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GENERAL

**Across Regions**

**Hezbollah leader assails European sanctions**

Hezbollah’s leader on Wednesday criticized the European Union’s decision to blacklist his organization’s military wing as a terrorist group, saying the move gave Israel “legal cover” to wage war against Lebanon. In a speech delivered via video to an Islamic women’s group, the leader, Hassan Nasrallah, accused the European Union of “bowing down” to the United States and Israel.

**NYT -** [**http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/25/world/middleeast/hezbollah-leader-assails-european-sanctions.html?ref=europe**](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/25/world/middleeast/hezbollah-leader-assails-european-sanctions.html?ref=europe)

**Australia 'needs military asylum operation'**

Australia's opposition has called for a military solution to fight people smugglers, as the toll from the sinking of an asylum boat rose to 11. Opposition leader Tony Abbott said the issue was "a national emergency", and he would ask a military commander to tackle the boats, if elected. The migrant boat sank off Indonesia's Java island, a transit point for people-smugglers, on Wednesday.

**BBC -** [**http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-23445579**](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-23445579)

EAPR

**Cambodia**

**More than 40,000 observers to monitor Cambodia's poll on Sunday**

Around 40,141 national and 85 foreign observers will inspect Cambodia's fifth parliamentary elections on Sunday, Secretary General of the National Election Committee Tep Nytha said Wednesday. National observers will come from 35 associations and non- governmental organizations. Eight political parties will compete in the elections on Sunday with around 9.67 million eligible voters. A month-long election campaign kicked off on 27 June and will complete on Friday.

**Xinhua -** [**http://www.tmcnet.com/usubmit/2013/07/24/7298397.htm**](http://www.tmcnet.com/usubmit/2013/07/24/7298397.htm)

**China**

**Killing highlights concerns over one-child policy**

A man with a knife killed two government officials at a family planning bureau and injured four other people, the Chinese state news media reported on Wednesday, in an incident that drew wide attention in China because of ongoing controversy over the country’s one-child policy. According to the state news media, the man had gone to the bureau on Monday to register his fourth child for permanent residency, but had been refused the registration because he had not paid a fine for having multiple children.   
**NYT -** [**http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/26/world/asia/killing-highlights-concerns-over-chinas-one-child-policy.html?ref=asia**](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/26/world/asia/killing-highlights-concerns-over-chinas-one-child-policy.html?ref=asia)

ESAR

**South Sudan**

**Juba deploys armed security forces after cabinet dissolution**

South Sudanese government on Wednesday deployed heavily armed security forces, comprising of police and regular soldiers, to guard key government institutions in the capital, Juba, following president Salva Kiir’s decision to dissolve the government. Public and privately-owned radio stations, as well as daily newspapers have reported on calls from senior government officials and high ranking military officers, appealing for calm as the president forms a new cabinet.  
**Sudan Tribune -** [**http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article47399**](http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article47399)

**Zimbabwe**

**AU chief arrives ahead of crunch vote**

African Union Commission chairwoman Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma flew into Harare Wednesday to assess Zimbabwe’s preparedness for next week’s elections. But the South African’s visit comes amid questions about the fairness of the vote and about the status of the African Union’s observer mission. With a week to go before the July 31 poll, the head of the AU observer mission, former Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo, has not yet arrived in the country.  
**AFP -** [**http://www.capitalfm.co.ke/news/2013/07/au-chief-arrives-in-zimbabwe-ahead-of-crunch-vote/**](http://www.capitalfm.co.ke/news/2013/07/au-chief-arrives-in-zimbabwe-ahead-of-crunch-vote/)

MENA

**Across MENA**

**Iraqi Kurdistan to host pan-Kurd conference**

Iraq's autonomous Kurdish region is preparing to host a conference that will bring together Kurdish parties from Iraq, Syria, Iran and Turkey, an official said on Wednesday. A preparatory meeting was held in Arbil, the capital of Iraqi Kurdistan, on Monday, and was attended by 39 Kurdish parties. Major Kurdish populations are spread across four countries -- Syria, Turkey, Iraq and Iran.

**AFP -** [**http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/91808-iraqi-kurdistan-to-host-pan-kurd-conference**](http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/91808-iraqi-kurdistan-to-host-pan-kurd-conference)

**Syrian refugees face wave of racism in Egypt, Lebanon**

A wave of xenophobia is blighting the lives of thousands of Syrian refugees in countries such as Egypt and Lebanon, where they are often blamed for anything that goes wrong. In Egypt, Syrians are accused of taking sides and interfering in the country's political crisis, while in Lebanon they are accused of taking the jobs of Lebanese. Egyptian media have played an instrumental role in spreading anti-Syrian sentiment, accusing them of joining protests in support of deposed Islamist president Mohammed Morsi.   
**Naharnet -** [**http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/91839-syrian-refugees-face-%20wave-of-racism-in-egypt-lebanon**](http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/91839-syrian-refugees-face-%20wave-of-racism-in-egypt-lebanon)

**Egypt**

**Government orders fresh arrest of Brotherhood leaders**

Egypt's public prosecutor ordered the arrest of Muslim Brotherhood leader Mohamed Badie and eight senior members of the Islamist movement on Wednesday in a probe over accusations of inciting violence, MENA state news agency reported. Badie has been detained for questioning and later released at least once since the army deposed Islamist president Mohamed Mursi, a leader of the Brotherhood, on July 3.

**Reuters -** [**http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2013/07/24/Egypt-orders-fresh-arrest-of-Brotherhood-leaders.html**](http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2013/07/24/Egypt-orders-fresh-arrest-of-Brotherhood-leaders.html)

**Bomb, attacks hit Sinai as army calls for rallies**

A car bomb exploded near a police base and two soldiers were killed in separate, multiple attacks in Egypt's lawless Sinai peninsula, which has seen a spike in violence since the July 3 army ouster of the country's Islamist president, Reuters reported. Four militants died when the car, rigged with gas canisters and carrying explosive belts, detonated in a desert area near the port town of El-Arish on Wednesday, the sources said. The attacks happened just hours after the head of Egypt's military called for rallies to back efforts to quell violence unleashed by the overthrow of Mohamed Mursi.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/07/24/us-egpyt-protests-sinai-idUSBRE96N0WL20130724**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/07/24/us-egpyt-protests-sinai-idUSBRE96N0WL20130724)

**Second largest Islamist party rejects army call for rally**

Egypt's second biggest Islamist Party said on Wednesday it rejected a call by the head of the army for mass rallies to give him a mandate to confront violence unleashed after the military deposed the country's Islamist president. "The state does not need a mandate to perform its duty as long as it is within the boundaries of the law," the party, Nour, said in a statement. "Violations of the law should be handled by the state, but the state's violations of the law threaten the very existence of the state," it said.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/07/24/us-egypt-protests-nour-idUSBRE96N13F20130724**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/07/24/us-egypt-protests-nour-idUSBRE96N13F20130724)

**Iraq**

**Gunmen set up fake checkpoint, kill 14 truck drivers in Tuz Khurmatu**

14 truck drivers were killed by unknown gunmen at dawn today 25, July near Sulaiman Bek district, belonging to Tuz Khurmatu. A security source said that unidentified gunmen set up a fake checkpoint on the road linking Baghdad to Kirkuk near Sulaiman Bek, and stopped the truck drivers and killed 14 of them. He added that other insurgents launched, at the same time, attacks on the checkpoints of the Iraqi army in the region, noting that a force from the Iraqi army went to the area and found the bodies near the fake checkpoint.

**Nina News -** [**http://www.ninanews.com/english/News\_Details.asp?ar95\_VQ=GJDKKD**](http://www.ninanews.com/english/News_Details.asp?ar95_VQ=GJDKKD)

**Syria**

**Rebels kill woman in attack on civilian convoy**

Rebels attacked a convoy of trucks and buses in northern Syria, activists said on 24 July, after militants had warned they would target all vehicles on the road to stop the army from using its only remaining route to Aleppo. One woman was killed and 19 people were wounded, some critically, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, based in Britain. The hardline rebel group Ahrar al-Sham uploaded video footage of the attack onto YouTube on 23 July.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20130724103645-wpn36**](http://www.trust.org/item/20130724103645-wpn36)

**Civilians in besieged areas in urgent need of relief**

Tens of thousands of civilians in Syria are living in extremely harsh conditions in sealed-off areas, and humanitarian aid is being prevented from reaching them. The consequences could be tragic. Civilians living in areas encircled by government forces or the various armed opposition groups are not receiving regular supplies of food or other basic necessities. To bring them aid it is necessary to obtain the consent of all sides, which can at times be very difficult.

**ICRC -** [**http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/update/2013/07-24-syria-access-civilians-homs.htm**](http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/update/2013/07-24-syria-access-civilians-homs.htm)

**Government rocket attack kills 15 Palestinian refugees**

Forces loyal to President Bashar al-Assad killed at least 15 Palestinians, mostly women and children, in a rocket attack on a rebel-held refugee camp on the southern edge of Damascus on Wednesday, opposition activists said. Palestinian militia from the pro-Assad Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC) as well as Syrian army and intelligence troops have been surrounding the camp for months.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/07/24/us-syria-crisis-palestinians-idUSBRE96N1DH20130724?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/07/24/us-syria-crisis-palestinians-idUSBRE96N1DH20130724?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews)

**Sudan**

**Darfur rebels attack North Kordofan military**

Sudanese rebels from Darfur have attacked an army position in North Kordofan, killing five soldiers in fierce fighting, the military has said. North Kordofan has been relatively untouched by the violence in Darfur and near the border with South Sudan. South Sudan denies charges it backs the Darfur rebels. Details of the battle are unclear, but it comes ahead of Sudan's deadline to halt oil exports from Sudan Sudan over the allegations of rebel support.

**BBC -** [**http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-23440721**](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-23440721)

**Currency falls to record low after South cuts oil flows**

Sudan’s currency has fallen to a record low against the dollar on the black market since South Sudan started reducing cross-border oil flows in a row over alleged support for rebels, dealers said. On Wednesday, one dollar bought SDG 7.35 on the black market—which has become the business benchmark—compared to 7 last week, black market dealers said. The central bank rate is around 4.4.

**Asharq Al-Awsat -** [**http://www.aawsat.net/2013/07/article55310979**](http://www.aawsat.net/2013/07/article55310979)

**Tunisia**

**Suspects behind Tunisia assassination 'identified'**

Six people believed to have orchestrated the killing of an opposition figure whose assassination in February plunged Tunisia into a major political crisis have been identified, a minister said Wednesday. "We have identified the sponsors and the authors of the assassination of Chokri Belaid," said Noureddin B'Hiri, senior adviser to the prime minister, after a cabinet meeting. B'Hiri said the details would be revealed "soon" by Interior Minister Lotfi Ben Jeddou, without   
**AFP -** [**http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/2/8/77298/World/Region/Suspects-behind-Tunisia-assassination-identified.aspx**](http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/2/8/77298/World/Region/Suspects-behind-Tunisia-assassination-identified.aspx)

**Yemen**

**Girl's speech against child marriage goes viral**

A video of an 11-year-old Yemeni girl's account of escaping her arranged marriage has gone viral. In the 3-minute clip, Nada al-Ahdal says she would rather die than get married at her age and calls the potential marriage "criminal." According to a report in NOW Lebanon, Nada fled to her uncle when her parents agreed to marry her to a Yemeni expatriate living in Saudi Arabia.

**Aljazeera -** [**http://stream.aljazeera.com/story/201307232138-0022928**](http://stream.aljazeera.com/story/201307232138-0022928)

ROSA

**Afghanistan 3**

**Taliban abducts policemen after drugging them**

Taliban militants have reportedly abducted 12 local policemen after poisoning their food in southern Afghanistan. Ghulam Sakhi Rogh Lewani, police chief of the southern Zabul Province, said on July 25 that the incident happened in the province's remote Shahjoi district. He said the Taliban militants approached the post posing as guests and apparently mixed drugs into the food the policemen had prepared for themselves.

**DPA -** [**http://www.rferl.org/content/afghanistan-taliban-police-drugged/25056653.html**](http://www.rferl.org/content/afghanistan-taliban-police-drugged/25056653.html)

**India**

**Court set to pass first verdict in gang-rape case**

An Indian court was scheduled to deliver Thursday the first verdict on one of five suspects on trial over the deadly gang-rape of a student in December which shocked the nation and sparked mass protests. The juveniles' court in New Delhi has finished hearing the case of a teenager, aged 17 at the time of the deadly assault on a bus in the capital, who faces a maximum sentence of three years in a correctional facility. The verdict had been expected on July 11, but was deferred by the principal magistrate Geetanjli Goel until Thursday.

**AFP -** [**http://www.foxnews.com/world/2013/07/24/india-court-set-to-pass-first-verdict-in-gang-rape-case/**](http://www.foxnews.com/world/2013/07/24/india-court-set-to-pass-first-verdict-in-gang-rape-case/)

**Maoists kill six villagers in Jharkhand**

Maoists brutally killed six villagers in Jharkhand's Khunti district. The incident took place in Maoist hotbed Murhu Block on Wednesday. According to locals, Maoists attacked a group of people late in the night and shot dead six. Birsa Munda, a local said that as he came out of his house early in the morning he saw six bodies lying on the ground with few scattered papers reading Maoist warning.

**ANI -** [**http://www.sify.com/news/maoists-kill-six-villagers-in-jharkhand-news-national-nhzmGxijcjb.html**](http://www.sify.com/news/maoists-kill-six-villagers-in-jharkhand-news-national-nhzmGxijcjb.html)

**Pakistan**

**Gunmen, blasts kill 3 in attack on Pakistan intelligence service**

A series of blasts and gunfire killed three people and wounded at least 40 in an attack on the offices of the Pakistani intelligence agency and other security forces in the southern town of Sukkur on Wednesday evening, police officials said. Up to 10 gunmen attacked the heavily guarded compound and detonated four bombs, said Masood Bangash, the deputy superintendent of police in Sukkur. He said the local offices of the Inter-Services Intelligence, the Pakistani military intelligence force, seemed to be the main target.

**Reuters -** [**http://in.reuters.com/article/2013/07/24/pakistan-attack-sukkur-idINDEE96N0CI20130724**](http://in.reuters.com/article/2013/07/24/pakistan-attack-sukkur-idINDEE96N0CI20130724)

TACR

**Across TACR**

**Pope in Brazil warns against legalising drugs**

Pontiff says liberal policies being considered in Latin America will not end suffering as he continues first overseas visit. Pope Francis entered political waters on Wednesday with a sharply worded condemnation of moves to legalise drug use. His comments, which were made during a visit to a rehabilitation centre in Brazil, run counter to a growing movement in Latin America to liberalise sales of marijuana and other narcotics following decades of a murderous and largely ineffectual war against drugs in the region.

**Guardian -** [**http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/jul/24/pope-francis-brazil-mass**](http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/jul/24/pope-francis-brazil-mass)

**Mexico**

**Clashes in Michoacan state leave 22 dead**

At least 20 armed gang members have died in clashes with police in Mexico's western Michoacan state, officials say. Two police officers were also killed in shootouts that started after gang members blocked roads with vehicles and ambushed police patrols. The attacks came a day after members of the Knights Templar drug gang shot dead five demonstrators protesting against the cartel's violent tactics.

**BBC -** [**http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-23429583**](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-23429583)

WCAR

**Across WCAR**

**West Africa cholera down but officials vigilant - UNICEF mention**

Some 1,700 people in West Africa have contracted cholera since mid-June, showing a significant decline compared to the same seven-week period in 2012 when 11,834 were affected. Overall, 50,439 people contracted cholera in West and Central Africa in 2012, according to UNICEF. Sierra Leone and Guinea saw 30,000 people infected and 400 deaths. This year, most of the cases are in Guinea Bissau (652), Sierra Leone (367) and Niger (354). Guinean health officials have worked with Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) and UNICEF to vaccinate 3,740 people in the Mènyingbé Islands, near Conakry, to prevent cholera from spreading.

**IRIN** - [**http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportID=98465**](http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportID=98465)

**CAR**

**UN concerned about reported human rights violations by rebel groups**

The United Nations political mission in the Central African Republic (CAR) is concerned about purported human rights violations in the country. A spokesperson for Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told journalists in New York that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the CAR, Babacar Gaye, met yesterday with local human rights non-governmental organizations (NGOs), who informed him of systematic killings of civilians, rape and other violations by soldiers from the Séléka coalition.

**UN -** [**http://reliefweb.int/report/central-african-republic/un-mission-concerned-about-reported-human-rights-violations-rebel**](http://reliefweb.int/report/central-african-republic/un-mission-concerned-about-reported-human-rights-violations-rebel)

**Guinea .**

**At least 95 died in ethnic violence**

At least 95 people died and around 100 more were wounded in ethnic violence last week in Guinea, a government spokesman said Wednesday, revising higher a previous toll of 58. "At the last count, there were at least 95 dead and around 100 wounded" in three days of clashes that broke out suddenly on July 15, Albert Damantang Camara told reporters. The violence began when Guerze tribesmen, who form the majority population in the southern forest region where the unrest took place, beat up three ethnic Konianke in the town of Koule. Two of the victims later died of their wounds, leading to reprisals, according to the police.

**AFP -** [**http://reliefweb.int/report/guinea/least-95-died-guinea-ethnic-violence-government**](http://reliefweb.int/report/guinea/least-95-died-guinea-ethnic-violence-government)

**Togo**

**Voters head to the polls in long-delayed elections**

The vote is seen as an indication of what will happen in the presidential elections next year. Experts say it could expose weaknesses in the grip of the Gnassingbe family. which has ruled the West African country for more than four decades. Opposition groups have held mass protests over the government's last-minute changes to the electoral code. They say constituency boundaries were manipulated to benefit the ruling party. Angry demonstrations caused the parliamentary vote to be postponed from October 2012.

**BBC -** [**http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-23443394#**](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-23443394#)

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

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