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GENERAL

**Across Regions**

**Thousands of child refugees fleeing by boat travel solo- Save the Children**

Over 9,000 child refugees and immigrants have arrived in Italy by boat so far this year, with over a third traveling alone and at risk, Save the Children said Thursday. Of the over 58,000 people who have made the perilous journey from the coast of North Africa across the Mediterranean, 3,160 were unaccompanied minors, the organization said in a report titled “From Syria to Europe, fleeing the war.” The majority of the accompanied minors – many of whom were under 5 years old – were Syrian, and most were landing in Italy after long and dangerous journeys through Libya, where they are exposed to “persecution, theft, threats and violence.”

**AFP -** [**http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/Jun-20/260836-thousands-of-child-refugees-fleeing-by-boat-travel-solo.ashx#ixzz35AOqYU00**](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/Jun-20/260836-thousands-of-child-refugees-fleeing-by-boat-travel-solo.ashx#ixzz35AOqYU00)

**Global forced displacement tops 50 million for first time since World War II - UNHCR Report**

A report released today by UNHCR shows that the number of refugees, asylum- seekers, and internally displaced people worldwide has, for the first time in the post-World War II era, exceeded 50 million people. UNHCR's annual Global Trends report, which is based on data compiled by governments, non-governmental partner organizations, and from the organization's own records, shows 51.2 million people were forcibly displaced at the end of 2013, fully six million more than the 45.2 million reported in 2012. This massive increase was driven mainly by the war in Syria, which at the end of last year had forced 2.5 million people into becoming refugees and made 6.5 million internally displaced.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140620044831-c6ahf/?source=search**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140620044831-c6ahf/?source=search)

**Sudan asks Egypt to rejoin Nile Basin Body**

Sudan on Thursday appealed for Egypt to resume full participation in a 10-nation Nile River forum, four years after Cairo withdrew over fears for its access to the crucial water source. Egypt has limited its participation in the Nile Basin Initiative since 2010 when Rwanda, Ethiopia, Uganda and Tanzania signed a new treaty on equitable sharing of Nile waters. Burundi and Kenya later also inked the deal which stripped Egypt of its power to veto upstream irrigation and hydropower projects. The Cooperative Framework Agreement replaced a decades-old pact that gave Egypt and Sudan rights over more than 90 percent of the Nile's waters.

**AFP -** [**http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/135671-sudan-asks-egypt-to-rejoin-nile-basin-body**](http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/135671-sudan-asks-egypt-to-rejoin-nile-basin-body)

CEE/CIS

**Across region**

**More Russian troops at Ukraine's border**

The head of NATO says Russia has resumed a troop build-up along its border with Ukraine, as Ukraine's president announced that he will sign an association agreement with the European Union. NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said in Brussels that "at least a few thousand more" Russian troops had been deployed in what he said was "a new Russian military build-up" around the Ukrainian border. He called it "a very regrettable step backwards."

**VoA -** [**http://www.voanews.com/content/reuters-nato-chief-more-russian-troops-at-ukraines-border/1940356.html**](http://www.voanews.com/content/reuters-nato-chief-more-russian-troops-at-ukraines-border/1940356.html)

**Bulgaria**

**At Least 10 dead in Bulgaria flooding**

At least ten people, including a child, died in heavy floods as torrential rain lashed Bulgaria on Thursday, police said. The Black Sea city of Varna was particularly hard-hit, with cars swept away and streets and houses flooded.

**AFP -** [**http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/135769-at-least-ten-dead-in-bulgaria-flooding**](http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/135769-at-least-ten-dead-in-bulgaria-flooding)

**Turkey**

**Turkey court orders release of 230 military 'plotters'**

Magistrates in Istanbul on Thursday ordered the release of 230 military officers sentenced for plotting to overthrow the government, a day after Turkey's top court said the original trial was flawed. The Istanbul court ruled that the sentences of between 13 and 20 years should be suspended until the officers can face a retrial, local media reported. The first of the officers were already walking free from prison by Thursday afternoon in Ankara and Istanbul, welcomed by dozens of family and supporters.

**AFP -** [**http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/Jun-19/260826-turkey-court-orders-release-of-230-military-plotters.ashx#ixzz35AQLEGtg**](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/Jun-19/260826-turkey-court-orders-release-of-230-military-plotters.ashx#ixzz35AQLEGtg)

**Ukraine**

**New president to sign EU economic pact on 27 June**

Ukraine's new President said on 19 June he would sign the crucial trade and economic relations portion of an historic EU pact in Brussels on 27 June. The interim government signed the political relations portion of the deal in Brussels on 21 March 21. But Kiev delayed signing the economic section because it demanded that Ukraine lift import barriers aimed at protecting its farmers and steel mills in the east from direct EU competition. The complete pact's signing will effectively cut Ukraine off from a Moscow-led economic alliance.

**AFP -** [**http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/new-ukraine-president-to-sign-eu-economic-pact-on-june-27/articleshow/36831623.cms**](http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/new-ukraine-president-to-sign-eu-economic-pact-on-june-27/articleshow/36831623.cms)

**New battles as Ukraine says 300 separatists killed in fighting**

Fighting raged for a second successive day in the east of Ukraine on Friday, a day after clashes in which Ukrainian government forces said about 300 separatists were killed. The casualty figures for the pro-Russian separatists could not be independently confirmed though a rebel commander said on Thursday the rebels had sustained "heavy losses" when they were outgunned by government forces backed by heavy armour. The government forces said seven of their own number had been killed in Thursday's fighting. The new fighting on Friday was about 100 km from the border with Russia.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140620071621-c28sr**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140620071621-c28sr)

**Ukraine regains control of border with Russia - defence minister**

Ukrainian forces have restored control of the border with Russia and can now prevent military equipment being brought across the frontier to support pro-Russian separatists, acting Defence Minister Mykhailo Koval said on 20 June. "Our forces have completed the encirclement of the problem region and restored the state border of Ukraine. Last week we fully closed off the possibility of any military equipment being brought in from the Russian Federation," Koval told parliament.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140620083255-uatf9**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140620083255-uatf9)

EAP

**China**

**China to move another oil rig in disputed sea**

China has said it is moving a second oil rig closer to Vietnam's coast, despite a tense confrontation with Vietnam over another oil rig to the south, according to reports. The 600 metre long rig is being towed southeast of its current position south of Hainan Island and will be in its new location closer to Vietnam by Friday, the Maritime Safety Administration said on its website on Thursday. Vietnamese authorities also broke up a small protest against the Chinese move on Thursday when about a dozen people gathered at a park in central Hanoi and chanted anti-China slogans.

**AlJazeera -** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia-pacific/2014/06/china-move-another-oil-rig-disputed-sea-2014619134142517431.html**](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia-pacific/2014/06/china-move-another-oil-rig-disputed-sea-2014619134142517431.html)

**Papua New-Guinea**

**Prime Minister sacks top policeman and shuts down corruption task force**

The Papua New Guinea Prime Minister has sacked the deputy police commissioner and shut down a corruption watchdog that was trying to arrest him over an alleged multi-million-dollar fraud. A police warrant was issued for the Prime Minister's arrest over allegations that he siphoned $31 million of public funds to a law firm, Paul Paraka lawyers. The Prime Minister denies any wrongdoing and shut the corruption watchdog Task Force Sweep, effectively ending its investigation into the matter.

**The Guardian -** [**http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jun/18/peter-oneill-sacks-top-png-policeman-and-shuts-down-corruption-watchdog**](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jun/18/peter-oneill-sacks-top-png-policeman-and-shuts-down-corruption-watchdog)

**Philippines**

**Philippine senator turns self in on graft charge, vows to rise again**

A Philippine action movie hero-turned senator turned himself in on Friday after an anti-graft court ordered his arrest on plunder charges, another step in the country's bid to shed its image as one of the most corrupt in Asia. The senator, Ramon "Bong" Revilla, turned himself in at the anti-corruption court, known as Sandiganbayan, after travelling in a convoy with family members and supporters from his home in Cavite province, south of the capital, Manila.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140620042307-cdyhc/?source=search**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140620042307-cdyhc/?source=search)

ESA

**Kenya**

**Troops kill five gunmen involved in coastal attack**

Kenya's security forces have shot dead five people suspected of involvement in attacks on the coast this week that killed about 65 people, the Interior Ministry said on 19 June. Somalia's al-Shabaab militant group claimed responsibility for this week's assaults that were 24 hours apart on the town of Mpeketoni and a nearby village. The Kenyan President dismissed the group's claim and accused his political rivals of being behind the attacks, saying they wanted to stoke ethnic tensions. The opposition swiftly denied the charge, which risks deepening political divisions.

**VoA -** [**http://www.voanews.com/content/kenyan-police-disperse-protest-over-security-concerns/1940333.html**](http://www.voanews.com/content/kenyan-police-disperse-protest-over-security-concerns/1940333.html)

**South Sudan**

**Bishops slam warring parties for stalling talks**

Religious leaders from South Sudan on 19 June accused warring factions of stalling peace talks to prolong fighting as the government and rebels continued to boycott negotiations. Both the government of President Salva Kiir and rebels loyal to former vice president Riek Machar are refusing to restart talks aimed at ending six months of bloodshed, which has already killed thousands and displaced 1.3 million people. The government says it objects to comments made by Mahboub Maalim, the executive secretary of the East African bloc brokering the talks, IGAD, who said the idea that a military solution to the conflict could be pursued was “stupid”. Rebels, meanwhile, have objected to the participation in the talks of civil society groups, religious organisations and other political parties, complaining that they were not involved in the selection process.

**AFP -** [**http://www.capitalfm.co.ke/news/2014/06/s-sudan-bishops-slam-warring-parties-for-stalling-talks/**](http://www.capitalfm.co.ke/news/2014/06/s-sudan-bishops-slam-warring-parties-for-stalling-talks/)

**Uganda**

**Uganda says won't be "blackmailed" over anti-gay law**

Uganda said on Thursday that any threats to cut aid would not alter its decision to toughen laws against homosexuals, after US officials said they would announce new measures against Kampala over the issue. "Uganda is a sovereign country and can never bow to anybody or be blackmailed by anybody on a decision it took in its interests, even if it involves threats to cut off all financial assistance," government spokesman Ofwono Opondo told Reuters, adding that Uganda had not been notified of any US "decision or sanctions".

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/06/19/usa-uganda-gay-idUSL6N0P04NW20140619**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/06/19/usa-uganda-gay-idUSL6N0P04NW20140619)

LAC

**Colombia**

**Country adopts new sexual violence law**

Sexual violence now may be prosecuted as a crime against humanity in Colombia, where the President signed a law to stem assaults against women during the ongoing civil war. The President signed the measure as his government struggles to end a half century of armed conflict with rebels. The measure, in addition to stiffening penalties for sexual assault, provides free counseling for victims, as well as addressing forced sterilizations and unwanted pregnancies resulting from rape. According to government figures, nearly 5,000 women have experienced GBV in the context of the conflict.

**AFP -** [**http://www.ndtv.com/article/world/colombia-adopts-new-sexual-violence-law-544599**](http://www.ndtv.com/article/world/colombia-adopts-new-sexual-violence-law-544599)

MENA

**Across MENA**

**Saudi king to pay rare visit to Egypt**

Saudi King Abdullah will visit Egypt on Friday for the first time since the 2011 uprising, in a show of support for newly-elected President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi, Egyptian officials said Thursday. The officials said el-Sissi will receive the ailing monarch upon his arrival from Morocco, where he spent time for medical rehabilitation. The visit will be Abdullah's first since the 2011 ouster of Hosni Mubarak, a close ally of both Saudi Arabia and the U.S. Officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the press.

**AP -** [**http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2014/Jun-19/260777-saudi-king-to-pay-rare-visit-to-egypt.ashx#ixzz35ANNdCTv**](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2014/Jun-19/260777-saudi-king-to-pay-rare-visit-to-egypt.ashx#ixzz35ANNdCTv)

**Egypt**

**Egypt sentences 14 Muslim Brotherhood leaders to death**

An Egyptian court Thursday handed down preliminary death sentences for 14 Muslim Brotherhood leaders - including group leader Mohammed Badie - on charges of involvement in deadly unrest following the ouster of Islamist president Mohammed Morsi last year. The sentences will now be sent to Egypt's chief Islamic legal authority, the grand mufti, to approve or reject them. The court will reconvene on August 3 to announce the final verdict. The defendants were charged with killing nine people, illegally possessing weapons and damaging state institutions. The rulings may be appealed.

**DPA -** [**http://www.dailysabah.com/africa/2014/06/19/14-muslim-brotherhood-leaders-to-death-in-egypt**](http://www.dailysabah.com/africa/2014/06/19/14-muslim-brotherhood-leaders-to-death-in-egypt)

**Iran**

**Iranian child bride faces execution for killing the man she was forced to marry**

Razieh Ebrahimi was forced to marry at the age of 14, became a mother at 15, and killed her husband at 17. Now at 21, she is on [Iran](http://www.theguardian.com/world/iran)'s death row. Ebrahimi, who shot dead her hubsand while he was sleeping, faces imminent execution, despite international laws prohibiting execution for crimes committed by juveniles. [Human Rights](http://www.theguardian.com/law/human-rights) Watch, has urged Iran's judiciary to halt the execution. Earlier this week, Ebrahimi's lawyer also asked judges to consider a retrial, the semi-official Mehr news agency reported.

**The Guardian-**[**http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jun/19/iran-child-bride-faces-execution**](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jun/19/iran-child-bride-faces-execution)

**Lebanon**

**Two dead in east Lebanon suicide bombing**

At least two people were killed in a suicide attack on a Lebanese police checkpoint on the Beirut-[Damascus](javascript:void(0)) highway Friday morning, according to security sources.  Security sources told [The Daily Star](javascript:void(0)) that the blast in the eastern [Bekaa Valley](javascript:void(0)) targeted an Internal Security Forces checkpoint in Dahr al-Baidar, with at least two people dead and 10 wounded. The sources said that one of the dead was a from the police force.  Witnesses said it appeared that the car was headed from the [Bekaa Valley](javascript:void(0)) toward [Beirut](javascript:void(0)) when it was stopped at the police checkpoint.

**Daily Star -** [**http://dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2014/Jun-20/260883-suicide-attack-hits-lebanese-police-checkpoint-in-dahr-al-baidar.ashx#axzz35ATnKX3p**](http://dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2014/Jun-20/260883-suicide-attack-hits-lebanese-police-checkpoint-in-dahr-al-baidar.ashx#axzz35ATnKX3p)

**State of Palestine**

**Five Hamas militants killed in Gaza tunnel collapse**

An explosion killed at least five members of Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of Hamas, in a tunnel under the Israeli border Thursday, Palestinian officials said. A security source told AFP the "accidental explosion" happened "inside of an Al-Qassam Brigades tunnel, which collapsed on some 12 members." Eyewitnesses reported a large explosion near the border with Israel.

**AFP -** [**http://www.yourmiddleeast.com/news/five-hamas-militants-killed-in-gaza-tunnel-collapse\_24519**](http://www.yourmiddleeast.com/news/five-hamas-militants-killed-in-gaza-tunnel-collapse_24519)

**Gunbattle flares as Israeli soldiers seek missing teens**

West Bank, Israeli forces traded gunfire with Palestinians Thursday, the military said, in the fiercest street battles in the occupied West Bank since a search began for three Israeli teens missing for a week. Hospital officials said three Palestinians suffered bullet wounds in the overnight clashes in Jenin, a militant stronghold and the scene of deadly fighting during a Palestinian uprising a decade ago. There were no reported Israeli casualties. The military said 300 Palestinians, including some who “hurled explosives and opened fire,” confronted troops who entered Jenin looking for the three seminary students.

**TheDailyStar -** [**http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/Jun-20/260861-gunbattle-flares-as-israeli-soldiers-seek-missing-teens.ashx#ixzz358RLGyB2**](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/Jun-20/260861-gunbattle-flares-as-israeli-soldiers-seek-missing-teens.ashx#ixzz358RLGyB2)

**West Bank youth killed in clash with Israeli troops-Palestinians**

Israeli troops killed a Palestinian teenager in the occupied West Bank on Friday, Palestinian medics said, as their forces continued a crackdown on Islamist militants as they searched for three Israeli teenagers missing for more than a week. Mohammed Dudin, 15, was killed in the village of Dura, near Hebron in the southern West Bank, close to where the three Israeli teenagers went missing eight days ago. Israel says they were abducted by the Islamist Hamas group.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140620042036-hvzjc/?source=search**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140620042036-hvzjc/?source=search)

**Syria**

**Abuses in Kurdish areas denounced by HRW**

HRW denounced on 19 June abuses committed in predominantly Kurdish areas of Syria, accusing the Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) of arbitrary arrests and failing to address unsolved killings. HRWsaid the PYD has also recruited children into the police force and its armed wing, the People's Protection Units (YPG). Detainees have been "beaten in custody" of Kurdish authorities running three enclaves in Syria ever since Damascus withdrew its forces in 2012, HRW said.

**HRW -** [**http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/syriakudrs0614webwcover.pdf**](http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/syriakudrs0614webwcover.pdf)

**Warplanes pound rebel town near Damascus**

Syrian warplanes on 19 June launched 23 air raids on Mleiha southeast of Damascus, a key rebel bastion the regime has struggled for weeks to recapture, a monitor said. Regime ground forces also targeted the Mleiha area with nine surface-to-surface missiles, as troops backed by Lebanon's Shiite Hezbollah battled rebels and their Al-Nusra Front allies, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

**AFP -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/syria-warplanes-pound-rebel-town-near-damascus-ngo-154707115.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/syria-warplanes-pound-rebel-town-near-damascus-ngo-154707115.html)

**Stalled measles campaign shows health challenge in rebel-held Syria**

A measles vaccination programme in northern Syria has stalled amid disagreement over who should coordinate it, highlighting the challenges of establishing basic healthcare services in opposition-held parts of the country. Syrian and international agencies are struggling to combat the extremely contagious and sometimes deadly disease 18 months into an outbreak, even though hundreds of thousands of vaccine doses are ready in southeastern Turkey, earmarked for high-risk refugee camps just over the border.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140620075653-k37ya**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140620075653-k37ya)

**Car bomb in western Syria kills 34**

A car bomb in Syria's western Hama province killed 34 and wounded more than 50, Syria's state news agency SANA said on Friday. It described the attack as a "terrorist" bombing, wording it uses to refer rebels fighting forces loyal to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an anti-Assad monitoring group, said 37 were killed and more than 40 wounded in the blast which took place in the village of Hurra.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140620072322-y75mh/?source=jtTheWire**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140620072322-y75mh/?source=jtTheWire)

**Tunisia**

**Tunisia's Islamists seek 'Consensual' presidential candidate**

Tunisia's main Islamist party on Thursday urged politicians to agree on a "consensual" presidential candidate, to assuage tensions that have plagued the country since the 2011 revolution. "We call on political parties to find a consensual candidate for the presidency, someone independent or who belongs to a political party," said Ali Larayedh, a former premier and senior Ennahda member. The chosen candidate for elections due later this year, "who would benefit from wide support," and allow for "less division and more unity," Larayedh told a news conference, without offering any names.

**AFP -** [**http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/135730-tunisia-s-islamists-seek-consensual-presidential-candidate**](http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/135730-tunisia-s-islamists-seek-consensual-presidential-candidate)

ROSA

**India**

**Three rebels killed in Indian Kashmir gunbattle**

Three separatist rebels were killed on 19 June in a gunbattle with government forces in Indian-administered Kashmir that also left two soldiers wounded, police said. The gun battle started late afternoon after government forces laid siege to a house in Tral, 45 kilometers southeast of the city of Srinagar, from where the hiding rebels tried to escape. "The operation was launched on specific information. Preliminary identification of the three dead militants has been done," the Inspector General reported.

**AFP -** [**http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/135712-three-rebels-killed-in-indian-kashmir-gunbattle**](http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/135712-three-rebels-killed-in-indian-kashmir-gunbattle)

**Nepal**

**12 Killed in Nepal Landslides**

Landslides triggered by heavy rains killed at least 12 people overnight in Nepal, including nine members of the same family who were buried alive when their home collapsed, eyewitnesses and police said 20 June. Residents of Gulmi district in the west of the country said that the nine family members, including four children, all died when part of a hillside came down on top of their home in a gorge. In neighboring Pyuthan district, three people were killed and two others reported missing after a landslide swept away their homes, located on the riverbank, local police official Deepak Regmi said.

**AFP -** [**http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/135816-12-killed-in-nepal-landslides**](http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/135816-12-killed-in-nepal-landslides)

**Pakistan**

**Suicide blast kills one in northwest Pakistan**A suicide bomb attack at the residence of an anti-Taliban peace militia in the restive northwestern city of Peshawar left one dead and five others injured late Thursday, police said. The incident took place in the Matan Adezai area of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa city and targeted the leader of an anti-insurgent group. The attack came as Pakistan's military wages a long-awaited offensive against insurgents holed up in nearby North Waziristan. The operation has been going on since Sunday and is expected to intensify after a three-day window to allow civilians to leave the area ends on Friday.   
**AFP -** [**http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/135733-suicide-blast-kills-one-in-northwest-pakistan**](http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/135733-suicide-blast-kills-one-in-northwest-pakistan)

**Pakistan helicopters pound rebels as 150,000 civilians flee**

Pakistani helicopter gunships pounded militant targets in the country's northwest Friday, June 20, killing up to 20 Taliban fighters, as the number of civilians fleeing an expected ground offensive passed 150,000. Nearly 100,000 people have left North Waziristan tribal area, on the Afghan border, this week after the military launched a long-awaited assault against Taliban hideouts. The authorities eased a shoot-on-sight curfew on Wednesday, June 18, to give civilians a chance to leave before troops begin a full-blooded ground operation.

**AFP -** [**http://www.rappler.com/world/regions/south-central-asia/61146-pakistan-helicopters-pound-rebels-civilians-flee**](http://www.rappler.com/world/regions/south-central-asia/61146-pakistan-helicopters-pound-rebels-civilians-flee)

**Sri Lanka**

**Sri Lanka muslims cut back friday prayers after unrest**

Sri Lanka's Muslim minority held shortened Friday prayer services as religious tensions gripped the island after clashes with hardline Buddhists killed four people, an official said. The Muslim Council of Sri Lanka (MCSL) said Islamic clerics instructed mosques to conduct shorter services and asked the faithful to disperse peacefully after lunchtime prayers. "The Ulamas (scholars) asked mosques to ensure shorter sermons and in some places they started prayers earlier than on other Fridays," MCSL President N. M. Ameen told Agence France Presse.

**AFP -** [**http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/135829-sri-lanka-muslims-cut-back-friday-prayers-after-unrest**](http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/135829-sri-lanka-muslims-cut-back-friday-prayers-after-unrest)

WCA

**Mali**

**UN surveillance drones to be deployed**

Surveillance drones are to be used by the UN in Mali's northern region. UN peacekeeping head Herve Ladsous told the UN Security Council they would help protect civilians and troops. An 8,000-strong UN force is deployed to help stabilise the country. Mali's Foreign Minister said the government would like the drones to be in service "as soon as possible", according to news reports. Mr Ladsous said the drones, known as unmanned aerial systems, would be used to enhance "situational awareness" the UN's ability to protect civilians and staff.

**BBC -** [**http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-27919711**](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-27919711)

**Mauritania**

**Abdel-Aziz expected** **to win again amid boycott**

Mauritania’s President Mohamad Ould Abdel-Aziz is expected to handily win a new term in office as main opposition rivals boycott a vote Saturday in the largely desert nation. The ex-army general, who seized power of the northwest African nation in a coup in August 2008, has campaigned strongly on his success in fighting armed groups linked to Al-Qaeda at home and in neighboring Sahel nations**.**

**AFP -** [**http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/Jun-20/260856-mauritanian-leader-to-win-again-amid-boycott.ashx#ixzz35ANpitPm**](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/Jun-20/260856-mauritanian-leader-to-win-again-amid-boycott.ashx#ixzz35ANpitPm)

**Nigeria**

**UN warns Britain over child voodoo victims, sex tourists**

Hundreds of children are believed to have been kidnapped in Africa and brought to Britain for brutal voodoo rituals, a UN watchdog said today, urging London to step up its fight against the scourge.

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"We're concerned about reports that hundreds of children have been abducted from their families in Africa and trafficked to the UK, especially London, for religious rituals," said Kristen Sandberg, head of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. "They are used in so-called voodoo rituals, and are also raped and sexually abused. The number of convictions is extremely low," said the former Norwegian supreme court judge. British police are reported to have recorded scores of cases over the past decade of children who have faced torture and abuse as part of witchcraft rituals.

**AFP -** [**http://zeenews.india.com/news/world/un-warns-britain-over-child-voodoo-victims-sex-tourists\_941020.html**](http://zeenews.india.com/news/world/un-warns-britain-over-child-voodoo-victims-sex-tourists_941020.html)

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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