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GENERAL

**Across Regions**

**Pledges to fight AIDS, TB, malaria hit $12bn, $3bn below target**

Donor countries pledged $12 billion to the Global Fund on Wednesday to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, the largest budget yet but below the Fund’s $15 billion target. The support announced at the Global Fund’s Fourth Replenishment meeting in Washington was a sharp rise from pledges made at the previous one, which attracted $ 9.2 billion in 2010, according to UNAIDS. The funds will cover a period of three years. The pledges are “a big increase on the previous period and we think it will make a transforming difference in the lives of millions of people,” said Global Fund Head of Communications Seth Faisons.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20131204181507-os80h/?source=hptop**](http://www.trust.org/item/20131204181507-os80h/?source=hptop)

**Thousands of Eritreans 'abducted to Sinai for ransom'**

Up to 30,000 Eritreans have been abducted since 2007 and taken to Egypt's Sinai to suffer torture and ransom demands, new research says. The study, presented to the European parliament, says Eritrean and Sudanese security officers are colluding with the kidnap gangs. At least $600m has been extorted from families in ransom payments, it says. Victims are kidnapped in Ethiopia, Sudan and Eritrea and taken to Sinai. Eritrea has denied its officials are involved in the kidnappings. Most of those targeted are Eritrean refugees fleeing the country, says the report - The Human Trafficking Cycle: Sinai and Beyond.

**BBC -** [**http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-25222336**](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-25222336)

CEE/CIS

**Russia**

**Russian force trains to counter militants from Syria -Chechen leader**

A unit of Russian security forces is training to fight militants battling in Syria on fears they may migrate from the Middle East conflict to join an insurgency in the North Caucasus, Chechnya's Kremlin-backed leader said. The Kremlin is worried that Russian-born militants will return to join insurgents who want to carve out an Islamic state in Chechnya and other mostly Muslim provinces in the mountains on Russia's southern fringe. Officials have said 400 Russians are fighting with al Qaeda affiliated groups in Syria, but experts estimate the numbers are much higher. Some Chechens, veterans of two post-Soviet wars against Russian rule, have emerged as leaders among Syrian rebels.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20131205115650-oszsn/?source=search**](http://www.trust.org/item/20131205115650-oszsn/?source=search)

**Ukraine**

**Ukraine government says it will not rule out early polls**

The Ukrainian government is prepared to discuss the possibility of early elections, the country’s deputy PM said Thursday, as protests against President Viktor Yanukovich’s decision to abandon a deal with the EU continue to rage. The [Ukraine](http://www.france24.com/en/20131202-ukraine-opposition-no-confidence-vote-protests-azarov-yanukovych-eu-russia) government has not ruled out holding early elections as it seeks a solution to growing unrest over Kiev’s decision to abandon an accord with the European Union, the country’s deputy prime minister has said. "We have to hold negotiations," said First Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Arbuzov when asked by Ukrainian Channel 5 late Wednesday if he considers snap parliamentary and presidential elections a solution to the ongoing standoff by pro-EU demonstrators across the country.

**France 24 -** [**http://www.france24.com/en/20131205-ukraine-government-early-polls-yanukovich**](http://www.france24.com/en/20131205-ukraine-government-early-polls-yanukovich)

EAPR

**Across EAPR**

**Myanmar's president asks Philippines for more aid**

Myanmar's president called Thursday for more investment and development assistance from the Philippines, saying his country needs help to catch up with the rest of Southeast Asia after emerging from nearly two decades of economic sanctions. President Thein Sein's visit represents a milestone in relations with the Philippines, one of the harshest critics of Myanmar's former ruling junta. Thein Sein's elected government took office in 2011, ending a half-century of military rule.

**AP -** [**http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/myanmars-president-asks-philippines-aid-21106133**](http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/myanmars-president-asks-philippines-aid-21106133)

**Malaysia**

**At least 19,000 people evacuated in floods**

Floods in Malaysia caused by heavy rains have left a teenager dead and forced authorities to evacuate thousands of people, officials reported. Some 19,000 people have been relocated to evacuation centres set up in schools in the east coast states of Pahang and Terengganu and Johor in the south, an official and news reports said. A Meteorological Department official said river levels continued to rise due to the high tide and water being released from dams, but the body expected rain to ease in the flood-hit areas.

**AFP -** [**http://www.gulf-times.com/asean-philippines/188/details/373701/teen-dies,-19,000-evacuated-after-floods-in-malaysia**](http://www.gulf-times.com/asean-philippines/188/details/373701/teen-dies,-19,000-evacuated-after-floods-in-malaysia)

**Myanmar**

**Authorities to resettle displaced Muslims in Meikhtila**

Local authorities are preparing to resettle hundreds of Muslims displaced by inter-communal violence in March between local Buddhists and the Muslims in Meikhtila Township, Mandalay Division, according a state-run newspaper. Muslim neighborhoods of Meikhtila were razed to the ground during the violence. Authorities say Muslims made up the majority of the 7,845 people who have since been living in temporary camps outside the town. A report in the New Light of Myanmar on Tuesday said the government will provide plots of land or apartments to resettle about 400 Muslim victims of the violence.

**Irrawaddy -** [**http://www.irrawaddy.org/burma/burma-authorities-resettle-displaced-muslims-meikhtila.html**](http://www.irrawaddy.org/burma/burma-authorities-resettle-displaced-muslims-meikhtila.html)

**Philippines**

**Freed Jordanian names Filipino extremist kidnapper**

A Jordanian journalist has identified the leader of an al-Qaida-linked terrorist group that held him for a year and a half in the jungles of the southern Philippines after luring him with a promise of an interview.

Appearing gaunt and bearded, TV journalist Baker Atyani was brought to a hospital in Sulu province under heavy guard after security forces took him into custody late Wednesday. He said that Abu Sayyaf commander Jul Asman Sawadjaan plotted his kidnapping in June last year with the help of his fighters and civilians in the restive, predominantly Muslim southern province. Two Philippine security officers said authorities were verifying intelligence that Sawadjaan had died due to an illness before Atyani walked free.

**AP -** [**http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/freed-jordanian-names-filipino-extremist-kidnapper-21106078**](http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/freed-jordanian-names-filipino-extremist-kidnapper-21106078)

**Thailand**

**Thai king urges people to do their duty; declines crisis comment**

Thailand's revered King Bhumibol Adulyadej called on his people to do their duty for the security of the country in a birthday address on Thursday but he avoided making direct reference to the latest political turmoil. Protesters have been attempting to bring down the government of Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra and five people have been killed in clashes over the past week, though the two sides reached a truce to mark the king's birthday.

**Reuters-** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20131205044149-81w6j/?source=search**](http://www.trust.org/item/20131205044149-81w6j/?source=search)

**Thailand's anti-trafficking effort loses steam**

The US State Department is gathering information for its next Trafficking In Persons (TIP) Report, due to be published in June. It ranks countries on their efforts to combat human trafficking. Thailand faces an automatic downgrade to Tier 3, the lowest rank, unless it makes "significant efforts" to improve its record, the State Department says. The numbers suggest the enforcement is losing steam. Thailand prosecuted 27 people for trafficking in 2012, down from 67 the previous year, according to the 2013 TIP Report. Only 10 of those prosecutions - one of them an official - resulted in convictions, the report said.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20131204234641-3c8qk/?source=hptop**](http://www.trust.org/item/20131204234641-3c8qk/?source=hptop)

ESAR

**Mozambique**

**At least 10 people killed in unrest**

Mozambique's government reported that Renamo rebels have killed 10 people during six weeks of unrest, and warned that the military may soon go on the offensive. “Ten people lost their lives and around 26 people have been injured... as a result of attacks by Renamo guerrillas,” the defence ministry spokesperson said. He said there had been a worrying “escalation of attacks by Renamo against people and their property,” particularly along the country's main north-south highway in the central Sofala province. Children and foreigners, including a South African national, were among those killed in the recent attacks, said the spokesperson, adding a Brazilian citizen was among the wounded victims.

**AFP -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/10-killed-mozambique-unrest-183934555.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/10-killed-mozambique-unrest-183934555.html)

**Local election gains boost Mozambique's MDM opposition party**

The opposition Mozambique Democratic Movement (MDM) has won three of the nation's four largest cities in local elections, emerging as a credible challenger to the ruling Frelimo party for presidential and parliamentary polls due next year. Besides retaining the mayorships of the ports of Beira and Quelimane in the November 20 municipal vote, MDM gained control of the northern city of Nampula in a re-run on Sunday, held following ballot errors in last month's polling. The results confirm MDM's growing support while President Armando Guebuza's Frelimo grapples with security and governance problems.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/12/04/us-mozambique-politics-idUSBRE9B30RS20131204**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/12/04/us-mozambique-politics-idUSBRE9B30RS20131204)

**Somalia**

**Seven dead in car bomb attack on armed convoy in northern Somalia**

Seven people were killed in a car bomb attack in northern Somalia on Thursday on an armed convoy escorting two foreigners working for a company training local security forces. The blast happened in Bosasso, a coastal city in the semi-autonomous Puntland region which has escaped the worst of a seven-year insurgency fought by militants seeking to impose a strict interpretation of Sharia law on the country. "The car bomb targeted a convoy of cars," said shopkeeper Hussein Nur. "I could see victims being carried away."

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20131205120721-b8ox6**](http://www.trust.org/item/20131205120721-b8ox6)

**Uganda**

**80 Ugandans injured in riots sparked by market fire**

More than 80 Ugandans were injured in riots in Kampala after the country's main market was engulfed in a fire on Wednesday, Red Cross officials said. The blaze broke out in the early hours today in Kampala's Owino market, sparking furious protests from traders who had lost their stock in the inferno. Security forces moved in to break up the rioters, firing tear gas and live ammunition, with shops closed and streets empty around the market for much of today.

**AFP -** [**http://zeenews.india.com/news/world/80-ugandans-injured-in-riots-sparked-by-market-fire\_894457.html**](http://zeenews.india.com/news/world/80-ugandans-injured-in-riots-sparked-by-market-fire_894457.html)

LAC

**Argentina**

**Looting ends as Argentine police strike resolved**

A sit-in by police seeking pay raises in Argentina's second-largest city prompted hours of looting, robberies, injuries and vigilante mobs trying to protect their neighborhoods before the provincial government agreed to the officers' demands and peace returned to the streets Wednesday. Three deaths were reported amid the violence in Cordoba and a copycat effort to loot a store outside the nation's capital. The accord brings steep pay hikes for Cordoba police.

**AP -** [**http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/looting-death-argentine-police-strike-21094346**](http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/looting-death-argentine-police-strike-21094346)

**Brazil**

**Militias flex growing muscle in Rio's slums**

Criminal gangs made up of corrupt ex-cops tripled their presence in Rio de Janeiro's shantytowns between 2005 and 2010, according to a study released in Brazil. The so-called militias, which also included off-duty police officers, prison guards and firefighters, already control 454 of Rio's estimated 1,000 favelas (or 45%), according to the survey conducted by the University of Rio and the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (Fiocruz). Over the years, the militias have muscled in to oust many drug gangs and installed their own brand of extortion in sectors such as private security, transports or cable television sales.

**AFP -** [**http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/world/383231/militias-flex-growing-muscle-in-rio-slums**](http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/world/383231/militias-flex-growing-muscle-in-rio-slums)

**Indigenous stage land protest in Brasilia**

Hundreds of indigenous people from across Brazil clashed with security agents Wednesday as they tried to break into the presidential palace to demand the return of their ancestral lands. They were protesting a justice ministry directive that would allow public bodies other than the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI), the government agency tasked with protecting Indian interests, to be involved in demarcating their lands. They tried to force their way through the main door and the main access ramp leading to the first floor but said security agents used pepper spray to disperse them and prevented them from getting in.

**AFP -** [**http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/131204/brazilian-natives-stage-land-protest-brasilia**](http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/131204/brazilian-natives-stage-land-protest-brasilia)

**Haiti**

**World Bank envoy criticizes lack of transparency in Haiti oil program**

The World Bank's special envoy to Haiti voiced concern on Wednesday about how the government was using public funds generated by cut-rate Venezuelan petroleum imports, saying a lack of transparency was the biggest obstacle to the country's economic development. The surprising public criticism of the government's handling of its finances came at a press luncheon in the capital. The director of the World Bank's office in Haiti, Mary Barton-Dock, cited Venezuela's Petrocaribe program, which allows beneficiaries to buy fuel from the oil-rich South American nation at favorable rates and easy payment plans.Under Petrocaribe, Haiti pays only 40% of the oil bills in the short term, while the rest are reimbursed over a 25-year period during which the government is free to spend the funds more or less as it pleases. The World Bank would like to see better communication about the use of Petrocaribe funds, said Barton-Dock, addressing reporters in French.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20131205010246-bawn1/?source=hpbreaking**](http://www.trust.org/item/20131205010246-bawn1/?source=hpbreaking)

**Honduras**

**Electoral court holds off presidential vote recount**

Honduras' electoral court says it has held off a recount of vote tally sheets from the 24 November presidential election after representatives of the losing party failed to show up. Court president David Matamoros says the recount was scheduled to start Wednesday but that members of the Libre Party did not show up as had been agreed. The court agreed to do a recount this week after receiving a fraud complaint from Libre presidential candidate Xiomara Castro, who finished second. Matamoros says representatives from all parties need to be present during the recount.

**AP-** [**http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/honduras-holds-off-presidential-vote-recount-21105048**](http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/honduras-holds-off-presidential-vote-recount-21105048)

**Nicaragua**

**Ten killed in Nicaragua clash**

Ten people have died in a confrontation between police and an armed group in northern Nicaragua, with accounts of the incident varying from a grocery store robbery to a confrontation involving an armed group that wants to stop President Daniel Ortega, who is trying to bring in unlimited terms of office. The national police said shooting broke out when officers came upon an armed band robbing a store in the town of Bocas de Ayapal in Jinotega state. But Janeth Sobalvarro, the mayor of nearby San Jose de Bocay, said it was not a robbery but a clash between police and the gunmen.

**AP -** [**http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/05/ten-die-nicaragua-armed-clash**](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/05/ten-die-nicaragua-armed-clash)

MENA

**Across MENA**

**Kerry lands in Israel to push stalled peace talks**

US Secretary of State John Kerry landed in Israel late Wednesday and he is scheduled to meet Netanyahu on Thursday morning and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in Ramallah later in the day. Kerry visits the region once more in an attempt to push forward negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, which appear to be stuck mainly due to Israel's ongoing construction in the West Bank and east Jerusalem settlements.

**Xinhua -** [**http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2013-12/05/c\_132944278.htm**](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2013-12/05/c_132944278.htm)

**Egypt**

**Egypt activists to stand trial for protesting without permission-judicial source**

Egypt's public prosecutor referred three political activists to trial on Thursday on charges including protesting without permission, a judicial source said. It was the first case of activists being charged under the provisions of a new law criticised for stifling the right to protest. The activists charged on Thursday include Ahmed Maher, founder of the April 6 movement that helped ignite the historic 2011 uprising against former President Hosni Mubarak, and Ahmed Douma, another prominent dissident.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20131205091135-cmbhn/?source=search**](http://www.trust.org/item/20131205091135-cmbhn/?source=search)

**Egypt's Nour Party says backs new constitution**

Egypt's second largest Islamist party on Thursday said it would support a new constitution in an upcoming referendum in order to spare the country "more anarchy". "The Nour Party will take part in this referendum and will take part with "yes", out of our concern for bringing about stability and so that we spare the country more anarchy," Younes Makhyoun, the head of the party, said in a news conference. The Nour Party's support for the army-led political transition has set it apart from Egyptian Islamists who opposed the July 3 overthrow of President Mohamed Mursi of the Muslim Brotherhood.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20131205120851-skigd**](http://www.trust.org/item/20131205120851-skigd)

**Iraq**

**Coordinated attacks in northern Iraqi city kill 11, wound 70**

Gunmen and suicide bombers attacked a police intelligence headquarters and a nearby shopping mall in a coordinated attack in the northern city of Kirkuk late on Wednesday, killing 11 people and wounding 70, police and medical sources said. Two suicide bombers armed with sniper rifles entered the shopping complex, took control of it and captured around 15 shoppers as hostages, police said. After a gun battle, one suicide bomber blew himself up and the other was shot dead by Kurdish security forces who took over the operation from local police. One hostage was wounded, police said.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20131205080332-r0hdv/?source=search**](http://www.trust.org/item/20131205080332-r0hdv/?source=search)

**Libya**

**Libyan assembly votes to follow Islamic law**

Libya's General National Council assembly (GNC) voted on Wednesday to make Islamic Sharia law the base for all legislation and for all state institutions, a decision that may impact banking, criminal and financial law. "Islamic law is the source of legislation in Libya," the GNC said in a statement after the vote. "All state institutions need to comply with this." The immediate scope of the decision was not clear, but a special committee would review all existing laws to guarantee they comply with Sharia.

**Reuters -** [**http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/2/8/88269/World/Region/Libyan-assembly-votes-to-follow-Islamic-law.aspx**](http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/2/8/88269/World/Region/Libyan-assembly-votes-to-follow-Islamic-law.aspx)

**Gunmen kill American in Benghazi**

Gunmen have killed a US citizen working at an international school in the Libyan city of Benghazi, medical and security sources said on Thursday. The attackers shot the American man, who was an instructor or teacher at the Benghazi school, while he exercised in the morning, the sources said. No one claimed responsibility for the shooting. The US ambassador to Libya was killed in late 2012 when Islamist militants assaulted the US consulate in Benghazi.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20131205122423-f0h3x**](http://www.trust.org/item/20131205122423-f0h3x)

**Morocco**

**Islamists under fire over women abuse bill**

A long-awaited law to combat violence against women is currently under study in Morocco, but the Islamist-led government has had to revise its proposals after sharp criticism from rights groups. A preliminary version of the bill, which is still in the drafting stage, threatens prison sentences of up to 25 years for perpetrators of violence against women. Despite the progress that this new law would represent, women's associations have strongly criticised the proposed legislation. In particular, they accuse Bassima Hakkaoui, the minister for women's affairs - herself a member of the ruling Islamist Party of Justice and Development - of excluding them from the drafting of the bill.

**AFP -** [**http://www.rappler.com/world/regions/africa/45307-morocco-islamists-under-fire-over-women-abuse-bill**](http://www.rappler.com/world/regions/africa/45307-morocco-islamists-under-fire-over-women-abuse-bill)

**Sudan**

**Air strike kills seven, including six children in South Kordofan**

On Sunday morning, the Sudanese Air Force attacked Showa, near Toloshi in Lagawa county, South Kordofan. A MiG jet fighter dropped three bombs on the village in Nuba Mountains, killing a mother, her three children, and three other children. The explosions wounded one baby, destroyed six houses and killed several animals. “Showa village lies far from the fighting location,” Arnu Ngutulu Lodi, spokesperson of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) said. “SPLA-N forces and other SRF forces will continue defending the Sudanese people from Sudan's brutal regime, by various means of struggle, until victory is achieved,” Lodi stressed.

**Radio Dabanga -** [**https://www.radiodabanga.org/node/60811**](https://www.radiodabanga.org/node/60811)

**Syria**

**Jihadists kidnap 50 Kurds: NGO**

Jihadists in northern Syria have kidnapped more than 50 Kurds in the past three days, in the second such case of mass hostage-taking since July, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said Thursday. The kidnappings come months into major battles for control of several parts of northern Syria that have pitted Kurdish fighters against jihadists, chiefly the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Among the hostages were nine children and a woman, said the Britain-based group, adding that there was no information on where they had been taken.

**AFP -** [**http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/2/8/88338/World/Region/Syria-jihadists-kidnap--Kurds-NGO.aspx**](http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/2/8/88338/World/Region/Syria-jihadists-kidnap--Kurds-NGO.aspx)

**Tunisia**

**Strike grips 'ignored' southern Tunisia region**

Tunisia's southern Tozeur region ground to a halt on Wednesday, as the latest in a growing number of strikes around the country was called to protest a lack of development. "This movement is taking place because the authorities have ignored our demands," the UGTT trade union confederation's regional chief, Haroun Bouagga, told AFP. "If the authorities do not reply to us or begin a dialogue, we will adopt more intense forms of protest," he warned. The strike organisers, who include the Utica bosses' organisation as well as the UGTT, estimated that 98 percent of public offices, shops and businesses observed the strike in Tozeur.

**AFP –**

[**http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/2/8/88275/World/Region/Strike-grips-ignored-southern-Tunisia-region.aspx**](http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/2/8/88275/World/Region/Strike-grips-ignored-southern-Tunisia-region.aspx)

**Negotiators set deadline for crisis talks**

The powerful Tunisian labor union seeking to broker an agreement between ruling Islamists and secular opponents said on Wednesday the two sides had 10 days to name a prime minister to lead a caretaker administration meant to end the crisis. The Islamist-led government has agreed to step down in a few weeks as a way to ease political turmoil that threatened to destroy the country's transition to democracy. Under a deal brokered by the UGTT union movement, Islamist party Ennahda will step down once the two sides agree on the name of a premier, finish their new constitution and set a date for elections next year. But weeks of talks have stalled over the name of the candidate.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/12/04/us-tunisia-crisis-idUSBRE9B319M20131204**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/12/04/us-tunisia-crisis-idUSBRE9B319M20131204)

**Yemen**

**20 killed in suicide bombing attack**

At least 20 soldiers were killed and dozens of others injured when suicide car bombings rocked the Yemeni defense ministry in Sanaa on Thursday morning, officials told Xinhua. An official of the defense ministry said anonymously that the explosions were caused by suicide car bombings that damaged part of the wall of the ministry in downtown Yemen, adding that first car bomb hit the western gate of the ministry and the second one broke into the gate and exploded inside the ministry complex. At least 20 soldiers were killed in the blast following exchange of gunfire with attackers, he said.

**Xinhua -** [**http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2013-12/05/c\_132943876.htm**](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2013-12/05/c_132943876.htm)

ROSA

**Afghanistan**

**27 militants killed in Afghan forces operations within day: ministry**

Twenty-seven Taliban militants were killed in military operations conducted by Afghan security forces since early Tuesday, the country's Interior Ministry said on Wednesday morning. "Afghan National Police (ANP) supported by the army and National Directorate for Security (NDS) conducted several anti- terrorism operations in Kabul, Laghman, Kandahar, Zabul and Helmand provinces over the past 24 hours. A total of 27 armed Taliban members were killed, six wounded and four others were arrested," the ministry said in a statement providing daily operational updates.

**Xinhua -** [**http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2013-12/04/c\_132940698.htm**](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2013-12/04/c_132940698.htm)

**India**

**India exit polls predict BJP win**

Exit polls in India show that the nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is poised to win three crucial state assembly elections and will lead in one, while the newcomer Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is expected to put up an extraordinary show in Delhi. As for the Congress Party, it is poised to lose badly in all four states. The outcome of the state elections, seen as a barometer of popular mood before the all-important national elections to the lower house of parliament sometime in April-May 2014, could be a huge boost to the political aspirations of BJP’s prime ministerial candidate Narendra Modi.

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2013/12/india-exit-polls-predict-bjp-wins-201312544845193991.html**](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2013/12/india-exit-polls-predict-bjp-wins-201312544845193991.html)

**Pakistan**

**Militants kill policeman in checkpost attack, injure another near Bannu**

Militants killed one policeman and wounded another in an attack on a checkpost in northwestern Pakistan, officials said on Thursday. The attack took place on the outskirts of Bannu town, in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province, which has seen several terrorist attacks in the past - many of them targeting security officials. No one claimed immediate responsibility for the attack.

**AFP -** [**http://tribune.com.pk/story/641439/militants-kill-policeman-injure-another-in-k-p-checkpost-attack/**](http://tribune.com.pk/story/641439/militants-kill-policeman-injure-another-in-k-p-checkpost-attack/)

**Polio fight goes under the radar - UNICEF mention**

Attacks on vaccination teams, militant threats and the abduction of teachers facilitating the campaign in November 2013 have handicapped efforts and led to a new strategy. Under the new strategy, the high-profile ‘National Immunization Days’ planned across the country have been dropped, according to OCHA and sources in the health ministry. The recent vaccination programme, organized over three days from 18 to 20 November in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, was conducted with far less publicity than before. “This is our approach,” Azmat Abbas, Communications Officer for UNICEF said. “The decision for campaign visibility now rests with the district governments, who are responsible for the security of the polio vaccinators. At the national level, polio campaign dates are not publicly announced and the focus is now on creating awareness of vaccine-preventable disease.

**IRIN -** [**http://www.irinnews.org/report/99265/pakistan-s-polio-fight-goes-under-the-radar**](http://www.irinnews.org/report/99265/pakistan-s-polio-fight-goes-under-the-radar)

WCAR

**CAR**

**UNSC to vote on strengthening of AU force**

The crisis in the CAR has been deteriorating for the best part of this year. In the words of UN Deputy SG Jan Eliasson, the international community has “watched from a distance” as the country descended into “virtual melt-down.” He called the decision to act, “a profoundly important test of international solidarity and of our responsibility to prevent atrocities.” Senior officials from France, the UN, and the US have all highlighted the country faces an imminent risk of genocide. This week, the UN Security Council will vote on a resolution calling for an African Union military mission there, staffed by just 1,400 of its 3,600 mandated personnel, to be strengthened and perhaps re-hatted into a UN peacekeeping force.

**IRIN -** [**http://www.irinnews.org/report/99253/the-politics-of-preventing-genocide**](http://www.irinnews.org/report/99253/the-politics-of-preventing-genocide)

**Twelve people killed in attack**

Armed men killed at least 12 civilians and wounded 30, including children, northwest of Bangui, UN officials said ahead of a Security Council move to end anarchy in the country. BINUCA, as the United Nations office in Bangui is known, said unidentified armed men had targeted Boali, about 95 km from Bangui at the weekend. The UN office did not give details on who was responsible but it warned of tensions between communities leading to "a climate of increasing violence" in the impoverished landlocked country, which is majority Christian.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20131203213128-birjv/?source=hpbreaking&utm\_source=MailingList&utm\_medium=email&utm\_campaign=Weekly+4+Dec+2013**](http://www.trust.org/item/20131203213128-birjv/?source=hpbreaking&utm_source=MailingList&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Weekly+4+Dec+2013)

**Mali**

**Sorting out Mali isn't our job, France says**

France will not play Africa's policeman and sort out a territorial dispute in Mali, Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius said on Thursday, a day after Mali's president and Tuareg separatist rebels both criticised Paris for doing too little. After winning adulation across its former colony for a 5-month military offensive earlier this year that scattered al Qaeda fighters, France is caught in a tug of war between the government in Bamako and Tuareg MNLA rebels in the north, who are demanding some form of autonomy.

"The democratic situation has been re-established. Now it's up to Malians, and particularly President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, to act," Fabius told RMC radio.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20131205092736-1qscm/?source=search**](http://www.trust.org/item/20131205092736-1qscm/?source=search)

**Nigeria**

**Nigerian drive to end fuel subsidy fraud mired in confusion**

Nigeria's drive to clean up a gasoline subsidy scheme that soaks up a fifth of federal spending is mired in confusion, with the government, anti-graft investigators and fuel importers at odds over attempts to root out massive fraud. President Goodluck Jonathan has promised that importers will be prosecuted if either of Nigeria's two anti-corruption bodies finds evidence they are defrauding the scheme, the total cost of which was 1 trillion naira ($6.3 billion) last year. A parliamentary inquiry said last year that it had found evidence of huge fraudulent payments in the fuel subsidies, provoking a public outcry.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20131205115050-znu22**](http://www.trust.org/item/20131205115050-znu22)

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