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GENERAL

**Across Regions**

**Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) update**To date, confirmed cases of Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) have been reported from Jordan, Lebanon, the Netherlands, the UAE, and the US. Globally, 572 laboratory-confirmed cases of infection with MERS-CoV have officially been reported to WHO, including 173 deaths. WHO encourages all Member States to continue their surveillance for severe acute respiratory infections (SARI) and to carefully review any unusual patterns.

**AFP -** [**http://www.expatica.com/nl/news/dutch-news/netherlands-reports-second-case-of-mers-virus\_292741.html**](http://www.expatica.com/nl/news/dutch-news/netherlands-reports-second-case-of-mers-virus_292741.html)

**WHO -** [**http://www.who.int/csr/don/2014\_05\_15\_mers/en/**](http://www.who.int/csr/don/2014_05_15_mers/en/)

CEE/CIS

**Across CEE/CIS**

**West warns Russia not to disrupt Kiev polls**

The US and Europe have agreed to impose sanctions on Russia if it tries to disrupt this month's Ukrainian election, as Moscow stepped up pressure on its beleaguered neighbour by hinging future gas shipments on payments being made in advance. US Secretary of State John Kerry, along with his German, French, British and Italian counterparts, on Thursday discussed possible sanctions, which would cover some of Russia's largest sectors including mining and gas. Meanwhile, Russian President Vladimir Putin, in a letter issued by the Kremlin on Thursday, said that gas shipments to Ukraine, which also feed western Europe, would not be made available unless advance payments were made.

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2014/05/west-warns-russia-not-disrupt-kiev-polls-201451513460138259.html**](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2014/05/west-warns-russia-not-disrupt-kiev-polls-201451513460138259.html)

**Bosnia-Herzegovina**

**Elections scheduled for 12 October**

Bosnia said on Thursday it would hold presidential and parliamentary elections on 12 October. Ethnic rivalry among Bosnian politicians has thwarted political and economic reforms since the end of the war and left the country at the back of a queue of Western Balkan peers aspiring to join the EU and NATO. Bosnian leaders have also been unable to agree on how to bring the country's constitution and election law in line with a 2009 ruling by the European human rights court, which called for an end to the discrimination against minorities such as Jews or Roma.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/15/us-bosnia-election-idUSBREA4E0JE20140515?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/15/us-bosnia-election-idUSBREA4E0JE20140515?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews)

**Bulgaria**

**No country for Syrian refugees**

Since November last year, Bulgaria has virtually closed its borders to an inflow of Syrian asylum seekers and other migrants trying to enter the country from Turkey, while EU institutions concerned appear to have acquiesced to this. Faced with a massive inflow of asylum seekers in 2013 – around 11,000 people lodged asylum applications in the country in 2013 compared with 1,000 on average in previous years – Bulgaria implemented a plan in autumn last year “to manage the crisis resulting from the enhanced migratory pressure.” Its main elements included building a 33 kilometre fence on the border with Turkey and increasing by 1,500 units the border police contingents patrolling that border.

**IPS -** [**http://www.ipsnews.net/2014/05/bulgaria-country-syrian-refugees/?utm\_source=rss&utm\_medium=rss&utm\_campaign=bulgaria-country-syrian-refugees**](http://www.ipsnews.net/2014/05/bulgaria-country-syrian-refugees/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=bulgaria-country-syrian-refugees)

**Russia**

**Police arrest dozens after killing provokes ethnic unrest**

Russian police detained nearly 60 people on Thursday after a demonstration venting anger against immigrants and demanding the arrest of an Uzbek man suspected of killing a local turned violent, Russian media reported. Some of the hundreds of protesters in the town of Pushkino, 30km northeast of Moscow, chanted anti-immigrant slogans, toppled kiosks at a street market and attacked a bus, beating its driver, Ekho Moskvy radio reported. The riot raised fears of a new outbreak of racial violence such as happened on the streets of Moscow last October and in 2010 after killings of Slavic men that were blamed on people from the Caucasus.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/15/us-russia-ethnic-unrest-idUSBREA4E0ZE20140515?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/15/us-russia-ethnic-unrest-idUSBREA4E0ZE20140515?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews)

**Turkey**

**Turkey outraged as PM's aide kicks protester**

A video of an aide of the Turkish Prime Minister kicking a protester has sparked outrage in Turkey and tarnished the Turkish leader's image ahead of his expected run for president. Turkish newspapers on 15 May published photographs showing an adviser kicking a protester who was on the ground and being held by special forces police. The incident occurred during a visit on 14 May to a mine disaster in the western town of Soma that killed at least 282 miners. Scores of others are missing. The prime minister's office distanced itself from the incident, with one official saying the issue was "his own personnel matter."

**AP -** [**http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/turkey-outraged-pms-aide-kicks-protester-23729218**](http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/turkey-outraged-pms-aide-kicks-protester-23729218)

**Protesters clash with police**

Four biggest unions hold strike over explosion in coal mine that has left at least 283 people dead and scores trapped. Anti-government protesters angered by the deaths have clashed with police across the country. In the city of Izmir, about 100km from Soma police fired tear gas and water cannon at around 20,000 protesters on 15 May. At a protest in central Istanbul on 15 May near Taksim square, the site of weeks of violent anti-government protests last year, angry demonstrators held the country's leaders responsible for the disaster.

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/05/protesters-clash-with-police-turkey-201451654141999709.html**](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/05/protesters-clash-with-police-turkey-201451654141999709.html)

**Ukraine**

**Rebel commander warns of onslaught on Ukrainian forces**

A senior rebel commander in Ukraine's separatist eastern region has threatened an onslaught on Ukrainian military checkpoints if they are not withdrawn on Thursday, according to a video posted on the Facebook page of a rebel politician. Sergei Zdrilyuk, dressed in military fatigues, clearly tired and sometimes mixing his words, said he had covert groups already in place. "I am ready to draw the first blood myself."

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140515140320-er6jt**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140515140320-er6jt)

**UN monitors warn on human rights in the east and Crimea**

UN monitors in Ukraine have found an alarming deterioration in the human rights situation in the east of the country and serious problems emerging in Crimea, UN human rights chief Navi Pillay said on 16 May. "Those with influence on the armed groups responsible for much of the violence in eastern Ukraine (must) do their utmost to rein in these men who seem bent on tearing the country apart," Pillay said in a statement accompanying the 37-page monitoring report.

**OHCHR -** [**http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/HRMMUReport15May2014.pdf**](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/HRMMUReport15May2014.pdf)

**Pro-Russian insurgents retreat in the east**

Pro-Russian insurgents have retreated from government buildings in a major eastern Ukrainian city as steelworkers began citizen patrols. Mariupol, second-largest city in the Donetsk region, was one of the cities in the east overrun by pro-Russian protesters who have been in control of government buildings there for weeks. Citizen patrols began earlier this week as Rinat Akhmetov, Ukraine's richest man who is believed to wield great influence in the area, urged the steelworkers at his factories to help the police restore order in the city. Akhmetov's Metinvest initiated the 15 May's agreement with steel plant directors, local police and community leaders on improving security in the city and vacating separatist-occupied buildings.

**AP -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/pro-russian-insurgents-retreat-ukraines-east-081645721.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/pro-russian-insurgents-retreat-ukraines-east-081645721.html)

**Separatists kidnap Kiev election workers**

Separatists in eastern Ukraine kidnapped three election officials, local media reports said on 16 May, in what seemed another attempt to prevent the upcoming presidential vote. Armed men on 15 May seized Dmytro Naboka, the head of Luhansk's polling precinct 106, and two computer programmers, city council deputy Serhiy Davidov told the local 0642.ua news site. The men also took all the precinct's computers and documents, the city council deputy said. Leaders of the separatists, who control wide areas of Ukraine's eastern Donetsk and Luhansk regions, have said they will not let the 25 May presidential elections happen.

**DPA -** [**http://www.lse.co.uk/AllNews.asp?code=lqdjpq00&headline=Separatists\_kidnap\_Ukrainian\_election\_workers**](http://www.lse.co.uk/AllNews.asp?code=lqdjpq00&headline=Separatists_kidnap_Ukrainian_election_workers)

EAPR

**Across EAPR  
Chinese team in Vietnam after deadly clashes**

China has dispatched a working group to Vietnam after at least 21 people were killed in rioting, the country's official news agency has said. Xinhua reported on Thursday evening that the team, led by Assistant FM Liu Jianchao, would deal with the aftermath of Wednesday's violence that saw people burning and looting foreign-owned factories in Vietnam. There has also been unrest in the capital, Hanoi. China's FM has said Vietnam "bears unshirkable responsibility" for violence directed towards Chinese companies and nationals.

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia-pacific/2014/05/chinese-team-vietnam-after-deadly-clashes-20145160357618370.html**](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia-pacific/2014/05/chinese-team-vietnam-after-deadly-clashes-20145160357618370.html)

ESAR

**Kenya**

**Twin blasts kill four in Kenyan capital**

At least four people were killed on Friday in two explosions in the Kenyan capital Nairobi, the National Disaster Operations Centre (NDOC) said. There was no immediate claim of responsibility. In the past such attacks have been widely blamed on the Somali Islamist militant group al Shabaab, which wants Kenyan troops out of Somalia and in September killed 67 people in an attack on a Nairobi shopping mall. "Two explosions reported. First blast was from a 14-seater matatu (minibus), second blast within Gikomba Market. Four fatalities," NDOC said on Twitter.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140516124103-gd51p/?source=quickview**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140516124103-gd51p/?source=quickview)

**Government fumes as security warnings drive tourists out**

Kenya rebuked Britain, the US, France and Australia on 15 May for issuing warnings about travel to the country, while hoteliers said at least 400 tourists had checked out of hotels along the Indian Ocean coast. Kenya called the alerts "unfriendly", saying they would increase panic and play into the hands of those behind the gun and grenade assaults that have hit Nairobi and Mombasa. The warnings and departures by tourists from hotels along the popular coast are further harming Kenya's tourism sector, which the Kenyan President has said is "on its knees" following the deadly attacks. **Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/15/us-kenya-security-idUSBREA4E0SO20140515?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/15/us-kenya-security-idUSBREA4E0SO20140515?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews)

**South Sudan**

**30,000 women at risk of dying in childbirth, warns UNFPA**

As the conflict in South Sudan continues to intensify, UNFPA warns that an estimated 200,000 pregnant women will be in need of urgent care this year alone. As health systems continue to deteriorate and few skilled health professionals remain in the country, some 30,000 of these women could experience life-threatening complications. UNFPA estimates that 25,000 women affected by the conflict could be at risk of sexual violence this year.

**UNFPA -** [**http://www.unfpa.org/public/cache/offonce/home/news/pid/17373;jsessionid=27E1CE0BC496757F1ED7D8DA7EB35A98.jahia01**](http://www.unfpa.org/public/cache/offonce/home/news/pid/17373;jsessionid=27E1CE0BC496757F1ED7D8DA7EB35A98.jahia01)

**Cholera outbreak in Juba – UNICEF mention**

The start of South Sudan’s rainy season has dramatically raised the threat level of waterborne diseases, in particular cholera, for an estimated 86,000 IDPs sheltering in protection of civilian (PoC) sites in UN bases across the country The Ministry of Health is concerned of the ongoing cholera situation in Juba, and it’s formally declaring cholera outbreak in Juba, Central Equatoria State. To date, 18 suspected cholera cases have been reported in Juba with one death, one of whom was laboratory confirmed on 6 May, following tests conducted by the AMREF laboratory in Nairobi. The Ministry of Health with the support of WHO, UNICEF, MSF, IOM and Medair have conducted cholera vaccination campaigns in Mingkaman, Malakal, Bor, Tomping and Juba III in an effort to prevent a possible cholera outbreak among the IDPs.

**GoSS -** [**http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Juba-Cholera-15-May-2014.pdf**](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Juba-Cholera-15-May-2014.pdf)

**Uganda**

[**Anti-Homosexuality Act’s heavy toll**](http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/05/14/uganda-anti-homosexuality-act-s-heavy-toll)

[Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex](http://www.hrw.org/topic/lgbt-rights) (LGBTI) people in [Uganda](http://www.hrw.org/africa/uganda) have reported a surge in human rights violations since the [passage](http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/12/20/uganda-president-should-reject-anti-homosexuality-bill) of the [Anti-Homosexuality Act](http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/uganda-anti-homosexuality-bill-must-be-scrapped-2013-12-20) on December 20, 2013, [Human Rights Watch](http://www.hrw.org/) and [Amnesty International](http://www.amnesty.org/) said today.  In a country where the climate for LGBTI people was already hostile and discriminatory, LGBTI people have faced a notable increase in arbitrary arrests, police abuse and extortion, loss of employment, evictions and homelessness, and scores have fled the country.

**HRW -** [**http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/05/14/uganda-anti-homosexuality-act-s-heavy-toll**](http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/05/14/uganda-anti-homosexuality-act-s-heavy-toll)

LAC

**Brazil**

**Country hit by widespread protests**

Protesters blocked two of Sao Paulo's main highways on Thursday, burning tires, waving banners and causing chaos during the morning commute in the sprawling metropolitan area as officials braced for a wave of anti-government demonstrations in several Brazilian cities, many of them protesting the high spending on next month's World Cup. Authorities said there were about 15 separate protests in Sao Paulo so far. Most were gatherings of a few hundred people, though about 5000 demonstrators gathered near the Itaquerao soccer stadium in Sao Paulo, which is set to host the opening match of the World Cup.

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/news/americas/2014/05/brazil-hit-widespread-protests-2014515174250554345.html**](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/americas/2014/05/brazil-hit-widespread-protests-2014515174250554345.html)

**Colombia**

**FARC announces cease-fire for presidential vote**

Colombia's leftist FARC rebels declared a unilateral cease-fire from May 20 to May 28, a period including the May 25 presidential election, as the guerrillas and the government continued peace talks in Havana on Friday. FARC and the government of Colombian President Jose Manuel Santos have been engaged in peace talks in Havana since November 2012 in an attempt to end a 50-year-old conflict.

Reuters - <http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/colombia-rebels-declare-election-time-cease-fire-23745684>

**Thousands of Embera people flee from armed groups**

In the Department of Chocó, Alto Baudó municipality, armed conflict caused the displacement of at least 2,631 indigenous Embera people from 27 communities. Shelter conditions are inadequate, and an indeterminate number of people were displaced to Puerto Meluk. Limited personnel and medicines at the local health center. There are difficulties in access and communication. Local authorities commissioned a verification, and a local humanitarian team is following up.

**OHCHR -** [**http://www.hchr.org.co/publico/comunicados/2014/comunicados2014.php3?cod=4&cat=94**](http://www.hchr.org.co/publico/comunicados/2014/comunicados2014.php3?cod=4&cat=94)

**Paraguay**

**Floods affecting 40,000 people**

In the Ñeembucú department, floods affect 40,000 people. More than half of the communities are isolated because of affected roads. Limited access to three health facilities. Shelter activated in the district of Pilar. Response by departmental government with national support of medicines and humanitarian assistance will be sent by air. Rains forecasted for the Western region and north of Chaco.

**ABC -** [**http://www.ultimahora.com/preocupa-neembucu-la-aparicion-gastroenteritis-contaminacion-n794849.html**](http://www.ultimahora.com/preocupa-neembucu-la-aparicion-gastroenteritis-contaminacion-n794849.html)

**Venezuela**

**Protests heat up amid opposition rift**

Venezuelan security forces arrested scores of people during a sweep of a busy Caracas avenue as protests against the government heated up amid a widening split within the opposition over whether to back possible U.S. sanctions. The student-led protest Wednesday came a day after the opposition froze talks with President Nicolas Maduro's socialist government, saying dialogue was impossible after the arrest last week of more than 200 student protesters who had been camping for weeks outside the United Nations offices and three plazas in the capital.

**AP -** [**http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2014/05/15/venezuela-protests-heat-up-amid-opposition-rift/9116115/**](http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2014/05/15/venezuela-protests-heat-up-amid-opposition-rift/9116115/)

MENA

**Algeria**

**President proposes constitutional amendments, term limits**

Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika proposed a two-term presidential limit and delegating more authority to the prime minister's post as part of constitutional amendments after his re-election, a government source said on Thursday. Bouteflika, 77, offered reforms to strengthen democracy after winning an April ballot to secure his fourth five-year term in office despite suffering a stroke last year that raised questions over his ability to govern..

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/15/us-algeria-politics-idUSBREA4E0HN20140515?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/15/us-algeria-politics-idUSBREA4E0HN20140515?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews)

**Iraq**

**Suicide bombers kill 10 in Baghdad court blasts**

An assault on a Baghdad court that included twin suicide bombings killed 10 people Thursday, the latest in a spate of explosions in Iraq's capital since an election last month. The blasts, one of which involved an attacker setting off a car bomb, came minutes apart during morning rush hour in the commercial district of Karrada, near a crossroads that is the site of a hospital, police headquarters and the court building. In all, 10 people were killed and 36 were wounded.

**AFP -** [**http://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/suicide-bombers-kill-10-in-baghdad-court-blasts/article1-1219577.aspx**](http://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/suicide-bombers-kill-10-in-baghdad-court-blasts/article1-1219577.aspx)

**Thousands flee government assault on rebel-held Falluja**

Thousands of civilians have fled Falluja since last week after the Iraqi military intensified shelling in a new bid to crush a five-month old Sunni uprising, killing scores of people in what residents describe as massive indiscriminate bombardment. The mortars, artillery and what residents call "barrel bombs" rained for at least seven days on Falluja the main battle ground in a war pitting the Shi'ite-led government against rebellious Sunni tribal chiefs and an al Qaeda offshoot. Residents say the new pounding of Falluja's residential neighborhoods appears aimed at driving out all remaining civilians in preparation for an all-out assault to defeat armed groups once and for all.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/16/us-iraq-falluja-idUSBREA4F04720140516**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/16/us-iraq-falluja-idUSBREA4F04720140516)

**Libya**

**Fierce clashes in Benghazi**

Fierce clashes erupted in Benghazi on 16 May between militants and forces led by a retired general seeking to purge it of "terrorists", a journalist and witnesses said. The witnesses said a group led by Khalifa Haftar, a former rebel chief in the 2011 uprising that toppled Muammar Gaddafi, was backed by warplanes that pounded a barracks occupied by the militant "February 17 Brigade" militia. Militiamen responded by opening up with anti-aircraft fire. The two groups also clashed in the Sidi Fradj area of south Benghazi, the journalist said. Haftar's group calls itself the "National Army" and a spokesperson for the force told a local broadcaster it has launched "a large-scale operation to flush terrorist groups out of Benghazi".

**AFP -** [**http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/2/8/101443/World/Region/Fierce-clashes-in-Libyas-Benghazi-AFP.aspx**](http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/2/8/101443/World/Region/Fierce-clashes-in-Libyas-Benghazi-AFP.aspx)

**AFP -** [**http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/130692-gunmen-kill-cleric-two-soldiers-in-libya-s-benghazi**](http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/130692-gunmen-kill-cleric-two-soldiers-in-libya-s-benghazi)

**Saudi Arabia**

**New deaths take Saudi MERS toll to 160**

Health authorities in Saudi Arabia on Thursday announced the deaths of another three people from the MERS respiratory virus, taking the country's toll to 160. The health ministry's daily bulletin on the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome outbreak in the Gulf nation said the latest people to die were two women aged 72 and 54 and a 63-year-old man. Since MERS first appeared in Saudi Arabia in 2012 the authorities have recorded 514 infections from the mystery virus for which there is currently no known antidote.

**AFP -** [**http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/2014/05/15/New-deaths-take-Saudi-MERS-toll-to-160-.html**](http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/2014/05/15/New-deaths-take-Saudi-MERS-toll-to-160-.html)

**State of Palestine/Israel**

**Palestinians mark 'Nakba' day amid violence**

Israeli forces on Thursday shot dead two Palestinians during a Nakba Day demonstration in the West Bank, prompting a Palestinian warning of a halt in security coordination with the Jewish state. The demonstration was held to mark the anniversary of the Nakba, or "catastrophe" of the 1948 establishment of the state of Israel on the former British mandate of Palestine. "The Palestinian leadership cannot remain idle in the face of Israel's violations, the latest of which was the killing of the two young Palestinians on Thursday" near Ramallah in the West Bank, Palestinian security spokesman Adnan al-Damiri told AFP. "And all this prompts the leadership to seriously consider a halt to security coordination with the Israeli side," he said.

**AFP -** [**http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/world/security-warning-after/1108546.html**](http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/world/security-warning-after/1108546.html)

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/05/palestinians-mark-nakba-day-amid-violence-2014515123517302113.html**](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/05/palestinians-mark-nakba-day-amid-violence-2014515123517302113.html)

**Israeli minister sees 50 percent more settlers in West Bank by 2019**

The number of Jewish settlers in the Israeli-occupied West Bank could grow by as much as 50 percent by 2019, Israel's ultra-nationalist construction minister said on Friday. Palestinians want the West Bank as part of their future state and blamed settlement expansions for the breakdown last month of U.S.-mediated peace talks with Israel - a position supported in part by Washington, but rejected by the Israelis. Construction and Housing Minister, Uri Ariel, the negotiations on Palestinian statehood were in their "dying throes" and predicted the settler population would spiral.

Reuters - [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/16/us-palestinian-israel-idUSBREA4F0AD20140516?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/16/us-palestinian-israel-idUSBREA4F0AD20140516?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews)

**Sudan**

**Fighting in Kordofan intensifies: UN**

Fighting has intensified between troops and rebels in Sudan's South Kordofan region, adding to humanitarian needs in an area where more than one million people were already affected, the UN said. The fighting that began three years ago "has intensified in April-May," OCHA said in its weekly bulletin. It said this followed the government's announcement that a "decisive" campaign against the SPLM-N would continue. "The SPLM-N has reported that in total an estimated 90,000 people were displaced in South Kordofan over the past month," adding to about 800,000 who the rebels estimated were already displaced or severely affected in areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile under their control, OCHA said.

**AFP -** [**http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/2/8/101398/World/Region/Fighting-in-Sudans-Kordofan-intensifies-UN.aspx**](http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/2/8/101398/World/Region/Fighting-in-Sudans-Kordofan-intensifies-UN.aspx)

**Judge orders Christian woman to hang for apostasy**

A Sudanese judge on Thursday sentenced a heavily pregnant Christian woman to hang for apostasy, a ruling which Britain denounced as "barbaric" and left the US "deeply disturbed". Born to a Muslim father, the woman was convicted under sharia law that has been in force in Sudan since 1983 and outlaws conversions on pain of death. Meriam Yahia Ibrahim Ishag, 27, is married to a Christian and eight months pregnant, human rights activists say. "We gave you three days to recant but you insist on not returning to Islam. I sentence you to be hanged," Judge Abbas Mohammed Al-Khalifa told the woman.

**AFP -** [**https://au.news.yahoo.com/world/a/23545396/sudan-judge-sentences-christian-woman-to-death-for-apostasy/**](https://au.news.yahoo.com/world/a/23545396/sudan-judge-sentences-christian-woman-to-death-for-apostasy/)

**Ex-PM grilled over Darfur ‘rapes by military’ claim**

A Sudanese former PM appeared before prosecutors for questioning Thursday after he reportedly accused a counter-insurgency unit of rape and other abuses of civilians in Darfur. The National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) filed a criminal complaint against Umma Party leader Sadiq al-Mahdi after he made the comments about the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). Mahdi arrived with several lawyers and about 100 supporters before spending close to 40 minutes with prosecutors, an AFP journalist said. Mahdi was questioned but has not been formally charged pending further investigation, one of his lawyers, Nabil Adieb, told AFP.

**AFP -** [**http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/2014/05/15/Sudan-ex-PM-grilled-over-Darfur-rapes-by-military-claim-.html**](http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/2014/05/15/Sudan-ex-PM-grilled-over-Darfur-rapes-by-military-claim-.html)

**Syria**

**Rebel rocket fire kills 13 people in Aleppo**

Syrian rebel rocket fire hit a government-held neighbourhood in the northern city of Aleppo on 16 May, killing at least 13 people, state television said. "The toll in rockets fired by terrorists on Ashrafiyeh district has risen to 13, including women and children," the report said. Earlier, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said at least seven people killed and five hurt in the attack on the western neighbourhood. In recent weeks, the city has also been afflicted by a water outage after groups including Al-Qaeda's Syrian branch, Al-Nusra Front, cut supplies from a pumping station in the Suleiman al-Halabi district. After more than a week without water, the Observatory and Syria's Red Crescent Aleppo branch have reported the return of supply to some parts of both government and rebel areas of the city.

**AFP -** [**http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/May-16/256661-syria-rebel-rocket-fire-kills-13-in-aleppo-state-tv.ashx#axzz31sD4OrY2**](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/May-16/256661-syria-rebel-rocket-fire-kills-13-in-aleppo-state-tv.ashx#axzz31sD4OrY2)

**Yemen**

**President says country in open war against al Qaeda**

Yemen is in open war against al Qaeda and will go after the militants wherever they are, the president said on Thursday, as his country faces retaliatory attacks by insurgents bent on establishing an Islamist emirate in the Arabian peninsula state. In his first remarks since the army launched an offensive to dislodge al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula from its southern strongholds more than two weeks ago, Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi said his troops would go after the insurgents in southern, central and northern provinces.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/15/us-yemen-security-idUSBREA4E0R420140515?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/15/us-yemen-security-idUSBREA4E0R420140515?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews)

ROSA

**Pakistan**

**Authorities impose polio related travel bans on tribal regions**

Pakistan on Thursday announced that residents of its restive tribal belt would not be able to travel to other parts of the country without getting vaccinating against polio. The move came days after Pakistan said it would set up mandatory immunisation points at airports to help stop its polio outbreak spreading abroad, in response to new guidelines by WHO. "(The) Prime Minister decided to involve (the)... Army to ensure security on all FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Area) border points to regulate ingress of people from FATA into settled areas only after polio vaccine has been administered," a statement from PM Nawaz Sharif's office said. Pakistan recorded 91 cases of polio last year, according to WHO, up from 58 in 2012. It has also recorded 59 of the world's 74 cases this year.

**AFP -** [**http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/news/latest-news/283838/pakistan-imposes-polio-related-travel-bans-on-tribal-regions**](http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/news/latest-news/283838/pakistan-imposes-polio-related-travel-bans-on-tribal-regions)

WCAR

**Across WCAR**

**Suspected Liberian gunmen seize Ivorian village, kill eight people**

At least eight people, including five civilians, were killed when gunmen believed to have come from Liberia seized a border village in western Ivory Coast, the parliamentarian for the area said on 16 May. Heavily armed fighters crossed the Cavally River, which forms the boundary between the two West African neighbours, and attacked the village of Fetai early on Thursday. Around 2,500 people had fled to Grabo from outlying villages for safety, according to MP, Yaya Coulibaly.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140516085234-vd1v8**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140516085234-vd1v8)

**CAR**

**CAR: a fragile country -UNICEF**

UNICEF’s Representative in CAR, Souleyman Diabaté, said children have fallen victim to malnutrition and recruitment into armed groups. He warned the conflict has growing regional implications. Souleyman Diabaté said all of the country’s health and social services have collapsed. He said unless the world pays attention to CAR, neighboring countries -- such as Chad, Cameroon, DRC and South Sudan -- could face long-term negative effects, including refugees and spillover fighting. “Children are not going to school. So they are being recruited by the rebels, by the militia groups. Children are being recruited by force or sometimes they are joining because for them it is the only way to find food. It is the only way to find a way to take care of themselves,” he said.

**VoA -** [**http://www.voanews.com/content/car-unicef-14may14/1914482.html**](http://www.voanews.com/content/car-unicef-14may14/1914482.html)

**At least 31 people killed in fighting**

At least 31 people, many of them civilians, were killed in clashes in CAR this week, a local priest and Red Cross officials said on Thursday. Fighting broke out on Monday outside Dekoa, a town 300km north of Bangui, when ex-Seleka fighters attacked a roadblock set up by the anti-balaka group. Another 10 bodies clothed in military fatigues, believed to be ex-Seleka fighters, were discovered in a mass grave, the priest said, adding that some people wounded in the fighting had fled into the bush.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140515160038-s1ddy**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140515160038-s1ddy)

**DR Congo**

**Communities in north-central Katanga facing widespread violence**

Despite a DDR programme that resulted in the surrender of hundreds of Maï Maï / Bakata Katanga militiamen in autumn 2013, a certain number of armed groups remain active and continue to put up sporadic resistance to the armed forces in DRC. This keeps people in a state of constant tension. Since January, clashes between certain Pygmy and Luba communities have been steadily increasing, particularly in the area between Kiambi and Nyunzu, north of the "triangle of death." In addition, problems involving the management of quarries and the lack of jobs – a consequence of "structural" poverty in north-central Katanga – further complicate the situation for the population.

**ICRC -** [**http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/update/2014/05-15-dr-congo-katanga-violence-civilians.htm**](http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/update/2014/05-15-dr-congo-katanga-violence-civilians.htm)

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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