http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-23627653**](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-23627653)

**Concern at 'child martyr' symbolism**- **UNICEF mention**

The presence of children at Egypt's political protests is causing concern, with some youngsters photographed in burial shrouds and claims that others have been "bussed in" from orphanages.

Children have been a common sight at protests since the January 2011 revolution, which removed Hosni Mubarak from power. However, their presentation as potential martyrs has led to unease at home and abroad. Last week, **UNICEF** called on all political groups to avoid exploiting children for political ends. "Disturbing images of children taken during street protests indicate that, on some occasions, children have been deliberately used and put at risk as potential witnesses to or victims of violence," it said.

**BBC -** <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/blogs-news-from-elsewhere-23602898>

**Iraq**

**Iraq mired in deadlock as violence worsens**

A coordinated spate of bombings across Baghdad capped Iraq's bloodiest Ramadan in years, with more than 800 people killed in spiraling violence that a paralyzed government has failed to stem. Experts say things could get even worse, as political deadlock with no end in sight feeds a worsening security situation in a country only a few years removed from a sectarian war in which tens of thousands of people died. "If the Iraqi political parties get together, and agree with each other, discuss things, try to be flexible and reach decisions, I think it will be better," Kurdish MP Mahmoud Othman said. "But if things stay as they are -- parties not meeting, not making common decisions, everyone putting blame on others - then of course it will get worse."

**AFP -** [**http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/93540-iraq-mired-in-deadlock-as-violence-worsens**](http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/93540-iraq-mired-in-deadlock-as-violence-worsens)

**Attack on policemen's home kills 13 people in Iraq**

Officials say a double attack on a policeman's home in central Iraq has killed 13 people, including the policeman and his entire family. Police officials said Thursday that gunmen stormed the policeman's home late the previous night in the city of Tikrit, killing the policeman, his wife, two sons and one daughter. When neighbors started to gather around the house, a car bomb exploded on the crowd, killing eight people and wounding 30. Tikrit is 130 km north of Baghdad.

**AP -** [**http://www.foxnews.com/world/2013/08/08/officials-attack-on-policemen-home-kills-13-people-in-iraq/**](http://www.foxnews.com/world/2013/08/08/officials-attack-on-policemen-home-kills-13-people-in-iraq/)

**Libya**

**Wave of political killings hits Libya**

Human Rights Watch says a picked-up wave of political assassinations in Libya has killed 51 people as the country lacks any effective law enforcement. In a statement released Thursday, the group says authorities have yet to arrest any suspects in the killings. Victims have included political activists, judges and members of security agencies. Human Rights Watch says the killings have centered around the eastern cities of Benghazi and Darna. The group says there have been no investigations carried out about the killings and no witnesses interviewed by authorities. No groups have claimed responsibility for the killings.

**AP -** [**http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/report-wave-political-killings-hits-libya-19902768**](http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/report-wave-political-killings-hits-libya-19902768)

**Saudi Arabia**

**Camels become prime suspects in deadly virus outbreak**

People infected with a deadly virus that emerged in Saudi Arabia last year may have caught it from one-humped camels, used in the region for meat, milk, transport and racing. In a study into what kind of animal "reservoir" may be fuelling the outbreak in humans, scientists said they had found strong evidence it is widespread among dromedary camels in the Middle East. The Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV), has been reported in people in the Gulf, France, Germany, Italy, Tunisia and Britain. The WHO says 46 people have died out of a total 94 confirmed cases, the majority in Saudi Arabia.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/08/08/saudi-virus-camels-idUSL6N0G93V920130808**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/08/08/saudi-virus-camels-idUSL6N0G93V920130808)

**Syria**

**UN chief and Russian minister discuss Syria**

The UN SG has discussed the escalating humanitarian crisis and increasing sectarian violence in Syria with Russian Foreign Minister. The UN spokesperson reported that the UN SG underscored the need to find a political solution to the 2 1/2-year Syria conflict and to urgently renew momentum for a new Geneva conference to try to get the government and opposition to agree on a transitional government.

**AP** - [**http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle\_east/un-chief-and-russian-minister-discuss-syrias-humanitarian-crisis-and-sectarian-violence/2013/08/08/e672c0b6-009a-11e3-8294-0ee5075b840d\_story.html**](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/un-chief-and-russian-minister-discuss-syrias-humanitarian-crisis-and-sectarian-violence/2013/08/08/e672c0b6-009a-11e3-8294-0ee5075b840d_story.html)

**Government increases restrictions on medical aid - UNICEF mention**

The Syrian government has increasingly restricted the delivery of medical supplies to opposition-controlled areas in recent months, several aid workers told IRIN, refusing to approve medical deliveries; taking medical supplies out of aid convoys; and requiring case-by-case negotiations for the delivery of surgical kits. The restrictions come on top of other constraints facing medical aid deliveries, including the hijacking of aid convoys, attributed to armed opposition groups and criminal elements. In early June, WHO received reports of 1,200 cases of diarrhoea in Talbiseh town in the rebel stronghold of Homs. WHO and the **UNICEF** prepared standard diarrhoea kits to send to the area, but 70 percent of the kits' contents were removed, Elizabeth Hoff, representative of the WHO in Syria, told IRIN.

**IRIN -** [**http://www.irinnews.org/report/98537/analysis-syrian-government-increases-restrictions-on-medical-aid**](http://www.irinnews.org/report/98537/analysis-syrian-government-increases-restrictions-on-medical-aid)

**Yemen**

**US drones kill 12 people in 3 airstrikes**

The US has sharply escalated its drone war in Yemen, with military officials in the country reporting 34 suspected al-Qaida militants killed in less than two weeks, including three strikes on 8 August alone in which a dozen died. The first reported drone attack hit a car carrying suspected militants in the district of Wadi Ubaidah, about 175 km east of Sanaa, and killed six, a security official reported. The second drone attack killed three alleged militants in the al-Ayoon area of Hadramawt province in the south, the official said. The third, also in Hadramawt province, killed three more suspected militants in the al-Qutn area, he added. All the airstrikes targeted cars, added the official.

**NPR -** [**http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=210095562**](http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=210095562)

ROSA

**Across ROSA**

**India faces pressure to scrap peace talks after Kashmir attack**

India's government faced mounting pressure on Wednesday to put proposed peace talks with Pakistan back in the deep freeze after a deadly cross-border attack on its troops in disputed Kashmir. The opposition accused the government of letting Pakistan off the hook over the killing of five soldiers in Kashmir, as the attack overnight on Monday triggered an uproar in the parliament. Defence Minister A.K. Antony told parliament on Tuesday that "20 heavily armed terrorists along with persons dressed in Pakistani Army uniforms" had staged the ambush. India's army had initially blamed the attack on regular Pakistan troops but later withdrew the statement. "Our defence minister has given a clean chit to Pakistan," Sushma Swaraj, lower house leader of the opposition Hindu nationalist Bharatiya

**AFP -** [**http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/india-faces-pressure-to/768832.html**](http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/india-faces-pressure-to/768832.html)

**Afghanistan**

**Graveyard picnic bomb kills 14 women and children in the east**

A bomb planted in an Afghan graveyard killed 14 women and children, many of them picnicking at the graveside of a family member during the Eid al-Fitr holiday, officials reported. The bomb exploded in a rural district of eastern Nangarhar province, reported the provincial governor's spokesperson. Nangarhar and Jalalabad, have been racked by a series of bombings and suicide attacks over the last week.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/08/08/us-afghanistan-graveyard-idUSBRE9770E520130808**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/08/08/us-afghanistan-graveyard-idUSBRE9770E520130808)

**Pakistan**

**Taliban attack kills up to 38 people at funeral**

A suicide bomber targeted a Pakistani funeral, killing up to 38 people and wounding dozens more, mostly police officers in a rare attack claimed by the Taliban in the southwest. The bombing at police headquarters in the city of Quetta will raise concerns that Pakistan's umbrella Taliban movement poses an ever deadlier challenge since the newly elected government took office. Officers had gathered to pay their respects to a colleague shot dead only hours earlier. Those killed included one of the most senior officers in Quetta, Baluchistan where sectarian and separatist violence are more common than attacks claimed by the Taliban. "At least 38 people have been killed and more than 50 injured," a senior police official reported. "Most of the dead and injured are policemen."

**AFP -** [**http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/130808/taliban-attack-kills-38-at-pakistan-funeral**](http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/130808/taliban-attack-kills-38-at-pakistan-funeral)

TACRO

**Across TACRO**

**Ecuadorian officer killed in Colombia border clash**

An Ecuadorian army lieutenant was killed Thursday in a clash with an armed Colombian group in a border area between the two countries, an official said. The unidentified armed group apparently opened fire on an Ecuadorian army patrol, killing Lieutenant Diego Maldonado, 28, an Ecuadorian military official said. Initial reports said members of the Colombian group may also have been killed, the official with the Armed Forces Joint Command said. The incident occurred early Thursday in Puerto Mestanza, a village in the northeastern Ecuadoran province of Sucumbios, which borders Colombia's Putumayo department.

**AFP -** [**http://www.almanar.com.lb/english/adetails.php?fromval=1&cid=18&frid=18&eid=105455**](http://www.almanar.com.lb/english/adetails.php?fromval=1&cid=18&frid=18&eid=105455)

WCARO

**Benin**

**President dissolves government**

The president of Benin is dissolving his government in a surprise move without giving a reason. According to a government statement read on national television late on 8 August, the President has "put an end to the duties of all members of his government." The announcement said a new governmental team would be put into place and a list of new ministers made public "very shortly."

**AP -** [**http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/president-tiny-benin-dissolves-government-19910123**](http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/president-tiny-benin-dissolves-government-19910123)

**CAR**

**Central African Republic asks soldiers to return**

A delegation from Central African Republic is trying to persuade soldiers to return home after they fled to neighboring Cameroon more than four months ago. The call comes as human rights groups describe a deteriorating security situation across Central African Republic, with accounts of rebels committing massacres and setting homes ablaze. But so far the soldiers who fled after President Francois Bozize was overthrown say they still fear for their safety. Djodiar Kato, a spokesman for the runaway soldiers, "We don't have sufficient guarantees that we will not be dragged to court to face manslaughter charges once we return."

**AP -** [**http://www.seattlepi.com/news/world/article/Central-African-Republic-asks-soldiers-to-return-4714164.php**](http://www.seattlepi.com/news/world/article/Central-African-Republic-asks-soldiers-to-return-4714164.php)

**Guinea Bissau**

**Ousted ex-premier eyes return for presidential polls**

Guinea Bissau's former prime minister Carlos Gomes Junior, who was ousted in a coup in 2012, said he planned to return to his country and run for president in November polls. Gomes Junior, who has been living in exile, did not specify when he intended to go back. The country is due to hold presidential and parliamentary elections on 24 November. The polls are aimed at ending the transitional phase that began when Gomes Junior was overthrown in April 2012 in a coup that interrupted a presidential race he was leading with 49% of the vote.

**AFP -** [**http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/130808/ousted-gbissau-ex-premier-eyes-return-presidential-polls**](http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/130808/ousted-gbissau-ex-premier-eyes-return-presidential-polls)

**Mali**

**In the aftermath of conflict, children remain at risk- UNICEF mention**

For children living in conflict-affected areas of northern Mali, explosive remnants of war are a life-threatening danger hiding in plain sight. Although they do not necessarily always kill, explosive remnants of war can cause irreversible damage. Because of their natural curiosity and the fact that they often move around unsupervised, children are unaware of the hazards and are most at risk from unexploded ordnance (UXO). Since 2012, 76 victims have been registered, 40 of them children, including six who died. As part of an effort to inform families and communities of the risks of UXO, **UNICEF** has trained 47 educators in Gao from various sectors – health, administration, NGOs and media.

**UNICEF -** [**http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/mali\_70110.html**](http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/mali_70110.html)

**Sierra Leone**

**Working to prevent cholera outbreaks - UNICEF mention**

Last year Sierra Leone had one of the worst cholera outbreaks in history - with 23,000 reported cases. The UN says close to 300 people died. Some measures have since been put in place to prevent another epidemic. Patrick Okoth, a water, sanitation and hygiene specialist for **UNICEF**, said things have improved since 2012 in that there is a consistent cholera task force comprised of international agencies and ministry of health staffers. Okoth noted that medical supplies were brought in too late last year but that this year measures have been put in place to see that supplies are already in communities across the country. Okoth said in addition to these measures, health care workers are now better trained to detect and treat cholera and UNICEF has been working to improve water facilities across the country. August is the worst month for rain and the time when cholera can peak.

**VoA -** [**http://www.voanews.com/content/sierra-leone-working-to-prevent-cholera-outbreaks/1725951.html**](http://www.voanews.com/content/sierra-leone-working-to-prevent-cholera-outbreaks/1725951.html)