**UNICEF OPSCEN Brief – Thursday, 5 June 2014**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| GENERAL | **Across Regions** | 1.3 billion people in the world live without electricity |
|  |  | Disaster cost quadrupled in past decades: Official |
|  |  | UN seeks to strengthen disaster readiness with launch of ‘Tacloban Declaration’ |
|  |  | US launches $1 billion push for off-grid Africa power |
|  |  | NATO extends Somali counter-piracy mission to 2016 |
|  | **Burundi/CAR** | Burundi ready to boost C.Africa contingent |
| CEE/CIS | **Across CEE/CIS** | Some Russian forces look set to stay near Ukraine border-NATO commander |
|  | **Ukraine** | Fighting rages in eastern Ukraine town, residents flee |
| EAPR | **China** | China detains 29 in security operation in restive Xinjiang |
|  |  | Exiled Tibetan PM slams 'total repression' by China |
|  | **Indonesia** | Indonesia sex workers protest plan to close red-light district |
|  | **Thailand** | Thailand's junta sidelines pro-Thaksin police, governors |
| ESA | **Kenya** | Kenya turns up the heat on Somali refugees |
|  | **Mozambique** | More than 15 killed in Mozambique clashes |
|  | **South Africa** | South African union rejects gov't proposal to end platinum strike: newspaper |
| LAC | **Brazil** | Strikes and protests in Brazil's Sao Paulo |
|  | **Colombia** | Defeated Colombian leftist calls on voters to back Santos |
|  |  | 14,000 Colombians displaced every month despite peace efforts – UN |
|  | **Venezuela** | Opposition leader to face trial over demos in Venezuela |
| MENA | **Iraq** | Six killed as militants assault Iraq’s Samarra |
|  |  | First Red Cross medical delivery to Iraq’s Fallujah in months |
|  | **Lebanon** | Kerry says Lebanon needs president to meet security challenge |
|  | **Libya** | Libyan renegade general survives assassination attempt-sources |
|  |  | Election of Ahmed Maiteeq as new Libyan PM violating law: prosecutor |
|  |  | Swiss Red Cross staffer slain in lawless Libya |
|  |  | Four UN staffers 'roughed up' at Libya airport: boss |
|  | **State of Palestine/Israel** | Israel to build 1,500 more homes in settlements |
|  | **Syria** | Assad wins Syria election with 88.7 pct of votes-speaker |
|  | **Tunisia** | Tunisian politicians deadlocked on new elections |
|  | **Yemen** | Twelve soldiers killed in Yemen checkpoint attack - official |
|  |  | Yemen says 500 al Qaeda militants, 40 soldiers killed in campaign |
| ROSA | **Afghanistan** | NATO to keep around 12,000 troops in Afghanistan next year-US official |
|  |  | Roadside bombing kills 4 Afghan police officers |
|  | **India** | Indian woman shot dead for resisting rape |
|  | **Pakistan** | Protests in Pakistan over MQM leader arrest |
|  |  | Militant Commander Killed in NW Pakistan |
| WCA | **Across WCA** | Guinea, Sierra Leone see spike in Ebola cases – WHO |
|  | **Mali** | Mali peace envoy meets rebel leaders in Mauritania |

GENERAL

**Across Regions  
1.3 billion people in the world live without electricity**Some 1.3 billion people in the world have no access to electricity, while 4.3 million people die each year due to indoor air pollutions triggered by open fires that are used for cooking, a new report said Wednesday. "We are dealing with massive problem here in terms of energy access globally," Simon Trace, the head of Practical Action, a non-governmental organization, told reporters in New York. Trace, who launched the Poor People's Energy Outlook report, said that another 1 billion people worldwide had poor access to electricity, while 2.8 billion people were still cooking over open fires. "Cooking over open fires is responsible for 4.3 million deaths a year from the results of indoor air pollutions," Trace said. Most of the deaths are women and children. Lack of access to electricity has impacted the educational opportunity for learning as some 50% of the world's children went to schools without electricity in 2012, the report said.   
**DPA -** [**http://www.haaretz.com/news/world/1.597063**](http://www.haaretz.com/news/world/1.597063)

**Disaster cost quadrupled in past decades: Official**

A senior European official says the average annual cost of natural disasters has quadrupled over the last three decades and that it makes economic sense to boost spending on preparedness. European Commissioner Kristina Georgieva told a disaster risk reduction conference of the Asia-Europe Meeting on Thursday that costs related to natural disasters have increased from $50 billion a year in the 1980s to $200 billion in the last decade. She said only 4 percent of spending for disasters today goes to prevention and preparedness, with 96 percent spent on response. But, she said, evidence shows every dollar spent on prevention brings at least $4 in savings on damage. About 200 participants from 49 countries and organizations have gathered in Manila to discuss ways to increase countries' disaster resilience.

**AP -** [**http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/official-disaster-cost-quadrupled-past-decades-24003995**](http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/official-disaster-cost-quadrupled-past-decades-24003995)

**UN seeks to strengthen disaster readiness with launch of ‘Tacloban Declaration’**

As the Philippines continues to rebuild from Typhoon Haiyan, the top United Nations official on disaster risk reduction is among the more than 150 representatives, mostly from Asia and Europe, participating in a conference that will detail new policies and principles involving disaster preparation.

Speaking in the capital, Manila, Special Representative Margareta Wahlström noted that opportunities exist now to address underlying risks to ensure that the next disaster will not cause similar devastation, in line with President Benigno Aquino’s policy to ‘build back better.’ Ahead of today’s start of the three-day conference, participants were scheduled to meet with some of the people and local officials who suffered the brunt of the super typhoon when it swept ashore on 8 November 2013.

The typhoon killed thousands and affected nearly 9.8 million people, displaced some 4 million people and destroyed 500,000 homes, according to the OCHA.

**UN News Service -** [**http://reliefweb.int/report/philippines/un-seeks-strengthen-disaster-readiness-launch-tacloban-declaration**](http://reliefweb.int/report/philippines/un-seeks-strengthen-disaster-readiness-launch-tacloban-declaration)

**US launches $1 billion push for off-grid Africa power**

US companies have promised $1 billion for off-grid power projects in Africa, putting a growing focus on small-scale and renewable energy in the push to ease the continent's chronic electricity shortages.

President Barack Obama's administration announced commitments by 27 investors as it moves forward on a goal of doubling electricity access in sub-Saharan Africa, where a lack of power has been a key impediment to improving education and public health.

**AFP -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/us-launches-1-billion-push-off-grid-africa-234353238.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/us-launches-1-billion-push-off-grid-africa-234353238.html)

**NATO extends Somali counter-piracy mission to 2016**

NATO has decided to extend its Indian Ocean counter-piracy mission by two years to the end of 2016, judging that piracy remains a threat despite a sharp fall in attacks, the alliance said on Wednesday. The decision was taken by NATO defense ministers meeting in Brussels. NATO ships have patrolled the waters off the Horn of Africa since 2009, as part of a broader international effort to crack down on Somali-based pirates who had caused havoc with world shipping. NATO's "Ocean Shield" operation as well as EU and other counter-piracy missions have significantly reduced attacks.

**Reuters -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/nato-extends-somali-counter-piracy-mission-2016-182000747.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/nato-extends-somali-counter-piracy-mission-2016-182000747.html)

**Burundi/CAR**

**Burundi ready to boost C.Africa contingent**

Burundi is ready to send hundreds more troops to Central African Republic, where international forces are trying to put an end to sectarian violence, President Pierre Nkurunziza told AFP. "We have been asked by the AU and the UN to raise the number of our troops in the CAR," Nkurunziza said during a visit to Paris. "We are ready to deploy 450 troops and have prepared two police units of a total of 280 officers." Burundi is looking for necessary equipment and support from its partners to see the mission through, he added. Burundi currently has 850 men in the 6,000-strong African peacekeeping force known by the acronym MISCA, which is trying to contain the crisis along with about 2,000 French troops.

**AFP -** [**http://reliefweb.int/report/central-african-republic/burundi-ready-boost-cafrica-contingent**](http://reliefweb.int/report/central-african-republic/burundi-ready-boost-cafrica-contingent)

CEE/CIS

Across CEE/CIS

**Some Russian forces look set to stay near Ukraine border-NATO commander**

Russia is pulling back most of its troops from the Ukrainian border but a portion of the Russian force "looks like it intends to remain," NATO's top military commander said on Wednesday. US Air Force General Philip Breedlove, NATO's supreme allied commander Europe, also said Russian irregular forces, Russian-backed forces and Russian financing were very active in eastern Ukraine and "this has to stop". All steps being taken by NATO to reinforce its members in Eastern Europe would comply with NATO's 1997 agreement with Russia, Breedlove told reporters, accusing Moscow of breaking the pact "when they crossed a sovereign boundary and annexed under fire a portion of a sovereign nation."

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140604100743-u639x/?source=search**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140604100743-u639x/?source=search)

**Ukraine**

**Fighting rages in eastern Ukraine town, residents flee**

Ukrainian government forces battled separatists with artillery and automatic weapons on Wednesday in a second day of fighting in and around Slaviansk, forcing many residents to flee. The Kiev government, trying to break rebellions by pro-Russia militias, said over 300 rebels had been killed in the past 24 hours in the "anti-terrorist operation" centered on the eastern town, a strategically located separatist stronghold. Rebels denied this, saying losses among the Ukrainian forces during an offensive begun on Tuesday exceeded theirs.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/06/05/us-ukraine-crisis-fighting-idUSKBN0EF0OY20140605**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/06/05/us-ukraine-crisis-fighting-idUSKBN0EF0OY20140605)

EAP

**China**

**China detains 29 in security operation in restive Xinjiang**

Authorities in China's Xinjiang region have rounded up 29 suspects on charges such as inciting separatism, state media said on Thursday, part of a crackdown following deadly attacks blamed by Beijing on Islamists and other militants. The suspects were detained in the regional capital Urumqi, site of a suicide bombing that killed 39 people last month, state news portal Xinjiang Net said. "As of May 31, the city's prosecutors have, according to law, quickly approved the arrest of 29 people suspected of crimes of inciting separatism, assembling to disturb social order, illegal business activities, and inciting ethnic hatred and ethnic discrimination," it said. The website, run by the ruling Communist Party's committee in Urumqi, gave no further details.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/06/05/us-china-xinjiang-idUSKBN0EG0PA20140605**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/06/05/us-china-xinjiang-idUSKBN0EG0PA20140605)

**Exiled Tibetan PM slams 'total repression' by China**

The prime minister of Tibet's government-in-exile accused Chinese authorities Thursday, June 5, of blanket repression in the Himalayan region as he launched a new campaign for autonomy in his homeland. "There is total repression and total discrimination" in Tibet, Lobsang Sangay told reporters at his government's headquarters in northern India. "All this repression is making Tibetans more resentful of the Chinese government's policies and towards the Chinese government and various forms of protests are taking place." The prime minister was speaking as he and other senior exiles, including the Dalai Lama, gathered to renew their push for a "Middle Way" of peaceful autonomy within China after a four-year hiatus.

**AFP -** [**http://www.rappler.com/world/regions/asia-pacific/59757-lobsang-sangay-slams-total-repression-china**](http://www.rappler.com/world/regions/asia-pacific/59757-lobsang-sangay-slams-total-repression-china)

**Indonesia**

**Indonesia sex workers protest plan to close red-light district**

Dressed in tight tops and miniskirts, but covering their faces to hide their identities, more than 1,000 Indonesian sex workers protested on Thursday over a plan to close one of Southeast Asia's biggest red-light districts. The Dolly district of Surabaya, the second-biggest city in the world's most populous Muslim-majority country, has largely been left alone by the authorities for decades. But now the city's crusading new mayor has pledged to shut down the area, which takes its name from a Dutch madam who ran a brothel during the Netherlands' colonial rule of Indonesia, by June 18. However many women who work in Dolly, who typically offer their services by posing in brightly lit shop windows, say they will not be able to earn a living if the plan goes ahead.

**AFP -** [**http://www.straitstimes.com/news/asia/south-east-asia/story/indonesia-sex-workers-protest-plan-close-red-light-district-20140605**](http://www.straitstimes.com/news/asia/south-east-asia/story/indonesia-sex-workers-protest-plan-close-red-light-district-20140605)

**Thailand**

**Thailand's junta sidelines pro-Thaksin police, governors**

Thailand's military is conducting a systematic reshuffle to blunt the power of officials seen as loyal to former premier Thaksin Shinawatra in what seems to be an effort to dismantle his support base and ensure he can never return to power. Governors in 13 provinces have been transferred, mostly from the country's pro-Thaksin north and northeast, according to the junta's National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO). The junta is also restructuring the police, long seen as a bastion of support for Thaksin and his sister, ousted Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra. Thaksin was a police officer for 13 years before resigning to start his own business.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/06/05/us-thailand-politics-reshuffle-idUSKBN0EG03320140605**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/06/05/us-thailand-politics-reshuffle-idUSKBN0EG03320140605)

ESA

**Kenya**

**Kenya turns up the heat on Somali refugees**

As security forces in Kenya continue to round up and detain thousands of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, most of them Somali, an agreement between the UNHCR and the Kenyan and Somali governments on the voluntary repatriation of Somali refugees is coming under strain. In late May, the Somali government pulled out of a meeting with UNHCR and the Kenyan government to formally launch a Tripartite Commission and discuss implementation of the Tripartite Agreement. The Agreement, signed in November 2013, outlines the procedures for the gradual and voluntary return of Somali refugees from Kenya, which is currently hosting around 423,000 Somalis holding refugee status.

**AllAfrica -** [**http://allafrica.com/stories/201406041333.html**](http://allafrica.com/stories/201406041333.html)

**Mozambique**

**More than 15 killed in Mozambique clashes**

Over 15 people died and 26 others were injured in attacks on Save and Muxúnguè regions in Mozambique's central Sofala province, the Moçambique para todos newspaper reported.

According to the publication, the reports were confirmed by sources in Muxúnguè rural hospital and eyewitnesses. The attacks on Tuesday were reportedly launched by the opposition Renamo forces against the government bases in Muxúnguè and River Save areas. The Moçambique para todos reported that 200 vehicles were used in the attacks. Renamo had on Monday announced an end to ceasefire declared earlier.

**Africa Review -** [**http://www.africareview.com/News/Scores-killed-in-Mozambique-clashes/-/979180/2337230/-/naux7kz/-/index.html**](http://www.africareview.com/News/Scores-killed-in-Mozambique-clashes/-/979180/2337230/-/naux7kz/-/index.html)

**South Africa**

**South African union rejects gov't proposal to end platinum strike: newspaper**

South Africa's AMCU union has rejected a government wage increase proposal aimed at ending a crippling five-month strike by platinum miners, the Business Day newspaper reported on Thursday. AMCU's position appeared to dash hopes that new Mines Minister Ngoako Ramatlhodi, who had thrown his weight behind mediation efforts, might be able to break the deadlock between the strikers and platinum producers.

**Reuters -** [**http://af.reuters.com/article/investingNews/idAFKBN0EG0N320140605**](http://af.reuters.com/article/investingNews/idAFKBN0EG0N320140605)

LAC

**Brazil**

**Strikes and protests in Brazil's Sao Paulo**

Sao Paulo subway workers have announced an open-ended strike amid fresh protests against the World Cup, threatening preparations for the tournament as Brazil defended itself against criticism over chronic delays and soaring costs. Workers decided to strike from midnight on Thursday after negotiations on a salary increase fell through. They rejected an offer of 8.7 percent, insisting on at least 10 percent, said the president of their union, Altino Melo dos Prazeres. The Sao Paulo metro is the main transport link to the economic capital's World Cup host stadium, which will host the opening ceremony and kick-off match on June 12, and the strike could pose a massive logistical headache for organisers.

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/news/americas/2014/06/strikes-protests-brazil-sao-paulo-2014656248973327.html**](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/americas/2014/06/strikes-protests-brazil-sao-paulo-2014656248973327.html)

**Colombia**

**Defeated Colombian leftist calls on voters to back Santos**

Leftist politician Clara Lopez, who was defeated in the first round of Colombia's presidential elections, has called on her supporters to back incumbent Juan Manuel Santos in the June 15 runoff vote to keep the country's peace process on track. Center-right Santos and right-wing Oscar Ivan Zuluaga, who is skeptical of peace talks with FARC rebels, are neck-and-neck in a tight election race, according to a poll last week that put just one percentage point between them in voter intentions.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140604170907-kzzt6/?source=search**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140604170907-kzzt6/?source=search)

**14,000 Colombians displaced every month despite peace efforts – UN**

Thousands of Colombians continue to be driven from their homes every month to escape fighting between warring factions despite peace efforts to end a 50 year-war, the UN said on Wednesday. The government needs to do more to provide humanitarian aid to communities living in areas hard hit by the conflict and drug-fuelled violence, deputy UN aid chief Kyung-wha Kang told reporters in Bogota at the end of a four-day official visit to Colombia. “The ongoing displacement due to the ongoing armed conflict, which has lasted more than five decades, continues to displace, affect new people. I understand that even with the peace process there’s on average about 14,000 displacements taking place and hundreds killed or injured by landmines,” she said.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140604191757-4thcm/?source=quickview**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140604191757-4thcm/?source=quickview)

**Venezuela**

**Opposition leader to face trial over demos in Venezuela**

A Venezuelan opposition leader has been ordered to stand trial on charges of instigating violence at an anti-government demonstration, prosecutors said Thursday. A judge ruled that Leopoldo Lopez, who has been in custody for three months, should stand trial, the prosecutor's office said. Lopez is charged specifically over violence that broke out during a rally against the government of Nicolas Maduro on February 12. Opponents of the leftist Maduro took to the streets in February to protest rampant crime, runaway inflation, a lack of economic opportunity and shortages of such basic goods as toilet paper in the country with the world's largest proven oil reserves. A total of 42 people died in the protests, which went on for four months, although they have died down now to just sporadic assemblies of handfuls of protesters. Lopez, a Harvard-educated economist aged 43, leads an opposition party called Popular Will. It is considered a hardline wing of an opposition umbrella grouping and pushed for Maduro to step down outright, whereas other factions just wanted economic and political reforms.

**VoA -** [**http://voiceofrussia.com/news/2014\_06\_05/Opposition-leader-to-face-trial-over-demos-in-Venezuela-9332/**](http://voiceofrussia.com/news/2014_06_05/Opposition-leader-to-face-trial-over-demos-in-Venezuela-9332/)

MENA

**Iraq**

**Six killed as militants assault Iraq’s Samarra**

Militants launched a major attack on the Iraqi city of Samarra on Thursday, killing six people and occupying multiple neighbourhoods, police, a doctor and witnesses said. The militants, travelling in dozens of vehicles, some mounted with anti-aircraft guns, attacked a major checkpoint on the southeast side of Samarra, killing the security forces guarding it and burning their vehicles, witnesses said. They then took control of several areas of the city, north of Baghdad, according to witnesses, who reported seeing the bodies of both security forces and gunmen in the streets. An AFP journalist saw helicopters firing into the city. A police major and a doctor said six police had been killed and 24 people wounded in the fighting.

**AFP -** [**http://www.khaleejtimes.com/kt-article-display-1.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2014/June/middleeast\_June49.xml&section=middleeast**](http://www.khaleejtimes.com/kt-article-display-1.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2014/June/middleeast_June49.xml&section=middleeast)

**First Red Cross medical delivery to Iraq’s Fallujah in months**

The International Committee of the Red Cross has delivered medical supplies to Iraq’s Fallujah for the first time since January, it said Thursday, describing the situation in the conflict-hit city as “extremely dire”. A five-member ICRC team visited the city, which has been outside of government control since the beginning of the year, and delivered the supplies to the city’s main hospital, which it said would be used to treat patients suffering from burns or other injuries. “The situation is very worrying,” said Patricia Guiote, head of the Red Cross sub-delegation in Baghdad and the leader of the delegation that visited Fallujah, a short drive west of the Iraqi capital. “People are enduring a severe shortage of food, water and health care. Services at the hospital, which is the only facility still able to provide treatment for the injured and the sick, have been seriously affected by the fighting.”

**AFP -** [**http://www.khaleejtimes.com/kt-article-display-1.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2014/June/middleeast\_June50.xml&section=middleeast**](http://www.khaleejtimes.com/kt-article-display-1.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2014/June/middleeast_June50.xml&section=middleeast)

**Lebanon**

**Kerry says Lebanon needs president to meet security challenge**

US Secretary of State John Kerry urged Lebanon's politicians on Wednesday to overcome their "deeply troubling" stalemate and elect a new president to help respond to the damaging fallout of civil war in neighbouring Syria. Kerry, on a brief visit to Beirut, also announced more aid to help Lebanon and other countries in the region struggling to cope with millions of Syrian refugees. "Lebanon's security for years has been of paramount concern to the US, and that is why I have to say that the current political stalemate here in Lebanon is deeply troubling," he said after meeting PM Tammam Salam.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140604163131-2tnd1/?source=search**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140604163131-2tnd1/?source=search)

**Libya**

**Libyan renegade general survives assassination attempt-sources**

A Libyan renegade general survived an attempt to kill him outside Benghazi on Wednesday, army sources said. A suicide bomber drove a Land Cruiser packed with explosives to the base of retired general Khalifa Haftar, his spokesman Mohamed El-Hejazi said, adding Haftar had not been hurt. Military sources said two of Haftar's guards were killed. Haftar has launched a campaign to what he calls purge the North African country of Islamists.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140604083807-1icw0/?source=search**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140604083807-1icw0/?source=search)

**Election of Ahmed Maiteeq as new Libyan PM violating law: prosecutor**

The election of Ahmed Maiteeq as Libya's new prime minister was conducted in violation of the country's temporary constitution, a prosecutor told the Supreme Constitutional Court on Thursday.

The North African country is struggling with a political crisis as outgoing premier Abdullah al-Thinni has refused to hand over power to Maiteeq who was elected by parliament in a chaotic vote last month. Amid disarray in Tripoli there is conflict between rival groups across the country.

**Reuters -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/election-ahmed-maiteeq-libyan-pm-violating-law-prosecutor-113252934.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/election-ahmed-maiteeq-libyan-pm-violating-law-prosecutor-113252934.html)

**Swiss Red Cross staffer slain in lawless Libya**

Gunmen killed a senior Swiss staffer of the Red Cross in Libya on Wednesday, hours after a rogue ex-general who has taken on the country's jihadists survived a suicide bombing. The violence, which underscores the almost total lack of security in the North African state, followed an overnight rocket attack on the government's offices in the capital, Tripoli. In Geneva, International Committee of the Red Cross spokesman Wolde Saugeron said one of its workers was "attacked by gunmen as he left a meeting with two colleagues" in the city of Sirte at around noon (1000 GMT). "They were headed towards their car, which wasn't marked with ICRC insignia" and the attackers shot at "point-blank" range. "Our organisation condemns this murder." The man, who was not immediately named, headed the agency's office in Misrata, some 200 kilometres (124 miles) from Sirte.

**AFP -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/rogue-libya-general-escapes-suicide-attack-084004227.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/rogue-libya-general-escapes-suicide-attack-084004227.html)

**Four UN staffers 'roughed up' at Libya airport: boss**

Four UN staffers have been roughed up by the security detail at Tripoli airport after being briefly detained for alleged arms smuggling, the UN chief of mission in Libya said Thursday.

The unidentified foreigners were "held for questioning by the security brigade ... for an hour and a half and roughed up" Wednesday night, Tarek Mitri told a press conference in the capital. Mitri denounced the "unacceptable" treatment of the men, who he said had diplomatic immunity. The men were carrying arms licensed by the Interior Ministry and were returning from the eastern town of Al-Baida, where they had traveled to prepare a visit by Mitri. Separately, Mitri complained that a senior UN official had been briefly detained, and his papers confiscated, after he recently went to attend a court hearing.

**AFP -** [**http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/Jun-05/258991-four-un-staffers-roughed-up-at-libya-airport-boss.ashx#axzz33lUqmQYB**](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/Jun-05/258991-four-un-staffers-roughed-up-at-libya-airport-boss.ashx#axzz33lUqmQYB)

**State of Palestine/Israel**

**Israel to build 1,500 more homes in settlements**

Israeli Housing Minister Uri Ariel has invited bids for 1,500 new homes in Jewish settlements in retaliation for a new Palestinian government backed by Hamas, reports said on Thursday.

Of the new homes, 400 will be in Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem with the rest elsewhere in the occupied West Bank, the online edition of Haaretz newspaper reported. Ariel said it was "an appropriate Zionist response to the terrorist Palestinian government," the paper reported.

"Israel has the right and duty to build throughout the entire country," said the minister, who is a member of the far-right Jewish Home party which is fierce champion of the settlements and opposes a Palestinian state. The announcement comes amid Israeli anger at its US ally's decision to work with the new merged administration for the West Bank and Gaza formed by Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas with the support of Israeli foe Hamas.

**AFP -** [**http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/133631-reports-israel-to-build-1-500-more-homes-in-settlements**](http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/133631-reports-israel-to-build-1-500-more-homes-in-settlements)

**AFP -** [**http://www.saudigazette.com.sa/index.cfm?method=home.regcon&contentid=20140605207516**](http://www.saudigazette.com.sa/index.cfm?method=home.regcon&contentid=20140605207516)

**Syria**

**Assad wins Syria election with 88.7 pct of votes-speaker**

Bashar al-Assad won 88.7 percent of the vote in Syria's presidential election, parliament speaker Mohammad al-Laham said on Wednesday, securing a third term in office despite a raging civil war which grew out of protests against his rule. Assad's foes had dismissed the election as a charade, saying the two relatively unknown challengers offered no real alternative and that no poll held in the midst of civil war could be considered credible.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140604185719-156fe/?source=dpagehead**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140604185719-156fe/?source=dpagehead)

**Tunisia**

**Tunisian politicians deadlocked on new elections**

Tunisia’s political parties remain deadlocked on Tuesday over the timing of the country’s next round of elections. Two days of negotiations ended without an agreement on whether the presidential or parliamentary poll should come first. Some also renewed calls for the polls to be held on the same day, despite a previous agreement to hold separate elections. The elections, which are expected by the end of 2014, will be the second vote since the 2011 uprising that ousted long-time president Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali, and the first since a new constitution was passed in January of this year. According to the results of a vote by the leaders of parties represented in Tunisia’s Constituent Assembly, nine parties back holding parliamentary elections before the presidential polls, and 10 parties voted for the opposite.

**Asharq Al-Awsat -** [**http://www.aawsat.net/2014/06/article55332890**](http://www.aawsat.net/2014/06/article55332890)

**Yemen**

**Twelve soldiers killed in Yemen checkpoint attack – official**

Twelve soldiers were killed when suspected al Qaeda militants opened fire at a military checkpoint in Yemen's southern Shabwa province at dawn on Thursday, a local official said. The insurgents attacked the army checkpoint in the city of Bayhan with machine guns while most of the soldiers were sleeping and fled the scene after setting fire to two army vehicle, the official told Reuters. Yemen is the main stronghold of Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), one of the Islamist militant group's most active wings.

**Reuters -** [**http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/06/05/uk-yemen-violence-idUKKBN0EG0QV20140605**](http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/06/05/uk-yemen-violence-idUKKBN0EG0QV20140605)

**Yemen says 500 al Qaeda militants, 40 soldiers killed in campaign**

Five hundred al Qaeda militants and 40 soldiers have been killed since the military launched an offensive against the group in April, Yemeni army spokesman, Colonel Saeed al-Faquih, told a news conference on Thursday. Yemen's military mounted a campaign in the south of the country to try to crush the Islamist group that has killed hundreds of people, and in response the militants have stepped up attacks on government facilities after being driven out of strongholds in the southern Shabwa and Abyan provinces. They have fled to the desert and the mountains from where they have been attacking army and government targets.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/06/05/us-yemen-violence-idUSKBN0EG0WW20140605**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/06/05/us-yemen-violence-idUSKBN0EG0WW20140605)

ROSA

**Afghanistan**

**NATO to keep around 12,000 troops in Afghanistan next year-US official**

A NATO-led training mission in Afghanistan next year is likely to total about 12,000 soldiers, including about 8,000 Americans, while some 1,800 Americans will conduct counter-terrorism missions, a senior US military official said on Wednesday. The US would also be keen to see participation in the counter-terrorism effort by nations with well-trained special forces, such as Britain or Australia, the official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said. The 12,000 figure for the NATO training mission given by the official on the sidelines of a meeting of NATO defense ministers in Brussels was at the high end of planning assumptions previously spoken of in NATO corridors.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/06/04/us-afghanistan-nato-military-idUSKBN0EF1VM20140604**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/06/04/us-afghanistan-nato-military-idUSKBN0EF1VM20140604)

**Roadside bombing kills 4 Afghan police officers**A provincial official says four Afghan police officers were killed and another one was wounded when their vehicle struck a roadside bomb in the country's south. Omer Zwak, spokesman for the provincial governor of Helmand province, said on Wednesday that the incident occurred on Tuesday evening while the policemen were on their way back from an operation in Sangin district. Zwak says the police vehicle was completely destroyed in the blast. No one has claimed responsibility for the attack in Sangin. Roadside bombings are a major threat to both the security forces and civilians in Afghanistan. Attacks using roadside bombs have escalated as the Taliban have intensified their campaign ahead of the US-led foreign forces withdrawal from Afghanistan by the end of the year.   
**AP -** [**http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/south-asia/roadside-bombing-kills-4-afghan-police-officers/article6081429.ece**](http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/south-asia/roadside-bombing-kills-4-afghan-police-officers/article6081429.ece)

**India**

**Indian woman shot dead for resisting rape**

Rebels have shot dead a 35-year-old mother of four in northeast India after she resisted their attempt to gang-rape her, police said, in the latest string of sexual crimes to shock the country. Authorities said that armed fighters of the outlawed Garo National Liberation Army attacked a woman in the remote south Garo Hills in Meghalaya state late on Tuesday, after locking her husband and children inside a room before turning on her. "The woman was shot dead by Garo National Liberation Army rebels after she resisted their attempt to molest and rape her", local police chief Lakardor Syiem told AFP news agency.

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2014/06/indian-woman-shot-dead-resisting-rape-2014655340806286.html**](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2014/06/indian-woman-shot-dead-resisting-rape-2014655340806286.html)

**Pakistan**

**Protests in Pakistan over MQM leader arrest**

Thousands of supporters of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) have protested in Karachi after UK police arrested the party's leader, Altaf Hussain, on suspicion of money-laundering. Hussain, who was detained in London on Tuesday, has lived in self-imposed exile in Britain since 1992 but regularly addresses large gatherings in Pakistan by telephone link. The MQM is one of the country's main political parties, and has often been accused by opponents of using violence to bolster its power. The protesters in Karachi, where the party has its biggest base of support, called on the Pakistani government to ensure Hussein's well-being.

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2014/06/protests-pakistan-over-mqm-leader-arrest-2014646133122172.html**](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2014/06/protests-pakistan-over-mqm-leader-arrest-2014646133122172.html)

**Militant commander killed in NW Pakistan**

A senior Taliban commander known for training suicide bombers was killed Thursday in a clash between rival factions in Pakistan's restive northwest, officials and militant sources said. Ashiqullah Mehsud of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) was killed during a clash with a recent breakaway faction near the town of Mir Ali in the North Waziristan tribal district bordering Afghanistan. "Ashiqullah has embraced martyrdom after an enemy attack this morning," a militant source told AFP. Local intelligence officials confirmed the death. Mehsud served on the shura (ruling council) of the TTP, the militant said, and was the successor to Qari Hussain -- an infamous commander known as the "father of suicide bombers" for indoctrinating and training young recruits.

**AFP -** [**http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/133685-militant-commander-killed-in-nw-pakistan**](http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/133685-militant-commander-killed-in-nw-pakistan)

WCA

**Guinea**

**Guinea, Sierra Leone see spike in Ebola cases – WHO**

At least 21 people died and 37 new cases of suspected Ebola were recorded in Guinea between May 29 and June 1, the World Health Organization said on Wednesday, undermining the government's claims that the number of Ebola deaths was slowing. The new figures take to 328 the number of cases linked to the disease in Guinea, of which 193 have been confirmed by laboratory tests. In total, 208 deaths have been linked to Ebola, making the outbreak one of the deadliest for years. More than half of the new deaths in Guinea were in the southern region of Gueckedou, epicentre of the outbreak which began in February, near the Sierra Leone and Liberian borders. The town is known for its weekly market which attracts traders from the region as well as from neighbouring countries.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140604161728-i6obu/?source=search**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140604161728-i6obu/?source=search)

**Mali**

**Mali peace envoy meets rebel leaders in Mauritania**

Mali sent a peace envoy to neighbouring Mauritania on Wednesday for talks with the leaders of rebel groups waging an insurgency against the war-torn west African state's government in Bamako. The gesture comes after the regional ECOWAS bloc of countries urged the United Nations at the weekend to strengthen its peacekeeping force and consider imposing "targeted sanctions against the armed groups or individuals who impede the peace process" in Mali. "I made contact with these organisations to first get know who they are, then to pass on the message of the president favouring dialogue and receive their suggestions," Modibo Keita told AFP in the Mauritanian capital Nouakchott. Keita, who was appointed by President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita in April to negotiate with the rebels, met members of the Arab Movement of Azawad (MAA) and the mainly-black Coordination of Patriotic Movements and Forces for Resistance. The UN SC urged Mali last week to implement fully a ceasefire between the government and armed rebel groups following fresh fighting in the northern desert town of Kidal.

**AFP -** [**http://reliefweb.int/report/mali/mali-peace-envoy-meets-rebel-leaders-mauritania**](http://reliefweb.int/report/mali/mali-peace-envoy-meets-rebel-leaders-mauritania)

**Nigeria**

**Witnesses: Boko Haram seizing villages in Nigeria**

Boko Haram militants are taking over villages in northeastern Nigeria, killing and terrorizing civilians and political leaders, witnesses say, as the Islamic fighters make a comeback from a year-long military offensive aimed at crushing them. Nigeria's military has insisted that the big influx of troops and a year-old state of emergency in three states which gives them the power to detain suspects, take over buildings and lock down any area has the extremists on the run.

**AP -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/witnesses-boko-haram-seizing-villages-nigeria-155835950.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/witnesses-boko-haram-seizing-villages-nigeria-155835950.html)

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