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GENERAL

**Across Regions**

**Fight against leprosy not over, WHO warns**

The effort to eliminate leprosy is far from over as more than 200,000 new cases are reported each year, the WHO warned on 24 July. Although successful treatment is now available, there were 232,850 new cases reported in 2012, mostly in Asia and Africa, an increase of 6,224 cases over the previous year. “We cannot lower our guard,” said the regional director of the WHO in South-East Asia. “We could eliminate small pox. Why not leprosy?” The introduction of multi-drug therapy in the early 1980s has effectively cured 16 million people over the past 20 years, bringing the national prevalence rate down to less than per 10,000 people worldwide by 2005, WHO officials reported.

**DPA -** [**http://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/health/fight-against-leprosy-not-over-warns-who/article4948500.ece**](http://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/health/fight-against-leprosy-not-over-warns-who/article4948500.ece)

**DRC/Uganda**

**UN concerned for civilians as ongoing violence displaces thousands in the east**

As fighting continues between Government forces and rebels in eastern DR Congo, the UNHCR expressed concern for the welfare of civilians in the area, including many who have fled to Uganda. The Bubukwanga transit centre, which is some 25 kilometres inland from the border, is now home to over 15,000 refugees, 60% of whom are under the age of 18. The Ugandan Office of the Prime Minister has pledged to begin electronic registration using biometrics by the end of the week so they can quickly begin moving refugees – if they wish – to the Kyangwali refugee settlement for longer term protection and assistance. There they will be given plots of land to farm, as well as basic household items. UNHCR staff at Bubukwanga have also been checking for cases of GBV among vulnerable people arriving in the camp. Meanwhile, the agency reported that fighting between Government forces and the armed group known as M23 has continued in the North Kivu, Goma, with no signs of ending.

**UN News Centre -** [**http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=45478&Cr=democratic&Cr1=congo**](http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=45478&Cr=democratic&Cr1=congo)

CEE/CIS

**Bulgaria**

**Twenty people hurt in protests**

Twenty people including three police officers needed hospital treatment in Bulgaria after long-running protests against the government turned violent overnight, medical sources reported. Others received medical attention at the scene after riot police broke up a blockade of parliament by around 2,000 protesters that only ended at around 3:30 am, a journalist on the ground said. Around 100 ministers, MPs and journalists were trapped inside for more than eight hours. The building was fully emptied by 5:00 am and protesters' barricades made of park benches, garbage containers and paving stones were dismantled. Protests have been held in Sofia every evening since 14 June by thousands of people fed up with poverty and corruption. They are calling for the government to resign, but until now the demonstrations had been peaceful.

**AFP -** [**http://www.brecorder.com/world/europe/128850-twenty-hurt-in-bulgaria-protests.html**](http://www.brecorder.com/world/europe/128850-twenty-hurt-in-bulgaria-protests.html)

EAPR

**Across EAPR**

**Australia to probe refugee rape claims in PNG**

Australia to investigate reports that asylum seekers at one of its detention camps in Papua New Guinea (PNG) are being raped and tortured. A former senior official at the Manus Island processing centre in PNG has said that people have been raped and tortured at the facility. Graeme McGregor, refugee campaign co-ordinator for Amnesty International Australia, said that it was vital that the government immediately took steps to support the complainants of rape and torture at the camp, and for those accused to be arrested and charged "in a fair court of law". "There needs to be a full investigation into how this matter was handled in the camp," McGregor told Al Jazeera. St George told Australia's SBS television that self-harm and attempted suicides occurred on an almost daily basis and that weapons were being accumulated in readiness for a break-out attempt.

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia-pacific/2013/07/201372451716209209.html**](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia-pacific/2013/07/201372451716209209.html)

**China**

**Northwest downpours kill 11**

Two rounds of severe rain have killed 11 people and injured 23 others in northwest China's Shaanxi Province since last Wednesday, local authorities said Tuesday. Over 569,100 people have been affected by the rain, the provincial government said. An initial investigation showed that the rain has resulted in direct economic losses of 1.75 billion yuan (about 285.56 million U.S. dollars). The downpours have caused mudslides that have destroyed 939 homes and damaged 1,106 others. Torrential rain has also raised water levels on local rivers and reservoirs, posing a threat to nearby residents. A new round of heavy rain is due to batter Shaanxi on Thursday and Friday.

**Xinhua -** [**http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/798482.shtml**](http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/798482.shtml)

**Indonesia**

**Boat carrying asylum seekers sinks, 60 feared dead**

A boat carrying as many as 170 suspected asylum seekers bound for Australia has sunk off the south coast of Indonesia, with up to 60 people feared dead or missing, Australian media reported on Wednesday. The latest mishap at sea involving boat people came less than a week after Australia slammed the door on would-be refugees with a deal to send all boat arrivals to Papua New Guinea for assessment and eventual settlement. As many as 170 people were on board the vessel, which broke up in heavy seas late on Tuesday, News Ltd reported. More than 100 people, mostly from Iran and Sri Lanka, were rescued by fisherman in the area overnight, it said.

**Reuters -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/boat-carrying-asylum-seekers-sinks-off-indonesia-60-001908376.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/boat-carrying-asylum-seekers-sinks-off-indonesia-60-001908376.html)

**Thailand**

**Two teachers killed in bombing in the south**

Police say two teachers were killed and one was injured in a bomb attack believed to have targeted security forces in Thailand’s insurgency-plagued south. A Police Colonel reported that suspected insurgents detonated an explosive as a car carrying three teachers passed by a hospital in Narathiwat province. He says investigators believe the militants were targeting a police vehicle in front of the teachers’ car. Two police officers were wounded in the attack. The explosion came weeks after separatist negotiators agreed to attempt to halt violence during Ramadan as part of ongoing peace talks with the Thai government.

**AP -** [**http://www.scmp.com/news/asia/article/1289822/two-teachers-killed-bombing-thailands-south**](http://www.scmp.com/news/asia/article/1289822/two-teachers-killed-bombing-thailands-south)

ESAR

**Madagascar**

**Opposition leader arrested, compounding crisis**

Police arrested an opposition leader in Madagascar on charges of holding an illegal rally on Tuesday, compounding the island nation's political crisis. Laza Razafiarison's small Avotr'I Madagasikara party has called for the departure of the country's interim president who came to power in a 2009 coup and has since fallen out with African and Western powers over planned elections. Police fired teargas at the opposition party's supporters when they held a small rally on Monday and officers said they moved in to arrest Razafiarison after he organised another unauthorised gathering on Tuesday. "Seven others were also arrested and they are under investigation," police commander reported.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/07/23/us-madagascar-politics-idUSBRE96M0NO20130723**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/07/23/us-madagascar-politics-idUSBRE96M0NO20130723)

**South Sudan**

**Calls for calm after president sacks government**

Heavily armed South Sudanese troops and police guarded key government institutions in Juba, as radio broadcasts called for calm after the president suspended his cabinet. Those removed include two of the young country’s most influential leaders — the vice president, Riek Machar, as well as Pagan Amum, the secretary-general of the ruling party, the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM). The sackings have sparked concern over potential instability in the fledgling nation, awash with guns, riven by ethnic rivalries and still reeling from decades of war. All 29 ministers were suspended as well as their deputies, in addition to 17 police brigadiers. Troops and armed police blocked several key roads in Juba, with a heavy deployment at the government ministry complex, but the city was reported calm.

**AFP -** [**http://www.aaj.tv/2013/07/south-sudan-calls-for-calm-after-president-sacks-government/**](http://www.aaj.tv/2013/07/south-sudan-calls-for-calm-after-president-sacks-government/)

**Food fears for tens of thousands in Jonglei**

Tens of thousands of people face severe food insecurity as they hide in the bush in South Sudan's Jonglei State following another wave of violence that has cut off aid to them. "We believe these people need food now and cannot wait for much longer after hiding in the bush for weeks," said Chris Nikoi, the WFP South Sudan country director, in a statement on 23 July. More than 100,000 people are out of reach of humanitarian support following violence that broke out in July between the Lou Nuer and Murle communities and following clashes between the government and a rebel movement led by David Yau Yau. Over the past six months, around 120,000 people have fled to the bush as insecurity gathered pace. Insecurity, rains and a lack of roads or useable airstrips make it very difficult to reach the neediest, especially with heavy foodstuffs.

**IRIN -** [**http://www.irinnews.org/report/98460/food-fears-for-tens-of-thousands-in-jonglei**](http://www.irinnews.org/report/98460/food-fears-for-tens-of-thousands-in-jonglei)

MENA

**Algeria**

**Roadside bomb kills two forest rangers**

A roadside bomb killed two forest rangers in the Bouira region southeast of Algiers on Tuesday, Algeria's APS news agency reported. There has been a sharp drop in violence in recent years, although groups affiliated with Al-Qaeda remain active in the countryside around Algiers, in the Kabylie region east of the capital and in the deep south. Rangers have been targeted in the fighting as the Islamists have set up base in forest areas where human rights groups have accused the security forces of resorting to torching woodland to burn them out.

**AFP -** [**http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/91671-roadside-bomb-kills-two-algeria-forest-rangers**](http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/91671-roadside-bomb-kills-two-algeria-forest-rangers)

**Egypt**

**30 NGOs call for a new constitution**

30 Egyptian NGOs have warned against amending the 2012 constitution, and have called for a new one, according to a Monday statement published on the website of the Arab Centre for the Independence of the Judiciary and the Legal Profession (ACIJLP). The Egyptian Organisation for Human Rights, the ACIJLP, the Egyptian Centre for Women's Rights, the Habi Centre for Environmental Rights, the Land Centre for Human Rights, among others, signed this statement. The NGOs expressed their concern regarding the Egypt's constitutional path, and stated that amending this suspended constitution, which was subject to 'popular and political criticism', is dangerous.

**Daily News -** [**http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2013/07/23/30-ngos-call-for-a-new-constitution/**](http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2013/07/23/30-ngos-call-for-a-new-constitution/)

**Sectarian attacks amid political crisis**

Egyptian Christians have been targeted in several attacks since the military’s ouster of former President Mohamed Morsy. The authorities should urgently investigate the attacks, hold the perpetrators to account, and determine whether the police could have prevented or stopped the violence. In the deadliest incident, on July 5, 2013, local residents brutally beat to death four Christians inside their home as police and a mob of residents surrounded the house, during a day of violence that erupted after a Muslim was found deadin Naga Hassan, a village 10 kilometers west of the city of Luxor in southern Egypt. Local residents also wounded three others and destroyed at least 24 Christian-owned properties. Witnesses and the police told Human Rights Watch that police did not stop a 17-hour anti-Christian rampage in the village until after the men were killed. Human Rights Watch visited Luxor and Naga Hassan, and interviewed at least 20 witnesses to the violence.

**HRW -** [**http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/07/23/egypt-sectarian-attacks-amid-political-crisis**](http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/07/23/egypt-sectarian-attacks-amid-political-crisis)

**Bomb attack, clashes kill 10, injure 50 people**

Violent clashes in Cairo began between pro and anti-Morsi supporters killing nine and injuring over 30, while a bomb explosion at a police station in Mansoura killed one and injured 17, bringing the total dead to 15 this week. Five police officers are among the wounded in the Mansoura explosion, according to an Interior Ministry statement. Authorities reported that unidentified assailants threw the device out of a passing vehicle. The attack took place after a day of clashes in Cairo between supporters and opponents of Egypt’s ousted President Mohamed Morsi. The violence claimed nine lives and injured 33 people, after clashes began near a Brotherhood protest at Cairo University, where Morsi supporters have camped out since his ouster on 3 July. After the clashes witnesses reported at least 15 burned-out cars, splattered blood and broken glass and traffic police stations set on fire.

**RT -** [**http://rt.com/news/bomb-attack-egypt-police-499/**](http://rt.com/news/bomb-attack-egypt-police-499/)

**Iraq**

**Armed men kill nine police in the north, deadliest month of 2013**

Militants attacked a police station in north Iraq on 24 July with mortar rounds and automatic weapons, killing nine police, an officer and a doctor reported. The attack, which occurred about 60 kilometres south of Mosul, also wounded another two police. The assault was followed by a roadside bomb exploding as emergency personnel travelled to the scene, wounding two more people. In a separate incident, gunmen shot dead a man in Baquba, north of Baghdad. The attacks came a day after 29 people were killed in violence in Iraq. With the latest unrest, more than 640 people have been killed in attacks so far in July, making it the deadliest month in a year marked by spiralling violence.

**AFP -** [**http://gulfnews.com/news/region/iraq/armed-men-kill-nine-policemen-in-north-iraq-1.1212591**](http://gulfnews.com/news/region/iraq/armed-men-kill-nine-policemen-in-north-iraq-1.1212591)

**Israel**

**Netanyahu plans peace talks referendum bill**

Israel's premier has announced he is fast-tracking legislation that would allow him to put any future peace deal with the Palestinians to a national referendum. Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu said on Monday that a referendum is needed to prevent a rift in Israeli society. Polls have suggested a majority of Israelis support the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel, but many groups are vehemently opposed, including hard-liners among Israel's West Bank settlers.

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/07/2013722174355412799.html**](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/07/2013722174355412799.html)

**Libya**

**Blast in Tripoli near tower housing embassies**

A loud explosion was heard near a building housing several foreign embassies and a hotel in the Libyan capital Tripoli on Tuesday, witnesses said. The explosion occurred in the car park of a residential compound next to Tripoli Towers, where the British and Canadian embassies as well as several foreign airlines and other companies are based. It was also close to a large hotel used by foreign businessmen, the Corinthia. It was not immediately clear what caused the blast, but a source working in the building said it could have been a car bomb. A Reuters reporter on the scene, which was cordoned off by police, saw a burnt-out car. Security officials said the damage could have been caused by a rocket-propelled grenade, although there was no confirmation of this. The blast occurred in mid-afternoon.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/07/23/us-libya-explosion-idUSBRE96M0MI20130723**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/07/23/us-libya-explosion-idUSBRE96M0MI20130723)

**Sudan**

**Army, rebels clash ahead of oil deadline**

Sudanese rebels clashed with troops in North Kordofan Wednesday, both sides said, days before a Khartoum deadline to halt South Sudan's oil exports over allegations it is backing the insurgents. The Justice and Equality Movement, a Darfur-based group which is part of a wider rebel alliance, said it attacked a military convoy and captured the garrison at Sidrah, about 30 kilometres (20 miles) south of El Rahad town. The attack ended weeks of relative calm in the area. In June, Khartoum gave oil companies 60 days to stop transporting crude from South Sudan through a Sudanese export pipeline after President Omar al-Bashir accused the Juba government of backing the rebels in the north. There has been confusion, however, about whether the 60 days is merely a warning period, with a shutdown possible after that deadline, which expires around August 7.

**AFP -** [**http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/2/8/77233/World/Region/Sudan-rebels-claim-attack-ahead-of-oil-deadline.aspx**](http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/2/8/77233/World/Region/Sudan-rebels-claim-attack-ahead-of-oil-deadline.aspx)

**Syria**

**Intense air raids hit targets across country**

Warplanes and helicopter gunships carried out intense air raids across Syria as fighting raged in and around the capital between regime and rebel forces, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported. Air raids struck the town of Tabqa in the province of Hasakeh, the province of Homs and Aleppo in the north, including the town of Khan al-Assal which rebels claimed to have captured. At least six people, including women and children, were reportedly killed in an air attack on the northwestern province of Idlib, said the Britain-based group. Five others were killed when artillery rounds struck Douma, a suburb of Damascus. In the south of the capital, troops pounded the Palestinian refugee camp of Yarmuk for the third consecutive day while regime forces and rebels were locked in fierce fighting inside the camp, said the Observatory. Government forces also shelled neighbourhoods in the south, east and north of Damascus.

**AFP -** [**http://www.france24.com/en/20130723-intense-air-raids-hit-targets-across-syria-ngo**](http://www.france24.com/en/20130723-intense-air-raids-hit-targets-across-syria-ngo)

**UN chemical weapons team arrives in Damascus**

A UN delegation tasked with investigating chemical weapons allegations in Syria has arrived in Damascus on the first such trip. Swedish chemical weapons expert Ake Sellstrom and UN disarmament Chief Angela Kane arrived on 24 July from Lebanon. The Syrian government has invited them to visit Damascus for talk on the terms of a possible UN investigation. The Syrian regime and the rebels fighting to topple President Bashar Assad accuse each other of using chemical agents in a March 19 incident in the village of Khan al-Assal on the edge of the northern city of Aleppo

**AP -** [**http://seattletimes.com/html/nationworld/2021451415\_apmlsyria.html**](http://seattletimes.com/html/nationworld/2021451415_apmlsyria.html)

ROSA

**Afghanistan**

**ICRC reduces operation after deadly attack**

ICRC said Tuesday it will shut down three of its 17 offices in Afghanistan, two months after an unprecedented militant attack on the organization. "A number of ICRC staff will be withdrawn as a precautionary measure due to events in May and three out of 17 offices will be closed," he said, referring to the attack on the group's offices in the eastern city of Jalalabad on May 29 which left one guard dead. "Regrettably, this will have an adverse effect on the quality and the quantity of some of our services," said Jacques de Maio, the ICRC's head of operations for South Asia, in a statement. The organisation pulled some international staff out of Afghanistan early last month after the two-hour assault on its offices involving a suicide and gun attack.

**AFP -**

[**http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/red-cross-reduces-afghan-operation-after-deadly-attack-113072301134\_1.html**](http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/red-cross-reduces-afghan-operation-after-deadly-attack-113072301134_1.html)

**India**

**4,000 people in Andhra Pradesh shifted to safer places from flooded areas**

Over 4,000 people have been shifted to 23 camps in of Andhra Pradesh's East Godavari district after water flooded houses in the area following heavy rains. District Collector Neetu Kumari Prasad said that it would take another two to three days for the water to recede from the inundated areas. "Rescue teams have shifted 4,251 people to relief camps and safer places. Besides, 40 national disaster response force (NDRF) members and 154 boats have been kept ready in the district," she added. As per preliminary reports, 1651 hectares of horticulture, 243 hectares paddy and 25 hectares of cotton crops were affected due to the floods.

**NDTV -** [**http://www.ndtv.com/article/south/andhra-pradesh-4-000-people-shifted-to-safer-places-from-flooded-areas-395967**](http://www.ndtv.com/article/south/andhra-pradesh-4-000-people-shifted-to-safer-places-from-flooded-areas-395967)

**Climate shifts cut short girls' education in northeast**

Many families in Assam dependent on agriculture for their livelihood are suffering the consequences of recurrent droughts and floods, which experts attribute to climate change. In Morigaon, the district where Tami-heruwa is located and one of the most severely affected in the state, thousands of school-age girls have been forced to drop out of education and are now either working in the home or as daily wage labourers, researchers found. A family, previously comfortably off, used to earn around $1,700 a year growing grain and vegetables. According to researchers, the number of such cases is growing rapidly, and thousands of Assamese families are being forced to take their daughters out of school and put them to work, as floods and droughts have destroyed thousands of hectares of agricultural land.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20130723114125-plf0z**](http://www.trust.org/item/20130723114125-plf0z)

**Sri Lanka**

**Disaster stocks dangerously low**

Disaster relief stocks across Sri Lanka are dangerously low, experts and officials warn. "There are gaps we need to fill, especially on stocks like tents and medicines that cannot be procured at short notice," the assistant director of the Disaster Management Centre (DMC), the main government body tasked with early warning and relief work, reported. The pre-positioning of emergency supplies is viewed as key to increasing preparedness for natural disasters, experts say. According to OCHA, humanitarian partners have reported they have "very limited" rapid response stocks, including tarpaulins, non-food items and tents to use in any future emergency. Agencies were not able to mobilize resources to replenish their relief stocks over the past two years due to limited funding.

**IRIN -** [**http://www.irinnews.org/report/98458/sri-lanka-disaster-stocks-dangerously-low**](http://www.irinnews.org/report/98458/sri-lanka-disaster-stocks-dangerously-low)

TACR

**Mexico**

**Attacks in Michoacan state leave 22 dead**

Heavily armed men clashed with federal police in six towns in Mexico's Michoacan state, leaving 22 people dead in the bloodletting, the Interior Ministry announced on Tuesday. "So far, we have two federal police killed, 20 presumed criminals shot dead and another 15 people under arrest," the ministry's National Security Council said in a statement. In May, Mexico's government promised to keep thousands of troops in the western state until peace is restored to a region that is tormented by violent drug cartels. Interior Minister Miguel Angel Osorio Chong held a meeting of the national security team in the state capital Morelia with local officials to discuss a crime wave that led some towns to create vigilante groups. Officials said some 4,000 army soldiers and marines and 1,000 federal police officers were deployed at that time.

**AFP -**

[**http://www.hindustantimes.com/News-Feed/World/Attacks-in-Mexico-s-Michoacan-state-leave-22-dead-official/Article1-1097429.aspx**](http://www.hindustantimes.com/News-Feed/World/Attacks-in-Mexico-s-Michoacan-state-leave-22-dead-official/Article1-1097429.aspx)

WCAR

**Across WCAR**

**Worrying climate outlook for West Africa's Volta basin**

Drastic water loss in West Africa's River Volta basin - covering Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, and Togo - could deprive millions of people of food and hydropower in coming years due to climate change, researchers predict. Higher average temperatures, seen to be rising by up to 3.6 degrees Celsius over the next century, and reduced rainfall could see water flows in the basin drop by 24% by 2050, and 45% by 2100, according to a new study by the International Water Management Institute (IWMI). By 2050 there would be enough water for only 50% of current hydropower production, the study found.

**IRIN -** [**http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportID=98457**](http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportID=98457)

**Cote d'Ivoire**

**Reconciliation at 'dead end'**

More than two years after a political and military crisis that claimed at least 3 000 lives in the country in the wake of disputed elections, statements by rival sides reveal their deep differences. Created by Ouattara in September 2011, a national Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CDVR) with a two-year mandate has endeavoured to resolve differences and has joined in the debate. The commission has for months promised public hearings across the country in which the "executioners" would directly confront their "victims", but they have yet to begin. Under fire from its critics, some members of the panel complain of a lack of sufficient financial resources and also argue that their task is being complicated by political and legal interference.

**AFP -** [**http://www.news24.com/Africa/News/I-Coast-reconciliation-at-dead-end-20130724**](http://www.news24.com/Africa/News/I-Coast-reconciliation-at-dead-end-20130724)

**Three killed in Ivory Coast prison mutiny**

At least three inmates were killed and a number injured in an mutiny at the Ivory Coast's biggest prison, security and prison officials said on Wednesday. The mutiny was quelled by security forces who surrounded the compound and fired teargas and live bullets into the building. The MACA prison in Ivory Coast's commercial capital Abidjan holds some of the country's most violent prisoners as well as officials from former President Laurent Gbagbo's government.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20130724104738-tiwfs/?source=hpbreaking**](http://www.trust.org/item/20130724104738-tiwfs/?source=hpbreaking)

**DR Congo**

**Army helicopters blast rebel positions**

Three Congolese army helicopters fired on M23 rebel positions near the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) provincial capital of Goma on Tuesday. "Our helicopters have just bombarded enemy positions," a Congolese officer told AFP journalists on the frontline after they witnessed the attack. "Until now the enemy has not yet responded," he added. The attacks came on the same day as the trial opened in Goma of a soldier and policeman accused of mutilating the corpse of an M23 rebel after clashes last week. Meanwhile Human Rights Watch (HRW) accused Rwanda of continuing its support of the M23 in a report. It also accused the rebels of summary executions and rape.

**AFP -** [**http://www.foxnews.com/world/2013/07/23/congolese-army-helicopters-blast-rebel-positions/**](http://www.foxnews.com/world/2013/07/23/congolese-army-helicopters-blast-rebel-positions/)

**Mali**

**Nutrition security in Gao an alarming situation - UNICEF mention**

The humanitarian community is raising the alarm on the rates of acute malnutrition in Gao, Northern Mali. Mali’s Ministry of Health and its partners, including UNICEF, have just published the results of a nutrition and mortality survey (SMART methodology), conducted for the first time since the crisis began in this conflict stricken region. The study reveals a dire nutrition crisis, making it extremely difficult for the most vulnerable and children under age five, in particular. According to the survey, the rate of global acute malnutrition (GAM) is 13.5% making it a “serious” nutrition situation by WHO classification. The situation is an even greater source of concern in the Bourem health district where global acute malnutrition (GAM) at 17% exceeds the emergency threshold of 15% set by WHO. During the next six months, 22 730 children will be at risk for acute malnutrition.

**UN -** [**http://mali.humanitarianresponse.info/fr/system/files/documents/files/Press\_Releas\_%20Mali\_SMART\_Survey\_English\_23-07-2013.pdf**](http://mali.humanitarianresponse.info/fr/system/files/documents/files/Press_Releas_%20Mali_SMART_Survey_English_23-07-2013.pdf)

**Togo**

**Candidates make last-minute pitches to voters**

Candidates in Togo's parliamentary elections made final pitches to voters ahead of polls that will see the nation's opposition try to loosen the ruling family's decades-long grip on power. The 25 July vote comes after months of delays amid protests by a coalition of opposition and civil society groups known as "Let's Save Togo" that seeks electoral reforms. Authorities have dispersed many of these protests with tear gas, but negotiations in recent weeks have led to a deal that saw the opposition drop threats to boycott the poll.

**AFP -** [**http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5iOPspO\_52NZtduKQAHjnlA\_aPXsQ?docId=CNG.6fed8a8669f7f55f7814fb52d1a44ba7.591&hl=en**](http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5iOPspO_52NZtduKQAHjnlA_aPXsQ?docId=CNG.6fed8a8669f7f55f7814fb52d1a44ba7.591&hl=en)

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