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GENERAL

**Across Regions  
Wars internally displace 33.3 million in 2013**

A record 33.3 million people worldwide were displaced by conflict and violence inside their own nations in 2013, UN and Norwegian officials said Wednesday. The increase of 4.5 million above the 2012 total was driven largely by Syria's civil war, now in its fourth. The heads of UNHCR and NRC reported that 8.2 million fled their homes in the last year, including about 3.5 million in Syria alone. The other two-thirds of the 33.3 million displaced by war worldwide had fled in previous years.

**AP -** [**http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/wars-internally-displace-333-million-2013-23709073**](http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/wars-internally-displace-333-million-2013-23709073)

**UN warns countries to bolster fight against MERS virus**

WHO on Wednesday warned countries to bolster their guard against the MERS virus, which has killed 152 people in Saudi Arabia and is causing alarm as it spreads elsewhere. WHO said that a meeting of its emergency committee, which groups medical and policy experts from around the globe, had flagged a significant increase in concerns about the potentially fatal Middle East Respiratory (MERS) virus. "The committee indicated that the seriousness of the situation had increased in terms of public health impact, but that there is no evidence of sustained human-to-human transmission," WHO said. The committee's concerns "centred on the recent sharp rise in cases, systemic weaknesses in infection prevention and control, as well as gaps in critical information, and possible exportation of cases to especially vulnerable countries," it added.

**AFP -** [**http://thanhniennews.com/health/un-warns-countries-to-bolster-fight-against-mers-virus-26307.html**](http://thanhniennews.com/health/un-warns-countries-to-bolster-fight-against-mers-virus-26307.html)

**Tropical Cyclones moving poleward, says study**

Tropical cyclones are reaching maximum intensity farther from the equator and closer to the poles, according to a study published in the journal Nature on Wednesday. Over the last 30 years, the peak of these powerful and destructive storms has migrated poleward at the rate of about half a degree of latitude - some 56 kilometres (35 miles) - per decade, they said. The shift is highest in the northern and southern Pacific and southern Indian Ocean. There was no evidence of a shift in North Atlantic hurricanes or northern Indian Ocean cyclones, nor of any change in the global frequency of these storms, the researchers found. The implications are far-reaching, according to the paper. It means that regions that were once considered to be relatively cyclone-safe may become more exposed.

**AFP -** [**http://www.ndtv.com/article/world/tropical-cyclones-moving-poleward-says-study-524482**](http://www.ndtv.com/article/world/tropical-cyclones-moving-poleward-says-study-524482)

CEE/CIS

**Across Region**

**Russia demands probe into use of UN-logoed aircraft in Ukraine**

Russia on 14 May called for investigation into alleged use of UN symbol by Ukrainian air forces in the country's troubled east. "We are sorting this situation out, because if it (the use of aircraft) was related to some forceful actions against the blocked Ukrainian cities. It is absolutely incompatible with the UN goals," the Russian Deputy Foreign Minister reported. He said the helicopters bearing UN identifications could only be used with the UN permission and in accordance with the UN mandate. The footage of three white UN-logoed Mi-24 and Mi-8 helicopters was broadcast by Russia's Life News TV channel on 13 May. The aircraft were reportedly involved in a military operation conducted by Ukrainian armed forces near the city of Kramatorsk in the eastern region of Donetsk. Earlier on 14 May, the UN Department for Peacekeeping Operations said the use of the UN-marked equipment would mean violation of the organization's rules.

**Xinhua -** [**http://www.china.org.cn/world/Off\_the\_Wire/2014-05/14/content\_32387788.htm**](http://www.china.org.cn/world/Off_the_Wire/2014-05/14/content_32387788.htm)

**Bosnia, Serbia hit by worst flooding in 120 years**

The heaviest rains and floods in the past 120 years hit Bosnia and Serbia this week, killing three people, cutting off electricity and leaving several towns and villages isolated. The three casualties, one of them a firefighter on a rescue mission, drowned in Serbia. The country declared a state of emergency in 18 towns and cities, including Belgrade. In Bosnia, army helicopters evacuated dozens of people stranded in their homes in the town of Maglaj, where the Bosna river swelled to record levels, reaching the first floors of apartment buildings. Special police were trying to reach the Bosnian town of Doboj, which was cut off from the rest of the country after all major roads out were flooded. The Bosnian government ordered the defense ministry to use troops to help thousands of civilians whose homes were engulfed by water, particularly in the central and eastern regions. The Serbian Energy Minister said power supplies were cut to around 100,000 households, mostly in central Serbia. A major highway from Belgrade to Macedonia and Bulgaria was flooded and the traffic interrupted. The main south-bound railway line to Montenegro's port of Bar was also closed down. Bosnia's top utility, Elektroprivreda BiH, said at least 5,000 households were without electricity in the central and eastern parts of the country.

**AP -** [**http://www.foxnews.com/world/2014/05/15/woman-drowns-in-serbia-floods-hundreds-evacuated-children-out-schools/**](http://www.foxnews.com/world/2014/05/15/woman-drowns-in-serbia-floods-hundreds-evacuated-children-out-schools/)

**AFP -** [**http://www.georgeherald.com/news.aspx?id=76440&h=Severe-floods-hit-Serbia-and-Bosnia**](http://www.georgeherald.com/news.aspx?id=76440&h=Severe-floods-hit-Serbia-and-Bosnia)

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/15/us-balkans-flood-idUSBREA4E0AX20140515?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/15/us-balkans-flood-idUSBREA4E0AX20140515?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews)

**Bulgaria**

**Hackers deface church website over mosque attack**

Hackers defaced the website of Bulgaria's Orthodox Church on 15 May, accusing the organization of failing to condemn an attack on a mosque and underlining simmering sectarian tensions in the country. An online group calling itself Milli Gucler ('national forces' in Turkish) briefly replaced the website's homepage with a Turkish flag and a message saying the minority Muslim population would be defended. Many Bulgarian Muslims have roots in Turkey. The hacking came three months after crowds hurled firecrackers and stones at a mosque in the city of Plovdiv, amid signs of rise in support for nationalist and far-right organizations in the build up to this month's European elections. It appeared in the morning and appeared to have been removed soon after midday. Most Bulgarians are Orthodox Christians while Muslims make up about 12% of the population, according to surveys. Reports of a sharp rise in the number of asylum seekers in the Balkan country, many of them from Syria, have provoked several anti-immigrant protests organized by far-right groups and an increasing number of racist attacks in recent months. An Orthodox church spokesman said the organization had contacted the country's leading Muslim cleric, who also condemned the hacking attack.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/15/us-bulgaria-church-website-idUSBREA4E0AG20140515?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/15/us-bulgaria-church-website-idUSBREA4E0AG20140515?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews)

**Turkey**

**Strike call as mine blast toll rises to 282**

Turkey's biggest union has called for a massive strike on 15 May amid mounting anger over the country's worst mining accident, which claimed at least 274 lives with many more still trapped underground. Thousands of protesters clashed with police in Ankara and Istanbul on 14 May, accusing the government and mining industry of negligence. The Turkish Prime Minister promised investigations would be launched into the causes of the disaster but rejected claims of government culpability, saying that "such accidents happen". Police used tear gas and water canon to disperse between 3,000 and 4,000 protesters in Ankara's downtown Kizilay Square, as well as thousands of demonstrators in Istanbul. Earlier in the day, they also used tear gas against around 800 students marching on the energy ministry, and 50 protesters who threw eggs at the mining research directorate in Istanbul.

**AFP -** [**http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/2/8/101335/World/Region/Strike-call-in-Turkey-as-mine-blast-toll-rises-to-.aspx**](http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/2/8/101335/World/Region/Strike-call-in-Turkey-as-mine-blast-toll-rises-to-.aspx)

**Ukraine**

**Fighting rages in Kramatorsk as rebels clash with troops**

Fierce fighting between Ukraine government troops and rebels is continuing. In the cities of Kramatorsk and Slovyansk up to a dozen militia are said to have been killed with several soldiers reportedly wounded since 13 May. Meanwhile, the commander of pro-Russian forces in Donetsk has given Ukraine troops a 24-hour ultimatum to withdraw or face sustained attack. It comes after the Ukraine government held the first in a series of round-table discussions on decentralising power as part of a peace plan. Despite the absence of any of the separatist groups, who were not invited, the talks broke up with no sign of a breakthrough. But the government insists it will not put off plans to hold the presidential election on 25 May.

**Euro News -** [**http://www.euronews.com/2014/05/15/fighting-rages-in-kramatorsk-as-rebels-clash-with-ukraine-troops/**](http://www.euronews.com/2014/05/15/fighting-rages-in-kramatorsk-as-rebels-clash-with-ukraine-troops/)

**Ukraine holds talks to end crisis, rebels not invited**

Ukraine's interim leaders on 14 May pushed a plan to allow the regions a greater say over their affairs, but the exclusion of separatists from round table talks cast doubt over whether the move could defuse the crisis. The talks brought together politicians and civil groups in an effort to quell a pro-Russian rebellion in the industrialized Donbass region of eastern Ukraine, which has triggered fears of a break-up of the former Soviet republic. They came at a tense moment for Kiev. On Tuesday, seven soldiers were killed in an ambush near the city of Kramatorsk, the deadliest attack on security forces since they were sent to tackle the uprising in the east in April.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/14/us-ukraine-crisis-talks-idUSBREA4D0FR20140514?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/14/us-ukraine-crisis-talks-idUSBREA4D0FR20140514?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews)

EAPR

**Across EAPR**

**China issues Vietnam travel warning after riots**

China has issued a warning to travelers planning trips to Vietnam, as state-media on 15 May blamed Hanoi for encouraging the country's worst anti-Beijing riots in decades, in which one Chinese worker was killed. Anti-China protesters set more than a dozen factories on fire in Vietnam on 14 May in response to Beijing's deployment of an oil rig in waters contested between the two nations. China's tourism administration said in a notice on its website on 14 May that any Chinese planning to visit Vietnam should "carefully consider" their plans, and called for visitors to "raise their consciousness of danger". Meanwhile, China's state-run Global Times newspaper said in an editorial that the riots - which saw at least 15 factories set on fire - were "the outcome of Hanoi's years of anti-China propaganda".

**AFP -** [**http://www.straitstimes.com/news/asia/east-asia/story/china-issues-vietnam-tourist-warning-after-riots-20140515**](http://www.straitstimes.com/news/asia/east-asia/story/china-issues-vietnam-tourist-warning-after-riots-20140515)

**Myanmar**

**Despite ceasefire, army seizes land and tortures citizens in southeast**

The Myanmar army continues to commit rights abuses - seizing land and detaining and torturing citizens - in the country’s southeast, more than two years after the government and the region’s ethnic rebels signed a historic ceasefire agreement that brought an end to the world’s longest-running insurgency, a new report said. Previously reported abuses in the area – such as forced labour, restrictions on movement and attacks against civilians – have decreased significantly since the Karen National Union (KNU) and the government agreed upon the ceasefire in January 2012. However, civilians accused of supporting the insurgents are still arbitrarily detained and tortured, and arbitrary taxation by all armed groups continues, according to Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG) report released on Tuesday. New abuses related to increased militarisation and resource management, such as the confiscation of land, have also emerged, KHRG said in its report.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140514100714-dmop0**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140514100714-dmop0)

**Kachin IDPs need shelter assistance**

Thousands of IDPs in Myanmar’s northern Kachin State are in urgent need of shelter assistance ahead of this year’s mid-May to mid-September monsoon, local aid groups and agencies warn. Kachin State, a remote, mountainous region bordering China, gets up to five metres of rain annually, most of it in June, July and August.  According to OCHA, more than 3,000 people were displaced in April, some for the second and third time, from more than 14 villages and four camps following fresh clashes between government forces and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), which has been fighting for greater autonomy from Myanmar’s central government for decades. Many of the displaced are currently staying in 400 temporary white tents provided by UNHCR, each one often housing up to four families at a time, with other families being accommodated in existing temporary shelters or in host communities. However, aid workers say the tents offer little protection against the elements and could put them at increased health risk.

**IRIN -** [**http://www.irinnews.org/report/100086/kachin-idps-need-shelter-assistance**](http://www.irinnews.org/report/100086/kachin-idps-need-shelter-assistance)

**Thailand**

**Thai army 'may intervene' after attack kills three**

The chief of Thailand’s coup-prone army warned Thursday his troops “may use force” to quell political violence, after three people were killed in a grenade and gun attack on protesters in Bangkok. The rare official statement from General Prayut Chan-Ocha followed a call by Thai election authorities for July polls to be postponed because of the unrest. “I want to warn every group — especially those who use violence and war weapons against innocent civilians — to stop now because if the violence continues the military may be needed to come out… to restore peace and order,” Prayut said in unusually strong comments. He said his troops “may need to use force to resolve the situation,” threatening “decisive measures” if civilians are hurt. Unknown assailants fired two grenades into a rally camp early Thursday at the Democracy Monument — a stone’s throw from the city’s famed backpacker zone — followed by a burst of gunfire. Bangkok’s Erawan emergency centre said three people were killed and 23 wounded.

**AFP -** [**http://tribune.com.pk/story/708773/thai-army-may-intervene-after-attack-kills-three/**](http://tribune.com.pk/story/708773/thai-army-may-intervene-after-attack-kills-three/)

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/15/us-thailand-protests-blast-idUSBREA4E01020140515**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/15/us-thailand-protests-blast-idUSBREA4E01020140515)

**Reuters -** [**http://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/news/international/Thai\_protesters\_force\_PM\_to\_flee\_meeting\_after\_three\_killed\_in\_Bangkok.html?cid=38586192**](http://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/news/international/Thai_protesters_force_PM_to_flee_meeting_after_three_killed_in_Bangkok.html?cid=38586192)

**Vietnam**

**More than 20 people dead as anti-China riots spread**

More than 20 people were killed and rioters attacked Vietnam's biggest steel plant overnight as violent anti-China protests spread to the centre of the country a day after arson and looting in the south, a doctor and newspapers said on 15 May. A doctor at a hospital in central Ha Tinh province said five Vietnamese workers and 16 other people described as Chinese were killed in the rioting, one of the worst breakdowns in Sino-Vietnamese relations since the neighbours fought a brief border war in 1979. "There were about a hundred people sent to the hospital last night. Many were Chinese. More are being sent to the hospital this morning," a doctor at Ha Tinh General Hospital reported. Hundreds of Chinese had fled Vietnam, either by air or by crossing into Cambodia, reports said. The brunt of the violence has been borne by Taiwanese firms, mistaken by the rioters to be owned by mainland Chinese. In Binh Duong alone, police said 460 companies in the province had reported some damage to their plants, local media reported. About 600 people were arrested for looting and inciting the crowd, the newspaper quoted the police chief of Binh Duong province, as saying.

**Reuters -** [**http://in.reuters.com/article/2014/05/15/vietnam-china-riots-idINKBN0DV06R20140515**](http://in.reuters.com/article/2014/05/15/vietnam-china-riots-idINKBN0DV06R20140515)

**AP -** [**http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/factories-torched-anti-china-protest-vietnam-23709298**](http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/factories-torched-anti-china-protest-vietnam-23709298)

ESAR

**Kenya**

**Britain, US warn citizens of high risk of attacks**

Britain and the United States warned of potential terrorist attacks in Kenya and British citizens were urged to immediately leave the east African country's port city of Mombasa following a series of attacks. The latest warnings, issued on Tuesday and Wednesday, may further damage Kenya's tourism sector, one that President Uhuru Kenyatta said was "on its knees" after high-profile attacks in resorts along its Indian Ocean coastline. Explosions in Nairobi and Mombasa killed seven people on May 3-4, and Kenya has blamed a series of gun and grenade attacks countrywide on the al Qaeda-linked Somali group al Shabaab. The militants killed at least 67 people, including many foreigners, in a raid on an upscale Nairobi shopping mall in September. Britain's Foreign Office said that unless on essential travel, all its citizens should avoid Mombasa and the surrounding area "following recent terrorist attacks and the continuing terrorist threat in the area". The warning said there was a high threat from "terrorism, including kidnapping", but excluded Mombasa's Moi International Airport and another airport at Diani on the coast.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/14/us-kenya-security-britain-idUSBREA4D0K420140514?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/14/us-kenya-security-britain-idUSBREA4D0K420140514?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews)

**Madagascar**

**22 dead, 3,000 displaced in cattle wars**

Twenty-two people have been killed and hundreds of houses destroyed in violence sparked by cattle rustling in Madagascar, a government agency said Wednesday. Some 275 homes were razed and 3,000 people forced to flee during a week of unrest in the south of the country, the National Bureau for Risk and Disaster Management said. The violence was linked to widespread theft of prized zebu humped cattle, which sparked clashes between gangs of cattle thieves, known as "dahalos," villagers and the army.

**AFP -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/22-dead-3-000-displaced-madagascar-cattle-wars-180509498.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/22-dead-3-000-displaced-madagascar-cattle-wars-180509498.html)

**South Sudan**

**Country faces 'catastrophic levels of hunger'**

South Sudan faces a catastrophic "tipping point" amid famine and genocide warnings, an aid agency has stated, as the conflict entered its fifth month with no sign of the bloodshed ending. "We either act now or millions will pay the price," Oxfam chief executive Mark Goldring said on Thursday. "We face a mammoth task of getting massive levels of aid to people at the worst time of the year, when rains make many areas hard to reach and turn roads into rivers of mud," Goldring said in a statement. We need a massive and rapid global surge in aid to prevent catastrophic levels of hunger. We cannot afford to wait, we cannot afford to fail."

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2014/05/s-sudan-faces-catastrophic-levels-hunger-201451511159244853.html**](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2014/05/s-sudan-faces-catastrophic-levels-hunger-201451511159244853.html)

**Bodies in wells, houses burned, infants starving**

Bodies stuffed in wells. Houses burned down. Children playing on military hardware. And infants showing the skeletal outlines of severe hunger. These are the scenes from a remote part of South Sudan - Leer - where MSF has just begun feeding severely malnourished children about three months after the aid group's hospital was destroyed in violence that has been ripping apart the country since December. UNSG Ban Ki-moon told the Security Council on Monday that he visited South Sudan this month in order to "sound the alarm about the violence and the risk of catastrophic famine." Ban warned that if the fighting continues, half of South Sudan's 12 million people will be displaced, starving or dead by year's end. MSF re-opened its clinic doors last Thursday to a flood of residents seeking help for malaria, measles, diarrhea, respiratory tract infections - and hunger. The group screened 600 children and found 50 faced the most dire level of malnutrition.

**AP -** [**http://www.cbsnews.com/news/south-sudan-bodies-in-wells-houses-burned-infants-starving/**](http://www.cbsnews.com/news/south-sudan-bodies-in-wells-houses-burned-infants-starving/)

**Uganda**

**President urged to veto 'flawed' HIV law**

Rights groups are urging Uganda's president to veto a new measure that they say hurts the fight against HIV and AIDS in the country. Human Rights Watch described Uganda's HIV law as "deeply flawed" in part because it is based on what the group called "stigma and discrimination." The bill, passed by lawmakers on Tuesday, criminalizes intentional transmission as well as attempted transmission of HIV. It also includes mandatory HIV testing for pregnant women and their partners.

Ugandan lawmakers say the measure is necessary to stem the growing rate of HIV in the country, despite concerns that it could be used to violate the rights of people living with HIV.

**AP -** [**http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/ugandas-president-urged-veto-flawed-hiv-law-23710778**](http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/ugandas-president-urged-veto-flawed-hiv-law-23710778)

LAC

**Brazil**

**Class tensions surface in presidential campaign**

A controversial new campaign ad has made class divisions a key theme in Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff's battle for re-election in October. The combative video, released online by Rousseff's Workers' Party this week, suggests a deeply polarized campaign ahead in which the incumbent will try to shift attention away from Brazil's current economic malaise and focus instead on how life improved for the poor over the last decade. The ad shows a rural family happily driving in a truck loaded with goods. Then they pass a dust-covered, downtrodden version of themselves from the past, walking along the side of the road and carrying heavy boxes. "We can't let ghosts from the past come back and take away everything we achieved," a narrator says.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/14/us-brazil-election-idUSBREA4D0L520140514?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/14/us-brazil-election-idUSBREA4D0L520140514?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews)

**Colombia**

**Rebels say 'stable and lasting peace' is possible**

The chances for a "stable and lasting peace" have never been better, Colombian rebels said before peace talks on Wednesday in the latest sign that President Juan Manuel Santos could receive a boost from the negotiations ahead of the 25 May election. Santos, engaged in a tightening re-election campaign, might benefit from any breakthrough between now and the first round of presidential elections, in which his leading rival has threatened to break off peace talks. FARC and the Colombian government have held talks in Havana over the last year and a half, seeking to end 50 years of conflict. The two sides are working a partial accord on eradicating illegal drug crops, which would be the third of five major agreements that would then be revisited in a sixth and final phase of a comprehensive agreement.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/14/us-colombia-rebels-idUSBREA4D0MD20140514**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/14/us-colombia-rebels-idUSBREA4D0MD20140514)

**A victory for sexual violence victims**

Colombia’s senate passed an important bill that is a major step in aiding and protecting sexual violence survivors – especially those who are raped or assaulted by guerillas, paramilitaries, Colombian forces, or others in the context of the country’s decades-long conflict. While this is a significant victory for victims, it is bittersweet. One of the most vocal proponents of the law, Ana Angelica Bello, died in February 2013 of a self-inflicted gunshot wound under circumstances that remain unclear. Angelica, from rural Colombia, became a fearless activist for victims of the armed conflict after being forced off her land by armed groups. She was raped by men she believed to be former paramilitary as punishment for her activism. The law could have changed her life. Human Rights Watch called for the adoption of this law in 2012, after documenting the many obstacles displaced women who were also victims of sexual violence encountered when trying to access health care or justice. We spoke with women who received death threats, or were raped again as retaliation for filing criminal complaints. Others suffered humiliation and mistreatment by authorities.

**HRW -** [**https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/05/13/dispatches-victory-colombia-s-sexual-violence-victims**](https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/05/13/dispatches-victory-colombia-s-sexual-violence-victims)

**Guatemala**

**Congress votes to deny genocide**

Guatemala's Congress has approved a non-binding resolution that calls for "national reconciliation," but also denies there was any attempt to commit genocide during the country's bloody 36-year civil war. The resolution states "It is legally impossible ... that genocide could have occurred in our country's territory during the armed conflict." The resolution was proposed by Luis Fernando Perez, a legislator for the party founded by former dictator Efrain Rios Montt. Rios Montt was convicted of genocide for crimes during his 1982-83 rule. But a court later annulled the 80-year sentence for the massacre of thousands of Mayans and ordered his trial re-started. The vote apparently has no effect on that trial, scheduled to begin again in January.

**AP -** [**http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/guatemalan-congress-votes-deny-genocide-23715631**](http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/guatemalan-congress-votes-deny-genocide-23715631)

**Haiti**

**Clashes as president marks three years in power**

Clashes between protesters and police marked Haitian President Michel Martelly's three years in power Wednesday, with at least one person shot in the confrontations. While PM Laurent Lamothe appealed for calm, a gas station went up in flames as demonstrators denounced perceived abuse and corruption in the poverty-stricken country. Calling for Martelly's resignation, opponents gathered near the presidential palace in the capital Port-au-Prince, where supporters of the singer-turned-head of state had assembled for a concert. At least one person suffered gunshot wounds during clashes between protesters and police elsewhere. Amid pressure from the international community, the Haitian government has committed to holding long overdue legislative and municipal elections in late October.

**AFP -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/clashes-haiti-president-marks-three-years-power-223301782.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/clashes-haiti-president-marks-three-years-power-223301782.html)

**Honduras**

**Honduras ejects protesters from Congress**

Supporters of former president Manuel Zelaya are calling for street protests after military police forced demonstrators out of the congress chambers, beating some. Congressmen from Zelaya's Libre party allegedly allowed leftist demonstrators to enter congress late Tuesday. Police forced them out, using tear gas. Zelaya's party has been protesting the appointment of judicial authorities, saying it has been left out of the process. The Libre supporters also were protesting a shooting attack on Rafael Barahona, a local leader. Barahona was wounded but survived the attack.

**AP -** [**http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/honduras-ejects-protesters-congress-23719348**](http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/honduras-ejects-protesters-congress-23719348)

**Venezuela**

**Opposition says talks with government 'in crisis'**

Venezuela's opposition warned that talks with the government of President Nicolas Maduro are "in crisis" due to repression of student demonstrations and officials' refusal to grant concessions that could defuse three months of street protests. Ramon Guillermo Aveledo, head of the opposition umbrella group MUD, said Socialist Party leaders have undermined the dialogue with constant insults and a refusal to consider amnesty for opposition-linked prisoners. An opposition source said it was unlikely they would attend Thursday's scheduled next round of talks, which are being mediated by representatives of the Vatican and Unasur group of South American nations as a way to stem this year's unrest.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/14/us-venezuela-protests-idUSBREA4D0H620140514?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/14/us-venezuela-protests-idUSBREA4D0H620140514?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews)

**Police arrest 80 in clashes**

Venezuelan police made about 80 arrests and fired tear gas at anti-government student protesters who hurled stones and fireworks at a ministry building in Caracas on Wednesday. The students, who were marching to demand the release of protesters arrested in recent days, massed in the east of the capital but the demonstration quickly became violent when they targeted the Tourism Ministry and riot police intervened. They detained around 80 people, Manuel Quevedo, commander of the National Guard regiment in Caracas, told AFP. Last week more than 200 people were arrested in police raids on encampments of protesters in Caracas. Most have since been freed. At least 42 people have died and more than 800 have been injured since students and other opponents of the socialist government took to the streets in February to protest rampant crime, runaway inflation and shortages of basic goods.

**AFP -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/venezuelan-police-arrest-80-clashes-221614597.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/venezuelan-police-arrest-80-clashes-221614597.html)

MENA

**Egypt**

**Court jails 79 Morsi supporters from 5 to 10 years**

An Egyptian court on Wednesday sentenced 79 supporters of ousted president Mohamed Morsi to jail terms of between five and 10 years over their involvement in deadly clashes, judicial sources said. The defendants were convicted for participating in clashes between Morsi supporters and opponents that killed 12 people in the Mediterranean city of Alexandria last July, after the military overthrew the Islamist president, the sources said. Since Morsi's ouster, his supporters have been staging weekly protests calling for his reinstatement. The rallies have often degenerated into violent street clashes with security forces and civilian opponents. Eleven defendants were given 10 years in jail, 13 were jailed for seven years, 55 were jailed for five years and seven acquitted, the sources added.

**AFP -** [**http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/world/egypt-court-jails-79/1106778.html**](http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/world/egypt-court-jails-79/1106778.html)

**Iraq**

**Twin Baghdad suicide bombs kill six people**

Twin suicide bombings in the centre of Baghdad killed at least six people on 15 May, the latest in a spate of explosions in the city since elections last month. The blasts went off minutes apart during morning rush hour in the commercial district of Karrada, near a crossroads that is the site of a hospital, a police headquarters and a court building. Each bombing killed three people, security and medical officials said. Among the fatalities was at least one policeman. "The first attack was a suicide car bomb between the court and a police base," said a Baghdad security spokesperson. "After a few minutes, another suicide bomber... blew himself up." He also put the toll at six dead, adding that "we lost some security forces" in the first blast. The violence comes two days after a wave of nationwide attacks, including nine car bombs in Baghdad alone, killed 42 people in Iraq's deadliest day since the 30 April polls. The 15 May's bombing was the latest in a protracted surge in violence that has killed more than 3,300 people this year.

**AFP -** [**http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/news/latest-news/283830/baghdad-car-bomb-against-police-hq-kills-three**](http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/news/latest-news/283830/baghdad-car-bomb-against-police-hq-kills-three)

**AFP -** [**http://www.ndtv.com/article/world/twin-baghdad-suicide-bombs-kill-six-524851**](http://www.ndtv.com/article/world/twin-baghdad-suicide-bombs-kill-six-524851)

**Libya**

**US Marines deploy to Italy due to Libya threat**

The US military has moved a team of marines from Spain to southern Italy as a precautionary step in case the US embassy in Libya comes under threat, officials said Wednesday. The contingent of nearly 200 marines is part of a newly-created "crisis response" force set up in the wake of a deadly attack on a US diplomatic outpost in the Libyan city of Benghazi in 2012. The State Department has requested the move amid growing concerns over violence in Libya, but there was no imminent plan to evacuate the embassy in Tripoli, an administration official said. "We're seeing a deterioration of the security situation there," the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, told AFP.

**AFP -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/us-marines-deploy-italy-due-libya-threat-172205609.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/us-marines-deploy-italy-due-libya-threat-172205609.html)

**Soldiers block entrance to PM's office to demand pay**

Libyan soldiers in charge of securing the prime minister's office blocked cars from leaving the building on Wednesday in protest at not having been paid, officials said. A government spokesman declined to give more details or say whether Prime Minister Abdullah al-Thinni was in the building located in central Tripoli during the protest. He said the protesters were members of Battalion No 127, which is tasked with securing the prime minister's office. A member of staff at the prime minister's office said protesters were demanding their salaries as they had not been paid for a while.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/14/us-libya-protests-idUSBREA4D09I20140514?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/14/us-libya-protests-idUSBREA4D09I20140514?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews)

**Saudi Arabia**

**Country reports 10 more deaths from MERS virus, 20 other cases**

Saudi Arabia said that 10 more people infected with Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) had died over the last two days and identified 20 new cases of the virus, pushing the total number of infections in the country to 511. Five of the deaths were reported on 13 May and five on 14 May, according to statements on the health ministry's website. They took the death toll in Saudi Arabia to 157 since MERS, a coronavirus like Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), was identified two years ago. The WHO said on 14 May that while concern about the virus had "significantly increased", the disease was not yet a global health emergency. Of the 16 new cases identified on 14 May, two had died. Of the four cases identified on 13 May, one had died, the ministry said.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140515063444-r59nw/**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140515063444-r59nw/)

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/05/sudan-woman-given-death-penalty-apostasy-20145159264775754.html**](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/05/sudan-woman-given-death-penalty-apostasy-20145159264775754.html)

**HRW urges Saudi to free two Ahmadis held for apostasy**

Human Rights Watch on Thursday urged Saudi Arabia to free two citizens held without trial for two years after converting to an offshoot of Islam banned in the conservative Sunni kingdom. Sultan al-Anzi, aged 33, and Saud al-Anzi, 35, were arrested and jailed in May 2012, three months after joining the Ahmadiyya group and refusing to abandon their belief, New York-based HRW said. The group said it urged Saudi King Abdullah back in August 2012 to release the pair, but never received a response.

**AFP -** [**http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/May-15/256556-hrw-urges-saudi-to-free-two-ahmadis-held-for-apostasy.ashx#axzz31idEYEeH**](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/May-15/256556-hrw-urges-saudi-to-free-two-ahmadis-held-for-apostasy.ashx#axzz31idEYEeH)

**State of Palestine**

**Israeli forces kill two Palestinians in West Bank clash**

Israeli forces shot dead two Palestinians during a stone-throwing protest on Thursday marking the "Nakba", the annual commemoration of what Palestinians term the catastrophe they suffered when Israel was founded. Hospital officials said Muhammad Abu Thahr, 22, and Nadim Nuwara, 17, were both shot in the heart outside Israel's Ofer Prison near the Palestinian city of Ramallah in the occupied West Bank. The Israeli military declined comment, saying border police were involved in the incident. A police spokesman was not immediately available to comment.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140515130642-xj9ye**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140515130642-xj9ye)

**Sudan**

**Two children killed, three maimed by ammunition in South Darfur**

Two children were killed and three others seriously injured in South Darfur’s capital of Nyala on Monday, when the ammunition they had found detonated. Residents of the suburbs of Nyala have been complaining for years about militiamen, elements of the paramilitary Border Guards, or the Central Reserve Force, living in their neighbourhoods. “These men are not all too professional with guns, and careless as well. They often leave their weapons in the open, within the reach of children,” the source explained.

**Radio Dabanga -** [**https://www.radiodabanga.org/node/72902**](https://www.radiodabanga.org/node/72902)

**Syria**

**Air strikes kill over 40 people in the north**

More than 40 people, many of them civilians, were killed by air strikes across northern Syria, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said on 15 May. On 14 May, 15 people were killed, including three from an emergency medical team, during five air raids in Atarib in the northern Aleppo province, the Observatory said early on 15 May. Four rebel fighters were killed by air strikes in the same area, while 21 people, including women, were killed in air strikes on the Sarmada area in northwestern Idlib province, the Observatory said.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/15/us-syria-crisis-airstrikes-idUSBREA4E06B20140515?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/15/us-syria-crisis-airstrikes-idUSBREA4E06B20140515?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews)

**Blast in northern Syria, near border crossing with Turkey kills 29: Activists**

An explosion near a border crossing between Syria and Turkey killed as many as 29 people and wounded many others Thursday, an activist group monitoring the Syrian civil war said. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the explosion occurred at a garage near the Bab al-Salameh border crossing in the northern Syrian province of Aleppo. The garage is used by passengers who come to or leave the crossing point, said Rami Abdurrahman, the Observatory's chief. Abdurrahman said it was not immediately clear if a suicide bomber caused the blast. He said those wounded were being treated in Turkish and Syrian hospitals. He said the dead included at least five women and three children. The Local Coordination Committees, another activist group, said a car bomb at the border crossing killed and wounded "many" people.

**AP -** [**http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/activists-blast-northern-syria-kills-17-23728209**](http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/activists-blast-northern-syria-kills-17-23728209)

**Yemen**

**Children, not soldiers: Yemen signs action plan to end recruitment and use of children by armed forces – UNICEF**

In a landmark development for the protection of children, the Government of Yemen signed an action plan with the UN to end and prevent the recruitment of children by the Yemeni Armed Forces. The action plan sets out concrete steps to release all children associated with the Government Security Forces, reintegrate them into their communities, and prevent further recruitment. “With this action plan, Yemen has formalized its commitment to protect its future generations,” said Leila Zerrougui, the SRSG for Children and Armed Conflict, in Sanaa for the signing ceremony. This Action Plan aims to ensure the release of all children within armed forces in Yemen and their effective reintegration into communities," said Julien Harneis, UNICEF's Representative in Yemen. Yemen is one of eight countries whose national security forces are listed by the UNSG for recruitment and use of children.

**UNICEF -** [**http://www.unicef.org/media/media\_73490.html**](http://www.unicef.org/media/media_73490.html)

**Fighting between army and al-Qaida kills 42**

Fierce fighting between soldiers and al-Qaida militants in southern Yemen killed at least 42 people Wednesday, as families fled past destroyed homes, burning cars and streets littered with corpses, witnesses and officials said. The fighting in the town of Azzan in Shabwa province comes amid an ongoing army offensive against al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula. Al-Qaida militants tried to retake the town in a dawn attack as government warplanes and naval forces bombed militants hiding in homes, officials said. Soldiers battled militants for hours in street-to-street clashes. Maj. Gen. Ahmed Seif al-Yafie said that the fighting killed at least 30 al-Qaida militants, including six of the local leaders of the terror group. He did not offer casualty figures for government forces. Al-Yafie also said al-Qaida militants used child soldiers in the fighting, without elaborating.

**AP -** [**http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/fighting-yemen-army-al-qaida-kills-42-23717879**](http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/fighting-yemen-army-al-qaida-kills-42-23717879)

ROSA

**Across ROSA**

**Pakistan tells Indian journalists to leave within a week**

Pakistan has told both Indian journalists stationed in Islamabad to leave within a week, the two said on Wednesday, and New Delhi criticized this as a retrograde step that would weigh on confidence-building measures between the nuclear-armed rivals. Tensions are simmering between Pakistan's powerful military and a civilian government that appears dovish towards neighboring India, where Hindu nationalist opposition leader Narendra Modi appears set to win a general election. Late on Tuesday night, Snehesh Alex Philip of The Press Trust of India and Meena Menon of The Hindu received letters telling them that their visas would not be renewed, the journalists told Reuters on Wednesday. They said no reason was given. Both had been in Pakistan for less than a year.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/14/us-pakistan-india-journalists-idUSBREA4D0LP20140514?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/14/us-pakistan-india-journalists-idUSBREA4D0LP20140514?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews)

**Afghanistan**

**Taliban fighters killed in Afghan gun battle**

At least two Taliban fighters have been killed in a gun battle with police in Afghanistan. The Taliban on Wednesday claimed responsibility for the ongoing attack on a border police post in Spin Boldak, a town in Kandahar province. An unknown number of attackers stormed the base on Wednesday evening, and police said that they had so far killed two members of the group. The number of police injured or killed is unconfirmed. Spin Boldak is near the Chaman border crossing with Pakistan.

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2014/05/taliban-fighters-killed-afghan-gun-battle-2014514164234118346.html**](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2014/05/taliban-fighters-killed-afghan-gun-battle-2014514164234118346.html)

**Presidential election heads for a run-off in June**

The Afghan election headed for a second round run-off between former opposition leader Abdullah Abdullah and ex-World Bank economist Ashraf Ghani after final results on 15 May showed no candidate had won an absolute majority. Abdullah took the lead with 45% of votes, followed by Ghani with 31.6%, the Independent Election Commission (IEC) said. Former foreign minister Zalmai Rassoul finished a distant third with 11.4%, but has since joined Abdullah's camp. According to election timetable, the runoff must take place two weeks after the final result is announced. However, an official said due to some problems, the runoff polls will take place on 14 June.

**Xinhua -** [**http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2014-05/15/c\_133336459.htm**](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2014-05/15/c_133336459.htm)

**Bangladesh**

**Bangladesh ferry capsizes with 200 passengers aboard, 9 bodies found**

A Bangladeshi ferry with around 200 passengers on board capsized in a storm on a river near the capital Dhaka on Thursday, with police reporting that at least nine bodies had been recovered, but there were fears that the toll would climb. "We fear there will be more bodies inside the vessel and we cannot be sure of the number of passengers (on board)," Saiful Hassan Badal, Deputy Commissioner of Munshiganj district told Reuters by telephone from the scene of the accident. The M.V. Miraj-4 ferry capsized in high winds and rain in the Meghna river at Rasulpur in Munshiganj district, 27 kilometers from Dhaka. The accident occurred at around 3:30 pm (0930 GMT). The ferry had been going to Shariatpur from Dhaka. Some survivors were able to swim ashore, despite strong currents and high waves whipped up by the storm.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/15/us-bangladesh-ferry-accident-idUSBREA4E0H220140515**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/15/us-bangladesh-ferry-accident-idUSBREA4E0H220140515)

**India**

**City on alert after communal unrest**

Indian police in the south Indian city of Hyderabad are maintaining a tight vigil after paramilitary forces trying to break up clashes between two religious communities killed three people. The violence broke out on 14 May in the old quarter of Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh state, which has a mixed Hindu-Muslim population, according to AFP news agency. Hyderabad police have declined to say who or which communities were involved in the rioting. Trouble erupted after some people attacked houses and shops of a religious minority following rumours that a religious flag had been burnt. Security forces placed a curfew on the area and the situation was under control, the Hyderabad police commissioner, said.

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2014/05/indian-city-alert-after-communal-unrest-201451575954365786.html**](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2014/05/indian-city-alert-after-communal-unrest-201451575954365786.html)

**Pakistan**

**Polio virus found in Lahore, Karachi sewage samples**

Samples taken from sewage in different parts of Karachi and Lahore – the country’s most populated cities – have tested positive for the polio virus, officials confirmed on Tuesday. The Pm’s focal person on polio, Ayesha Raza Farooq, confirmed that an environmental sample from Lahore taken at the Main Outfall pumping station, and two from Karachi – one taken at Gadap and the other at Gulshan-e-Iqbal – have tested positive for the virus. The samples collected were taken in April. However, Farooq says she was not “too concerned about (the environmental sample testing positive in) Lahore because there are no reported cases which means a high level of immunity has developed among the population so while the virus is still being circulating it is a low grade one.” WHO says the virus strain of polio found in Pakistan has affected as many as five countries over the past two years, becoming a serious threat to other countries.

**Dawn -** [**http://www.dawn.com/news/1106040/polio-virus-found-in-lahore-karachi-sewage-samples**](http://www.dawn.com/news/1106040/polio-virus-found-in-lahore-karachi-sewage-samples)

WCAR

**CAR**

**EU force at 870 in June**

The EU expects to have more than 800 troops on the ground in CAR by mid-June, where they will secure parts of the capital before handing over to a UN force later this year, the force's operation commander said Tuesday. The six-month deployment comes amid mounting concern that existing French and African peacekeepers need more help to secure the near-anarchic country before the UN force is deployed in September. The EU force, known as EUFOR, has 235 troops in Bangui, where they are securing the airport and a nearby area intended to house the remaining troops when they arrive. Greece is hosting the operation headquarters for the multinational force of 17 countries.

**AP -** [**http://bigstory.ap.org/article/eu-force-c-african-republic-870-june**](http://bigstory.ap.org/article/eu-force-c-african-republic-870-june)

**Benin**

**President pardons alleged plotters after French mediation**

Benin's President Boni Yayi has publicly pardoned those accused of trying to poison him in an alleged 2012 coup attempt after the mediation of international figures, including the president of France. The intrigue had fomented tensions in the country that has otherwise enjoyed relative political stability since multi-party democracy was introduced in the 1990s.

**Reuters -** [**http://townhall.com/news/politics-elections/2014/05/14/benin-president-pardons-alleged-plotters-after-french-mediation-n1838319**](http://townhall.com/news/politics-elections/2014/05/14/benin-president-pardons-alleged-plotters-after-french-mediation-n1838319)

**Nigeria**

**Boko Haram rebels kill 4 soldiers in ambush**

Boko Haram rebels killed four Nigerian soldiers in a night ambush outside the northeastern city of Maiduguri and several insurgents also died in the firefight, according to a statement on Wednesday from Defense Headquarters. Troops on patrol around Chibok were ambushed by insurgents yesterday. Troops engaged the insurgents in a fierce combat and extricated themselves from the ambush killing several insurgents. Four soldiers however lost their lives during the ambush," said a statement from Defence Headquarters. "On evacuation of the remains of the fallen troops, the General Officer Commanding addressed the troops who registered their anger about the incident by firing into the air. The situation has since been brought under control," it said.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/14/us-nigeria-girls-ambush-idUSBREA4D0T520140514**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/14/us-nigeria-girls-ambush-idUSBREA4D0T520140514)

**Missing schoolgirls start second month in captivity**

More than 200 schoolgirls on Wednesday began their second month as Boko Haram hostages as international powers ramped up efforts to track down the savage Nigerian Islamist group. Lawmakers began debating a request from President Goodluck Jonathan for a six-month extension to a state of emergency first imposed in three northeast states worst affected by the violence exactly a year ago. A total of 223 of the 276 girls who were abducted from their school in the remote town of Chibok, Borno state, on 14 April are still missing. Street protests were held to mark the one-month anniversary of their kidnapping.

**AFP -** [**http://www.ndtv.com/article/world/missing-nigerian-schoolgirls-start-second-month-in-captivity-524464**](http://www.ndtv.com/article/world/missing-nigerian-schoolgirls-start-second-month-in-captivity-524464)

**Few gains after year-long state of emergency**

Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan's bid to extend an ineffective year-long state of emergency in the northeast has exposed him as an out-of-touch leader with no credible plan to end a brutal Islamist conflict, experts said. Few dispute the severity of the crisis in the remote region, where Boko Haram has killed thousands in a five-year uprising and more than 2,000 already this year. Violence has escalated, with the abduction of more than 200 schoolgirls receiving unprecedented global attention. Jonathan's request for a six-month extension to special measures for Yobe, Borno and Adamawa states, which is awaiting approval from lawmakers, was widely expected.

**AFP -** [**http://www.ndtv.com/article/world/few-gains-after-nigeria-s-year-long-state-of-emergency-524519**](http://www.ndtv.com/article/world/few-gains-after-nigeria-s-year-long-state-of-emergency-524519)

**Mali**

**IMF says cash to be delayed over questionable jet purchase**

IMF says it questions the rationale of and procedures that led to Mali buying a $40 million presidential jet given the country's pledges to fight poverty, a spokesman said. IMF has contacted Malian authorities about the purchase as well as a separate 100 billion CFA franc ($209.02 million) state guarantee issued to guarantee a loan secured by a private company with a Malian bank to provide supplies for the army, the spokesman said. The IMF spokesman added that the process of getting this information will delay the first review of its post-war aid package and, as a result, a $6 million disbursement due in June will be delayed.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/14/us-mali-imf-idUSBREA4D0X920140514?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/14/us-mali-imf-idUSBREA4D0X920140514?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews)

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