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GENERAL

**Across Regions**

**Food crisis fears prompt UN wake-up call to world leaders**

Governments in rich and poor countries alike should renounce their focus on agribusiness and give more support to small-scale, local food production to achieve global [food security](http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/food-security) and tackle [climate change](http://www.theguardian.com/environment/climate-change), according to a report from UNCTAD, the UN trade and development body. The 2013 [Trade and Environment Review](http://unctad.org/en/pages/ditc/trade-and-environment-review-series.aspx), calls on governments to "wake up before it is too late" and shift rapidly towards [farming](http://www.theguardian.com/environment/farming) models that promote a greater variety of crops, reduced fertiliser use and stronger links between small farms and local consumers. The report warns that urgent and far-reaching action is needed before climate change begins to cause big disruptions to agriculture, particularly in vulnerable regions of poorer countries.

**The Guardian -** [**http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2013/sep/18/food-crisis-un-governments**](http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2013/sep/18/food-crisis-un-governments)

**Top donor countries 'failing' Syrians: Oxfam**

Donor countries, among them France, Qatar and Russia, are failing to adequately fund the humanitarian response to the Syrian crisis, an international aid agency said on Thursday. "Research carried out by... Oxfam reveals that many donor countries are failing to provide their share of the urgently-needed funding for the humanitarian response to the Syria crisis," the agency said in a statement. France and Qatar, who back the Syrian uprising, and Russia, which supports the regime, are among the countries most heavily involved in a conflict that in 30 months has killed more than 110,000 people and forced millions to flee their homes. The analysis also identifies countries that are contributing more than their "fair share," including Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Britain.

**Oxfam -** [**http://www.oxfam.org/en/pressroom/pressrelease/2013-09-19/top-donor-countries-failing-syrians-conflict-un-syria-appeals-falling-short**](http://www.oxfam.org/en/pressroom/pressrelease/2013-09-19/top-donor-countries-failing-syrians-conflict-un-syria-appeals-falling-short)

**Brief -** [**http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/oxfam-fair-share-analysis-un-syria\_appeal-17sept2013.pdf**](http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/oxfam-fair-share-analysis-un-syria_appeal-17sept2013.pdf)

**Indigenous rights affect a third of land in emerging-economy deals – study**

At least one out of every three hectares of land licensed for commercial exploitation in emerging economies overlaps with land to which indigenous communities have a claim, according to a study of 12 countries released on Thursday, highlighting the importance of potential land rights disputes in business deals. The analysis for the Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI), a global coalition of groups working on forest tenure reform and policy, is the first attempt to quantify the risks associated with local land rights for investors that enter into agreements with governments to exploit natural resources. The findings come amid rising international interest in sourcing commodities from developing countries - in sectors including agriculture, forestry and mining.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20130919031629-3wjni/?source=hptop**](http://www.trust.org/item/20130919031629-3wjni/?source=hptop)

CEE/CIS

**Serbia/Kosovo**

**EU police officer shot dead in volatile northern Kosovo**

An EU police officer in Kosovo was shot dead on Thursday in a northern, mainly Serb region where tensions are rising over a fragile accord between the Balkan country and its former master Serbia. It appeared to mark the first fatality suffered by the EU mission, known as EULEX, since it deployed in 2008 after majority-Albanian Kosovo declared independence from Serbia with the backing of the West.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20130919074547-aaghl**](http://www.trust.org/item/20130919074547-aaghl)

**Turkey**

**Authorities shuts border gate after clashes on Syrian side**

Turkey has closed one of its border gates to Syria after an al Qaeda-affiliated rebel group clashed with units of the Arab- and Western-backed Free Syrian Army in the Syrian town of Azaz near the Turkish frontier, a Turkish official said on Thursday. "The Oncupinar border gate has been closed for security reasons as there is still confusion about what is happening on the Syrian side. All humanitarian assistance that normally goes through the gate has ceased," the official told Reuters.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20130919100155-l8wbe**](http://www.trust.org/item/20130919100155-l8wbe)

EAPR

**Philippines**

**Mindanao crisis deepens as displacement tops 100,000**

Aid workers are struggling to provide assistance to more than 100,000 people displaced by fighting in Mindanao, a crisis that could undermine Philippine President Benigno Aquino's efforts to bring peace to the country’s south. “There are reports that some of the evacuation centres are overcrowded, and there are serious WASH concerns, as well as access issues to non-food items," confirmed David Carden, head of OCHA in the Philippines. “We need to ensure that sufficient assistance is available to all those affected.”

**IRIN -** [**http://www.irinnews.org/report/98783/mindanao-crisis-deepens-as-displacement-tops-100-000**](http://www.irinnews.org/report/98783/mindanao-crisis-deepens-as-displacement-tops-100-000)

**Aquino hopeful violence over soon; eight dead in clash**

Fighting between Philippine forces and Muslim rebels in a southern city has been confined to just two areas and should be over soon, President Benigno Aquino said on Thursday. But despite such optimism, heavy clashes broke out in parts of Zamboanga city on Thursday and eight rebels were killed and 15 surrendered in one district, said an army spokesman. The gunmen, from a faction which objects to a deal the government reached with the country's main Muslim rebel group, marched into Zamboanga on 9 September. More than 100 people have been killed and about 112,000 displaced in 11 days of fighting with the rebels from a breakaway faction of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF).

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20130919103629-a607m/?source=hpbreaking**](http://www.trust.org/item/20130919103629-a607m/?source=hpbreaking)

**Solomon Islands**

**Hospital monitoring for illness outbreaks after floods**

A Solomon Islands hospital in eastern Guadalcanal says patient intake seems to be back to normal after the region was hit by destructive flooding. Heavy rain in the mountains left 12,000 people affected by food and water shortages. The nurse manager at the Good Samaritan hospital at Tetere appealed to the Ministry of Health’s health promotion team to come to the area educate locals, but they have not yet come. He says he has been going out into the community himself, encouraging people to boil water before they drink it.

**RNZI -** [**http://www.rnzi.com/pages/news.php?op=read&id=79178**](http://www.rnzi.com/pages/news.php?op=read&id=79178)

ESAR

**Across ESAR**

**Uganda hauls back two dozen Somalia peacekeepers over scam**

Uganda has recalled the commander of its peacekeeping force in Somalia and almost two dozen other officers suspected of involvement in a scam to steal food and fuel and sell it on the black market. Lt Colonel Paddy Ankunda, military spokesman, said the officers had been placed under "open arrest" which will restrict their movements pending the investigation. If the alleged racket is proven, it would underscore how embedded corruption, including among senior officers, is within a military infamous for taking the pay of "ghost soldiers" and money for helicopters which turned out to be junk. "(Brigadier Michael) Ondoga and 23 others have been brought back from Somalia," said Ankunda, spokesman for the Uganda People's Defence Force. The EU, which pays troops stipends, said it had "taken note and (was) looking into the allegations".

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/18/us-uganda-peacekeepers-idUSBRE98H0H820130918**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/18/us-uganda-peacekeepers-idUSBRE98H0H820130918)

**Angola**

**Police vow to clamp down on planned protest**

Angolan police vowed on Wednesday to use force if necessary to crack down on an anti-government youth protest planned for Thursday in Luanda, at which they expect activists to distribute posters that incite violence and disturb public order. "We will repress, I repeat, vehemently repress, all acts that go against order and public security, and we will use force if it is necessary," Aristofanes dos Santos, spokesman for Angolan police said. The Angolan Revolutionary Movement, which has held several protests since 2011 urging President Jose Eduardo dos Santos to resign after 34 years in power, said the march will be peaceful and is protected by Angolan law. Amnesty International called on Angolan authorities not to suppress the march, avoid making arbitrary arrests and to use force only if strictly necessary.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20130918222752-wt6j3**](http://www.trust.org/item/20130918222752-wt6j3)

**Kenya**

**Branded an ICC witness, woman fears for life**

A Kenyan woman says she fears for her life after her photo was circulated on social media and on blogs claiming she was the first witness - whose identity was hidden- to testify against Kenya's deputy president during his trial at the International Criminal Court. Rahab Muthoni says she reported her fears to police late Wednesday. The attempt to reveal the identity of the first witness prompted the presiding judge in the ICC trial of William Ruto to issue a stern warning Wednesday against witness intimidation and revealing the names of protected witnesses testifying in the case.

**AP -** [**http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=223980532**](http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=223980532)

**Mozambique**

**Diarrhea outbreak kills 100 people**

Authorities in Mozambique say about 100 people have died in a diarrhea outbreak in a central province. The medical chief at the Gurue district hospital in Zambezia province, reported that the outbreak started two weeks ago and is now under control. He says the outbreak was caused by a lack of hygiene among people who don't wash their hands before cooking and eating in markets and other places. He also says illegal mining in the area has polluted rivers used by residents for drinking water. No one suffering from diarrhea has been admitted to the district hospital since Sunday.

**AP -** [**http://www.nzherald.co.nz/world/news/article.cfm?c\_id=2&objectid=11126156**](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/world/news/article.cfm?c_id=2&objectid=11126156)

**Zimbabwe**

**Tsvangirai vows to stay on as opposition leader**

Zimbabwe's opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai said on Wednesday he would remain leader of his MDC party despite an internal call for him to quit after an overwhelming defeat in July's presidential election against Robert Mugabe. Tsvangirai has dismissed his third consecutive defeat by Mugabe as fraud, but it has fuelled speculation he might step down as leader of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), the party he has led since its formation in 1999 when Zimbabwe's economy began to crumble.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/18/us-zimbabwe-tsvangirai-idUSBRE98H0MU20130918**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/18/us-zimbabwe-tsvangirai-idUSBRE98H0MU20130918)

MENA

**Egypt**

**Police storm area near Cairo, officer killed**

Egyptian security forces clashed with gunmen on the outskirts of Cairo on Thursday as the army-backed government moved to reassert control over an Islamist-dominated area where political violence broke out last month. A police general was killed in an exchange of gunfire outside the town of Kerdasa, 14km, from the capital. Dozens of police and army vehicles entered Kerdasa at daybreak in the second operation this week to restore control over areas where hostility to the authorities has grown since the army deposed President Mohamed Mursi on 3 July.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20130919090823-8vase/?source=hpbreaking**](http://www.trust.org/item/20130919090823-8vase/?source=hpbreaking)

**Two bombs defused on Cairo metro-report**

Egyptian explosives experts defused two primitive bombs planted on the Cairo metro line on Thursday, the state news agency reported, causing a partial closure of the network. The bombs had been found 100 metres (yards) from Helmeyet el-Zaytoun station in northeast Cairo.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20130919062214-6ie57/?source=hpbreaking**](http://www.trust.org/item/20130919062214-6ie57/?source=hpbreaking)

**Iran**

**Authorities release jailed human rights lawyer - husband**

Imprisoned Iranian lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh, who has defended human rights activists including Nobel Peace laureate Shirin Ebadi, has been released by the authorities, her husband wrote in a Facebook post on Wednesday. Sotoudeh, herself a human rights activist, had been serving a six-year sentence after being arrested in September 2010 and convicted of spreading propaganda and conspiring to harm state security. Her husband Reza Khandan, whose Facebook page is followed by thousands, wrote in a short post on Wednesday: "Nasrin came … they told her you are free …" Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, who took office last month, pledged during his election campaign to ease some political and social restrictions at home, and his supporters have called for the release of political prisoners in Iran.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/18/us-iran-sotoudeh-idUSBRE98H0MG20130918**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/18/us-iran-sotoudeh-idUSBRE98H0MG20130918)

**Country will never seek to build nuclear weapons, Rouhani tells US TV**

[Iran](http://www.theguardian.com/world/iran)'s new president [Hassan Rouhani](http://www.theguardian.com/world/hassan-rouhani) has told an American television audience he is hopeful of a diplomatic breakthrough over Tehran's [nuclear weapons](http://www.theguardian.com/world/nuclear-weapons) programme, insisting his country had no intention of developing weapons of mass destruction. Speaking before a crucial visit to the UN in New York, Rouhani claimed his government had "full power and authority" from Iran's supreme leader to negotiate over the nuclear programme, which the US fears is close to creating a bomb.

**The Guardian -** [**http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/sep/19/iran-nuclear-weapons-rouhani**](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/sep/19/iran-nuclear-weapons-rouhani)

**Iraq**

**Children find 10 handcuffed, blindfolded corpses in Baghdad – police**

Children discovered the handcuffed and blindfolded corpses of 10 unidentified young men in eastern Baghdad on Thursday, apparently killed by gunshots to the head, Iraqi police said. Police said residents told them unusual vehicle movements to and from an abandoned building in the area had caught the attention of the children, who waited until the cars had left to investigate. "Several kids climbed over the wall of the building to enter and they found the 10 bodies inside one of its rooms," said a police officer involved in the investigation. It was not clear who was behind the killings.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20130919090352-1fvcj**](http://www.trust.org/item/20130919090352-1fvcj)

**Libya**

**Saif Gaddafi trial postponed to 12 December**

A Libyan state TV says the trial of the son of Libyan dictator Moammar Gadhafi on charges of "harming state security" has been postponed, after he showed up in a courtroom in a western mountain town. The Thursday session in Zintan involving Seif al-Islam Gadhafi, the only surviving son of Gadhafi held in Libyan custody, is separate from proceedings accusing him of murder and other crimes during Libya's eight-month civil war in 2011. Those proceedings are supposed to be held in the capital, Tripoli.

**AP -** [**http://www.theguardian.com/world/feedarticle/10981277**](http://www.theguardian.com/world/feedarticle/10981277)

**Saudi Arabia**

**Two die of MERS virus, bringing total deaths in kingdom to 49**

Two Saudis have died after contracting the MERS coronavirus, the health ministry said on Thursday, bringing the total number of fatalities from the SARS-like virus in the kingdom to 49. A 75-year-old woman, who had suffered chronic illnesses, died in the western city of Medina, while a man, 83, who also had chronic diseases, died in the capital, the ministry website said. The ministry also registered three new cases, bringing to 107 the total number of infections in Saudi Arabia, the country worst hit by the virus. WHO said on 7 September that it has been informed of 114 cases of MERS infection worldwide, among them 54 fatalities.

**AFP -** [**http://www.france24.com/en/20130919-two-saudis-die-mers-virus**](http://www.france24.com/en/20130919-two-saudis-die-mers-virus)

**Sudan**

**Dozens killed in Darfur: tribal chief**

Clashes between rival tribes in Sudan's western region of Darfur on Wednesday killed at least 20 people despite a peace deal agreed last month, a tribal chief said. Sheikh Merdes of the Maaliya tribe said that "clashes broke out Wednesday when a group from the Rezeigat tribe attacked us in the Bakhit region" some 70km east of East Darfur capital Ed Daein. "There was fighting in which the other side was supported by government vehicles," he charged. Merdes spoke of "20 dead and 24 wounded" in the Maaliya camp in the fighting which lasted more than four hours. A Rezeigat spokesman confirmed that clashes had taken place, but was unable to give a toll.

**AFP -** [**http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/98682-dozens-killed-in-sudan-s-darfur**](http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/98682-dozens-killed-in-sudan-s-darfur)

**Syria**

**Drug shortages threaten health catastrophe**

Drug production in Syria has plunged ever since an uprising broke out against President al-Assad 30 months ago and degenerated into civil war. The shortage caused by the raging war has created "a very critical situation" in Syria, said WHO’s Elisabeth Hoff. "Pharmaceutical factories only cover 20% to 30% of the needs, though they used to cover 90%" before the conflict, she reported. Hoff explained that most factories are located in Homs, Aleppo and in the outskirts of Damascus. The three areas have seen some of the worst fighting and destruction in the conflict. Eighteen of 73 factories have closed down because of damage, transport difficulties and a halt in raw material imports. WHO warned in March that drug production had fallen because of restrictions on imports, fluctuations in the exchange rate and spiralling production costs.

**AFP -** [**http://www.france24.com/en/20130918-syria-drug-shortages-threaten-health-catastrophe**](http://www.france24.com/en/20130918-syria-drug-shortages-threaten-health-catastrophe)

**Yemen**

**Talks stumble over north-south divide**

Reconciliation talks in Yemen have stumbled over the future form of the state, with ousted president Ali Abdullah Saleh's party rejecting a north-south federation, delegates and officials say. A special committee formed equally of northern and southern representatives was this week close to signing a roadmap to solve the issue of the formerly independent south Yemen. But the signing of such an accord has been put off as the two representatives of Saleh's General People's Congress walked out and the GPC suspended its participation, rejecting any bid to "harm the unity of the homeland." "The main problem is related to the form of the state: should it be formed of two regions, or several," said Ahmed Awad bin Mubarak, secretary general of the national dialogue.

**AFP -** [**http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/130918/yemen-talks-stumble-over-north-south-divide**](http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/130918/yemen-talks-stumble-over-north-south-divide)

ROSA

**Across ROSA**

**Five killed in shootout along Pakistan-Afghanistan border**

Security forces killed five men Wednesday near the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, officials from the two countries said, though they offered conflicting claims over whether the dead were militants or cattle farmers. The men had crossed the porous border to get fodder for their cattle when Afghan security forces killed them, Pakistani official Taj Mohammed said. But the police chief for Afghanistan's Paktika province, Daulat Khan Zadran, said the men were Taliban militants killed in a confrontation with Afghan security forces. The Pakistani government summoned a top Afghan diplomat to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Islamabad to protest the incident.

**AP -** [**http://www.sunherald.com/2013/09/18/4960833/5-killed-in-shootout-along-pakistan.html**](http://www.sunherald.com/2013/09/18/4960833/5-killed-in-shootout-along-pakistan.html)

**Afghanistan**

**Taliban attack police in previously peaceful north**

Taliban fighters have attacked police in northern Afghanistan, government officials said on Thursday, though they gave different accounts of the severity of the attack. Violence has increased recently in the Afghan north after years of relative peace, compounding worries about security after foreign troops leave next year. The insurgents ambushed a police convoy during an operation to clear an area in Badakhshan province on Wednesday, said Dawlat Mohammad, administrative chief of the district.

Mohammad said 10 policemen were killed and 16 were captured. But the Interior Ministry in Kabul denied that the Taliban had taken any policemen prisoner.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20130919081119-rg480/?source=hpbreaking**](http://www.trust.org/item/20130919081119-rg480/?source=hpbreaking)

**Pakistan**

**Clerics suggest amendment to blasphemy laws**

Pakistan's top religious clerics Wednesday suggested amendments to the country's controversial blasphemy laws, proposing the death penalty for people convicted of making false accusations. Blasphemy is an extremely sensitive issue in Pakistan, where 97% of the population is Muslim, and insulting the Prophet Mohammed can be punished by death under the country's penal code. Even unproven allegations can provoke a violent public response, and critics say the law is often used to settle personal scores. The country's Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) suggested the government should bring in the death penalty for people convicted of making false accusations of blasphemy. "All the religious scholars agreed to put an end to the misuse of blasphemy laws," scholar Allama Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi told AFP.

**AFP -** [**http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/130918/pakistani-clerics-suggest-amendment-blasphemy-laws**](http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/130918/pakistani-clerics-suggest-amendment-blasphemy-laws)

**To deal with worsening drought, Pakistan turns to olives**

As Pakistan struggles with increasingly unpredictable weather patterns linked to climate change, farmers in arid regions are seizing on a drought-resilient crop better known from southern Europe and the Middle East: olives. Ghulam Mustafa, 53, is one of the farmers in Chakwal district of Pakistan’s Punjab province who is experimenting with growing olives, alongside his normal wheat and peanut crops, to cope with worsening drought problems.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20130919114433-bh0t1/?source=hpbreaking**](http://www.trust.org/item/20130919114433-bh0t1/?source=hpbreaking)

TACR

**Mexico**

**Manuel a hurricane after deadly flooding**

The US National Hurricane Center says Manuel has become a hurricane with its northern eyewall now nearing the Pacific Coast of Mexico. Forecasters say the deadly storm has strengthened and it has top sustained winds of 75 mph. Manuel is centered about 20 miles southeast of the western Mexican community of Altata. The center also says Manuel is moving north at 5 mph and a hurricane warning is in effect from La Cruz to Topolobampo in Mexico. Some strengthening is possible as it nears the coast.

**AP -** [**http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2013/09/18/manuel-mexico-acapulco-hurricane/2834567/**](http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2013/09/18/manuel-mexico-acapulco-hurricane/2834567/)

**Looting hits Acapulco as storm death toll rises**

Looting broke out in the flooded Mexican beach resort of Acapulco as the government struggled to reach tens of thousands of people cut off by flooding that had claimed at least 70 lives by on 18 September. Stores were ransacked by looters who carried off everything from televisions to Christmas decorations after floodwaters wreaked havoc in the Pacific port that has borne the brunt of some of the worst storm damage to hit Mexico in years. Tens of thousands of people have been trapped in the aftermath of two tropical storms that hammered vast swathes of Mexico. More than 1 million people have been affected, and Acapulco's airport terminal was under water, stranding tourists. Torrential rains were spawned by two tropical storms, Ingrid and Manuel, which converged on Mexico from the Gulf and the Pacific over the weekend, triggering the flash floods.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/18/us-storm-ingrid-idUSBRE98D0AH20130918**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/18/us-storm-ingrid-idUSBRE98D0AH20130918)

WCAR

**CAR**

**Villagers take up arms to face down rebels**

Framing the deserted streets, the burned roofs of Bossangoa's destroyed neighbourhoods are a stark reminder of the violence that has recently unfolded in this Central African town. Bossangoa's residents have fled in three directions: Christians have occupied the Catholic church, Muslims a local school, and the Fula people, a distinct Muslim group, have taken over an airfield. It is the latest sign of a worrying new turn in the increasingly sectarian conflict between the area's Christian majority and fighters from the former Seleka rebel alliance who are largely drawn from the country's Muslim minority. All around Bossangoa, Christian vigilante groups are springing up, bent on defending their villages from further atrocities. Armed with homemade guns, machetes, or simply holding clubs, these villagers proclaim themselves "ready to die" to defend their land from the relentless attacks by the fighters.

**AFP -**

[**http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5hM3DiagSrqEb8SWairiAY1BWILvA?docId=CNG.cd73c01e8f035fbcc9e3c025f1c49406.351&hl=en**](http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5hM3DiagSrqEb8SWairiAY1BWILvA?docId=CNG.cd73c01e8f035fbcc9e3c025f1c49406.351&hl=en)

**Reinforcements start arriving**

Reinforcements have begun arriving for an African peacekeeping mission in CAR but the planned 3 600-strong force will not be fully deployed before 2014, an official involved in talks on the crisis reported. France has called on world powers to take action to prevent the country following Somalia's path to decades of lawlessness and efforts are focusing on beefing up a 1,100-strong African force that has long been deployed. "The force will reach 2 000 soldiers [in September] and hit 3 600 by January 2014," an official who took part in regional meetings hosted by Gabon reported. Further meetings are due to take place in Gabon later this week to decide on the leadership and makeup of the force.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.news24.com/Africa/News/Reinforcements-start-arriving-in-CAR-20130917**](http://www.news24.com/Africa/News/Reinforcements-start-arriving-in-CAR-20130917)

**Seleka fighters accused of rights violations - HRW**

The Seleka alliance that seized control of CAR in March has brought death and destruction to the country instead of the security and aid it promised, Human Rights Watch said in a report. UN officials and rights groups say both sides may have committed war crimes in the violence that has continued since the new president, Michel Djotodia, was sworn in last month. The HRW report, ‘I Can Still Smell the Dead’: The Forgotten Human Rights Crisis in the Central African Republic,’ states that the Seleka killed scores of people, including children, raped at least 47 women and deliberately destroyed more than 1,000 homes, both in the capital Bangui, and in the provinces between February and June this year.

**HRW Report -** [**http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/car0913\_ForUpload.pdf**](http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/car0913_ForUpload.pdf)

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20130918145421-go3su/?source=hptop**](http://www.trust.org/item/20130918145421-go3su/?source=hptop)

**DR Congo**

**Armed groups demand place in national talks**

Eleven armed groups operating in North Kivu and South Kivu provinces in the east of DRC want to be included in the national dialogue. Speaking under the umbrella of the "supreme council of self-defense armed groups in eastern DRC", the groups said the issue of insecurity in this part of the country cannot be resolved without their involvement. The groups say they have been excluded in the national talks at the initiative of President Joseph Kabila to find a solution in eastern DRC. However, a team was set up during the talks opened on 7 September to handle the issue of disarmament of the militia groups. "We believe that the actors should have been involved so that the decisions taken can be long lasting and applicable on the ground," said Jacques Kabusala, the secretary general of the coalition of the 11 armed groups.

**Xinhua -**

[**http://www.africareview.com/News/Armed+groups+in+DR+Congo+demand+included+in+national+dialogue/-/979180/1996438/-/3i2c2fz/-/index.html**](http://www.africareview.com/News/Armed+groups+in+DR+Congo+demand+included+in+national+dialogue/-/979180/1996438/-/3i2c2fz/-/index.html)

**Mali**

**Government calls parliamentary elections for 24 November**

Mali's new government set 24 November as the date for the first parliamentary elections since a military coup last year which led to a sweeping Islamist occupation and a French-led military intervention. The announcement comes two weeks after Mali's first post-war president Ibrahim Boubacar Keita appointed PM Oumar Tatam Ly to lead the nation's return to stability after 18 months of political chaos. "Under the terms of the plan, the electoral college is called for Sunday, 24 November 2013, throughout the national territory and a second round of voting will take place Sunday, 15 December 2013 in constituencies where no candidate has obtained an absolute majority of votes cast in the first round," the minutes of a cabinet meeting published by the government said.

**AFP -**

[**http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5iq1ULYMMkoRTEsXfCFdQoQf3YcJg?docId=CNG.2a45967236d4be4d0773e01fb146fd7a.381&hl=en**](http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5iq1ULYMMkoRTEsXfCFdQoQf3YcJg?docId=CNG.2a45967236d4be4d0773e01fb146fd7a.381&hl=en)

**France turns to crowdsourcing to fight Mali aid corruption**

France is enlisting the help of Malians to police its aid projects in the country with an innovative crowdsourcing project asking people to report corruption by text or online. The foreign ministry's project is the first of its kind in France, which has pledged $374 million) in aid to Mali after it helped the country oust Al-Qaeda-linked groups that were occupying the north. It consists of a website (<http://transparence.ambafrance-ml.org/> ) that geolocalises every development project on a map, giving funding details for each programme, and asks Malians to report any irregularities about the schemes via text message or an online form as part of a "citizen control."

**AFP -** [**http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/130918/france-turns-crowdsourcing-fight-mali-aid-corruption**](http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/130918/france-turns-crowdsourcing-fight-mali-aid-corruption)

**Armed groups in north commit to peace talks**

Armed factions from Mali's diverse and bitterly-opposed desert communities have committed to peace talks to end an 18-month crisis triggered by a Tuareg uprising, they said on Wednesday. The groups made the statement after a three-day meeting in Bamako of the main Tuareg separatist organisations with the Arab Movement of Azawad (MAA) and the mainly-black United Forces of Patriotic Resistance (UFPR). They presented an agreement committing to dialogue to President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, said Hamada Ag Bibi, of the High Council for the Unity of Azawad, which represented the Tuareg side along with the larger National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA).

**AFP -**

[**http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/2/9/81931/World/International/Armed-groups-in-northern-Mali-commit-to-peace-talk.aspx**](http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/2/9/81931/World/International/Armed-groups-in-northern-Mali-commit-to-peace-talk.aspx)

**More than 100 Chadian soldiers leave north**

An official with the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali says more than 100 Chadian soldiers have left their positions in the northern Kidal province. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to journalists, said Wednesday that between 130 and 160 soldiers had deserted their base in the town of Tessalit. The soldiers, who complained about conditions in northern Mali, have now arrived in the city of Gao. A delegation from the Chadian military has arrived for consultations with the soldiers. Kidal is still home to a separatist rebel movement.

**AP -** [**http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/100-chadian-soldiers-leave-north-mali-20291035**](http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/100-chadian-soldiers-leave-north-mali-20291035)

**Niger**

**Government would welcome armed US drones - FM**

Niger would welcome the deployment of armed US drones to the country to help in its battle against an armed Islamist threat and drug trafficking in the Sahara, FM Mohamed Bazoum said on Wednesday. Washington deployed about 100 military personnel and unarmed surveillance drones in Niger after a French-led military operation in January destroyed an al Qaeda enclave in neighbouring northern Mali. Niger President Mahamadou Issoufou's government, concerned not only by the presence of Islamists but also the trafficking of arms, cocaine and cannabis in the north, wants to further reinforce military ties with the country's Western partners.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20130918153035-3ya1t/?source=hpbreaking**](http://www.trust.org/item/20130918153035-3ya1t/?source=hpbreaking)

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