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GENERAL

**Across Regions**

**US tells Ukraine it's working with Europe on more Russia sanctions**

US Vice President Joe Biden told Ukraine President Petro Poroshenko on Tuesday that the United States was working with European allies on further sanctions against Russia over the escalation of the conflict in Ukraine. "The leaders discussed Russia's ongoing support for the separatists and apparent escalation of the conflict over the last few days," the White House said in a statement about the call between the two men. "The vice president told President Poroshenko that the United States was engaging with European leaders to discuss the imposition of costs on Russia for its continued escalation of the conflict," it said.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140716011838-izksf/?source=search**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140716011838-izksf/?source=search)

**US, Iran lay ground for extension of nuclear deal deadline**

US Secretary of State John Kerry and his Iranian counterpart laid the groundwork Tuesday for the possible extension of a Sunday deadline to strike a historic nuclear deal after intense talks in Vienna.

Both Kerry and Mohammad Javad Zarif said however after two days of one-on-one discussions which failed to yield any major breakthrough that negotiators would still keep trying until the July 20 cut-off.

A Western diplomat said an extension is now "highly probable," and by months not weeks.

**AFP -** [**http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/138986-u-s-iran-lay-ground-for-extension-of-nuclear-deal-deadline**](http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/138986-u-s-iran-lay-ground-for-extension-of-nuclear-deal-deadline)

**Brics nations to create $100bn development bank**

The leaders of the five Brics countries have signed a deal to create a new $100bn (£58.3bn) development bank and emergency reserve fund. The Brics group is made up of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. The capital for the bank will be split equally among the five participating countries. The bank will have a headquarters in Shanghai, China and the first president for the bank will come from India. Brazil's President, Dilma Rousseff, announced the creation of the bank at a Brics summit meeting in Fortaleza, Brazil on Tuesday.

**BBC -** [**http://www.bbc.com/news/business-28317555**](http://www.bbc.com/news/business-28317555)

**Dutch court rules Dutch state liable for 300 Srebrenica deaths**

The Netherlands is liable for about 300 of the more than 8,000 deaths in the 1995 Srebrenica massacre, a Dutch court ruled on Wednesday, pinning some of the blame for Europe's worst massacre since World War Two on the Dutch state. A district court in The Hague said Dutch peacekeepers in Srebrenica, a Bosnian Muslim enclave in Bosnian Serb-held territory, could have known that the 300 men who had sought refuge in their base in the village of Potocari would be murdered if deported from the Dutch compound. The court said the Netherlands was not liable for the deaths of those who had fled into the forests surrounding Srebrenica, where many of the men and boys were later buried in mass graves. The ruling could set a precedent with implications for future peacekeeping deployments by the Netherlands or other countries.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140716102339-0tyne/?source=search**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140716102339-0tyne/?source=search)

**United Nations**

**Global AIDS epidemic can be controlled by 2030, UN says**

The United Nations said on Wednesday new HIV infections and deaths from AIDS were decreasing, making it possible to control the epidemic by 2030 and eventually end it "in every region, in every country". "More than ever before, there is hope that ending AIDS is possible. However, a business-as-usual approach or simply sustaining the AIDS response at its current pace cannot end the epidemic," UNAIDS said in a global report issued ahead of an AIDS conference in Melbourne, Australia next week. It said the number of people infected with HIV was stabilising at around 35 million worldwide. The epidemic had killed some 39 million of the 78 million people it has affected since it began in the 1980s.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140716085431-xmhq8/?source=search**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140716085431-xmhq8/?source=search)

CEE/CIS

**Turkey**

**Turkey president approves Kurdish reform law**

Turkish President Abdullah Gul on Tuesday approved a ruling party-backed law aimed at giving a boost to peace talks with Kurdish rebels with the ultimate goal of ending the three-decade-long conflict, his office said. The law that gives peace talks a legal framework is seen as a government gambit to court Kurdish votes in the run-up to the August 10 polls in which Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan is running for the presidency.

The six-article package of reforms protects anyone involved in peace negotiations with the banned Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) from prosecution and authorises the cabinet to appoint individuals or bodies to carry out talks with Kurdish militants.

**AFP -** [**http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/middle-east/Turkey-president-approves-Kurdish-reform-law/articleshow/38452101.cms**](http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/middle-east/Turkey-president-approves-Kurdish-reform-law/articleshow/38452101.cms)

**Ukraine**

**Ukraine sees Russian role in air strike on town**

Ukraine has made fresh charges of Russian involvement in its conflict with separatist rebels, suggesting Moscow may have had a role in an air strike on Tuesday that killed 11 people. The accusations come a day before EU leaders meet to discuss the crisis, where they might consider adopting fresh sanctions against Russia. "Tomorrow in Brussels, the heads of state and government will again assess the situation on the ground and, should it be required, adopt necessary decisions," the bloc's enlargement commissioner Stefan Fuele told the European Parliament in Strasbourg.

**Reuters -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/soldiers-killed-ukraine-kiev-points-moscow-over-air-101941677.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/soldiers-killed-ukraine-kiev-points-moscow-over-air-101941677.html)

**Mediators blame rebels over talks**

International mediators have accused pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine of lacking willingness to reach a truce with the government.The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) spoke out after a planned video conference call failed to take place on Tuesday.Fighting continues, with the government saying six soldiers died overnight.EU leaders are expected to expand sanctions against Russia at their summit in Brussels on Wednesday. Russia annexed Crimea from Ukraine in March and has been accused of fanning the rebellion in the eastern regions of Donetsk and Luhansk.

**BBC -** [**http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-28327453**](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-28327453)

EAP

**China**

**China ends drilling operations in disputed sea**

China on Wednesday was moving a massive oil rig away from waters claimed by Vietnam after announcing the end of operations, a development that should end a tense standoff between the nations in the South China Sea. But in withdrawing the rig on its own terms, Beijing has demonstrated it will not be stopped from carrying out exploration activities in waters it considers its own - regardless of the regional or international criticism such actions provoke.

**AP -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/china-ends-drilling-operations-disputed-sea-014239860.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/china-ends-drilling-operations-disputed-sea-014239860.html)

**Indonesia**

**Indonesia's Jokowi leads with 80 percent of votes counted: private group**

Jakarta's populist governor looks set to become Indonesia's next president, according to a private tally of eighty percent of the votes cast, as his rival lashed out at critics, including the capital's biggest English-language newspaper. The Elections Commission (KPU) is to officially announce the result on July 22, but a number of private groups are maintaining counts of the votes as they are published on the commission's website. One such group, www.kawalpemilu.org, showed Governor Joko "Jokowi" Widodo in front with 53 percent of the vote after 80 percent of the count.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/16/us-indonesia-election-idUSKBN0FL0PE20140716**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/16/us-indonesia-election-idUSKBN0FL0PE20140716)

**PNG**

**Many women abused, few dare to speak up**

According to a recent UN study, one in five women’s first experience of sex was rape, 30% of men had experienced sexual abuse as children and 12% had been forced into sex as a child in PNG. MSF, nurses and doctors have treated more than 18,000 victims of sexual and gender-based Violence since December 2007. This crisis in Papua New Guinea is hardly noticed outside the country. This crisis in Papua New Guinea is hardly noticed outside the country. The European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO) decided to support MSF-Holland in establishing Family Support Centres in 2014 with a grant of € 1.5 million.

**Reuters -** [**http://ec.europa.eu/echo/en/field-blogs/stories/papua-new-guinea-many-women-abused-few-dare-speak-0**](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/en/field-blogs/stories/papua-new-guinea-many-women-abused-few-dare-speak-0)

**Philippines**

**Typhoon kills 10 in Philippines, shuts Manila, cuts power, prompts evacuations**

A typhoon killed at least 10 people as it churned across the Philippines and shut down the capital, cutting power and prompting the evacuation of almost more than 370,000 people, rescue officials said on Wednesday. The eye of Typhoon Rammasun, the strongest storm to hit the country this year, passed to the south of Manila on Wednesday after cutting a path across the main island of Luzon, toppling trees and power lines and causing electrocutions and widespread blackouts. Government offices, financial markets and schools closed for the day.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/16/us-philippines-typhoon-idUSKBN0FL07520140716**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/16/us-philippines-typhoon-idUSKBN0FL07520140716)

ESA

**Across ESA**

**Kenya back in court over Somali refugee roundup**

Rights groups are helping Somali refugees to appeal a high court ruling that allowed Kenya to send 100,000 refugees living in urban areas to overcrowded camps, while 29 police officers involved in mass arrests in a Somali-domated neighbourhood may face prosecution for abuse. On June 30, the high court dismissed a petition brought by 10 Somali refugees challenging the government’s March 25 order that all urban refugees be taken to camps due to "emergency security challenges". Amnesty International is one of the advocacy groups providing legal assistance to the Somalis. Kenyan police have arrested thousands of people without identity documents in the capital's Somali-dominated suburb of Eastleigh following a blast in the area on March 31 that killed six people.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140716064724-iu1wc/?source=jtTheWire**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140716064724-iu1wc/?source=jtTheWire)

**Malawi**

**Malawi ballots destroyed in fire**

Some 1,500 ballot boxes from May's disputed election in Malawi have been destroyed in an unexplained fire.

It comes amid an opposition demand for a recount of voting papers for a parliamentary seat in a constituency in the capital, Lilongwe. The High Court was set to hear arguments about the case on Thursday. In May, it overruled an attempt by former President Joyce Banda to annul the presidential vote, which she said was marred by rigging. Peter Mutharika, leader of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), was declared the winner, taking 36.4% of the presidential vote. International election observers declared the polls to be generally free and fair.

**BBC -** [**http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-28313417**](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-28313417)

**South Sudan**

**UN warns 50,000 children may die of malnutrition in war-torn country – UNICEF mention**

The war in South Sudan has forced farmers from their land, closed supply routes and displaced almost 1 million people. The UN is warning that without urgent help, as many as 50,000 children may die. An appeal has been launched to help get aid into the country. A total of $1.8 billion is needed but so far only $600 million has been pledged.

ABC - <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-07-15/50000-children-may-die-of-hunger-in-south-sudan/5599650>

**Somalia**

**UN monitors allege 'conspiracy' to divert Somali assets**

A United Nations panel that monitors compliance with UN sanctions on Somalia has accused the country's president, a former minister, and a US law firm of conspiring to divert Somali assets recovered abroad, according to a new report. The Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group, an 8-person committee, disclosed the findings in a confidential report to the UN SC's Somalia/Eritrea sanctions committee. Reuters reviewed a copy of the 37-page document. The UN Monitoring Group said the information it has gathered so far "reflects exploitation of public authority for private interests and indicates at the minimum a conspiracy to divert the recovery of overseas assets in an irregular manner."

**Reuters -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/exclusive-u-n-monitors-allege-conspiracy-divert-somali-031143967.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/exclusive-u-n-monitors-allege-conspiracy-divert-somali-031143967.html)

**Zambia**

**Disabled Zambians needing HIV services face discrimination-report**

In Zambia, where disability is often considered a punishment inflicted by evil spirits, nearly two million people with disabilities are struggling to access HIV prevention or testing services or treatment, a rights group said. Yet these people may be more vulnerable to HIV infection than others because of lower levels of education and literacy, greater poverty and greater risk of physical and sexual abuse, Human Rights Watch (HRW) said. "Across the continuum of care – from education to testing to treatment – people with disabilities in Zambia face hurdle after hurdle," said Rashmi Chopra, the author of the report, 'We Are Also Dying of AIDS': Barriers to HIV Services and Treatment for Persons with Disabilities in Zambia.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140715144816-bpmc1/?source=dpagehead**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140715144816-bpmc1/?source=dpagehead)

LAC

**Mexico**

**Mexico rescues 458 children from squalid refuge amid abuse fears**

Mexico said on Tuesday it had rescued 458 children from a vermin-infested refuge for abandoned boys and girls, some of whom it believes were sexually abused. The attorney general's office said police and army troops raided a home known as "La Gran Familia" (The Big Family) in the western city of Zamora on Tuesday, following at least 50 complaints about its operators. Infested by rats, bedbugs and fleas, the refuge was run by Rosa Verduzco, who is now being questioned by authorities, the government said. The refuge was home to 278 boys, 174 girls and six infants as well as 138 adults aged up to 40, the government said. The children in the refuge had to beg for money on the streets, eat unsanitary food and sleep on the floor among vermin, officials said. Some suffered sexual abuse, they added.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140716032244-ons59/?source=search**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140716032244-ons59/?source=search)

MENA

**Across MENA**

**Gaza toll hits 194, first Israeli killed as Netanyahu announces broadening military operation**

The death toll from Israel's week-long campaign in Gaza rose Tuesday to 194, as two Palestinians were killed in renewed strikes after an Egyptian truce bid failed. An Israeli was also killed on Tuesday, the first since the eruption of the war. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu pledged to ramp up Israel's military campaign against Gaza, after an Egyptian truce plan failed to end eight days of cross-border fire. "This would have been better resolved diplomatically, that’s what we tried to do when we accepted the Egyptian truce proposal today," he said.

**AFP -** [**http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/138980-gaza-toll-hits-194-first-israeli-killed-as-netanyahu-announces-broadening-military-operation**](http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/138980-gaza-toll-hits-194-first-israeli-killed-as-netanyahu-announces-broadening-military-operation)

**Israel targets top Hamas leader as Gaza cease-fire collapses**

Israel resumed its air strikes in the Gaza Strip on Wednesday a day after holding its fire in deference to an Egyptian-proposed cease-fire deal that failed to get Hamas militants to halt rocket attacks. Attacks in the Gaza Strip killed at least seven Palestinians in the early hours of Wednesday, Gaza health officials said, and destroyed the house of Mahmoud Zahar - who is believed to be in hiding elsewhere - in the first apparent targeting of a top Hamas political leader.

**Reuters -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/israel-targets-top-hamas-leader-gaza-cease-fire-054043069.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/israel-targets-top-hamas-leader-gaza-cease-fire-054043069.html)

**Israel warns 100,000 Gazans to leave homes: military**

The Israeli army has warned some 100,000 Palestinians in the eastern Gaza Strip to evacuate their homes, military sources said Wednesday. AFP correspondents saw flyers dropped over the Zeitun neighbourhood southeast of Gaza City, and residents there and elsewhere also reported receiving recorded phone and text messages urging them to evacuate by 0500 GMT.

**AFP -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/israel-warns-100-000-gazans-leave-homes-military-060917049.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/israel-warns-100-000-gazans-leave-homes-military-060917049.html)

**UNWRA says Gaza destruction 'Immense'**

UNWRA on Tuesday described the damage wrought by Israel's air offensive on Gaza as "immense", with more than 500 homes razed. "The level of human losses and destruction in Gaza is really immense," said UNWRA spokesman Sami Mshasha. "According to our latest figure, we are talking about 174 killed and well over 1,100 injured. This number will increase. The numbers are increasing by hours," he told reporters." A good number of those killed and injured are women and children. That is a cause of concern for UNRWA," he added.

**AFP -** [**http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/139007-u-n-agency-says-gaza-destruction-immense**](http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/139007-u-n-agency-says-gaza-destruction-immense)

**Israel warplanes hit Syria's Golan, killing four: NGO**

Israeli warplanes struck three administrative and military targets in Syria's Golan at dawn on Tuesday, killing two security guards and two women, said the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. "Israeli planes flying over the occupied Golan Heights launched rockets into southern Syria's Quneitra province at around 1:15 am (2215 GMT). Rockets hit Base 90 - a Syrian military airbase - and regime bastion Baath City. Four people were killed," the monitor said. The strike that killed the women and guards targeted an area where the residence of Quneitra province's governor is located, said the Observatory.

**AFP -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/israel-warplanes-hit-syrias-golan-killing-four-ngo-104700364.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/israel-warplanes-hit-syrias-golan-killing-four-ngo-104700364.html)

**Egypt**

**Egyptian security forces kill seven gunmen in Sinai**

Egyptian security forces killed seven gunmen late Tuesday in Egypt’s Sinai region near the border with Israel, an Al Arabiya correspondent reported. The incident, which happened in Sinai’s northern city of Al-Arish, comes two days after two successive explosions killed a security officer and seven civilians in the same area.

Egypt has been hit by an Islamist insurgency led by Sinai-based militants, who have mainly targeted security forces since last year’s army ouster of elected Islamist President Mohammad Mursi.

**Al Arabiya -** [**http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2014/07/16/Egyptian-security-forces-kill-seven-gunmen-in-Sinai.html**](http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2014/07/16/Egyptian-security-forces-kill-seven-gunmen-in-Sinai.html)

**Iran**

**Iran army vows to fight ‘violations to hijab’**

The Iranian armed forces' chief of staff says it is prepared to fight what it describes is the appearance of "moral and cultural rebellion" and “violations to the hijab.” In a statement Friday carried by the Iranian Mehr news agency, the chief of staff said one of the aims of the "soft war" against the Islamic Republic was to spread "vice" and encourage "rebellion" against the country’s values and religious laws. "This soft war against Iran begins with targeting chastity and hijab via media outlets and satellite channels," the statement said. It also criticized citizens failing to adhere to the advice of Iran’s supreme leader regarding the "cultural attack and soft war" targeting the country.

**Al Arabiya -** [**http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2014/07/15/Iran-army-vows-to-fight-violations-to-hijab-.html**](http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2014/07/15/Iran-army-vows-to-fight-violations-to-hijab-.html)

**Iraq**

**Iraq parliament elects speaker as Tikrit push falters**

Iraq's sharply divided parliament has elected a speaker in a step forward in the delayed government formation process, while a renewed push by Iraqi forces to recapture Tikrit from militants ended in retreat. World powers and Iraq's top Shiite cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, had piled pressure on MPs to set aside their differences in the face of a jihadist-led offensive that has overrun swathes of territory north and west of Baghdad.

**AFP -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/iraq-forces-advance-militant-held-tikrit-officials-083200233.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/iraq-forces-advance-militant-held-tikrit-officials-083200233.html)

**Libya**

**Surge in Libya violence raises spectre of Civil War**

Libya's government said on Tuesday it was considering calling for international forces to help restore security, as fighting between rival militias around Tripoli airport pushed the country closer to civil war. With liberal and Islamist militias locked in a brutal power struggle, the country's main international airport, which was shut down on Sunday for security reasons, came under renewed attack late Monday. Shortly afterwards the government said it was "looking into the possibility of making an appeal for international forces on the ground to re-establish security and help the government impose its authority". The statement from a spokesman added that the forces would help protect civilians, prevent anarchy and allow the government to build up the army and police.

**AFP -** [**http://www.ndtv.com/article/world/surge-in-libya-violence-raises-spectre-of-civil-war-559256**](http://www.ndtv.com/article/world/surge-in-libya-violence-raises-spectre-of-civil-war-559256)

**Tripoli airport becomes Libya's new frontline between rival militias**

First, there is a single shot. Then Libyan fighters empty their anti-aircraft guns as others crouch for cover at Tripoli International Airport. Until Saturday night, the airport was a hub for Libyans coming home for the Muslim fasting month and expatriates going on vacation. Now, Libya's main airport has turned into a battlefield between rival militias, a sign of anarchy in the oil producer. The weak government with its almost non-existent army is appealing for calm but fighters on both sides show no signs of abating in the worst militia clashes in the capital Tripoli since November.

**Reuters -** [**http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/middle-east/Tripoli-airport-becomes-Libyas-new-frontline-between-rival-militias/articleshow/38451870.cms**](http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/middle-east/Tripoli-airport-becomes-Libyas-new-frontline-between-rival-militias/articleshow/38451870.cms)

**State of Palestine**

**Acute water crisis looms in Gaza, aid agencies warn**

Hundreds of thousands of Gazans are without water after Israeli air strikes that have wrecked the water and sewage system and the whole strip is threatened with a water crisis within days, aid agencies warned on Tuesday. The eight-day assault has caused massive damage to infrastructure and destroyed at least 560 homes, the UNRWA said. "Within days, the entire population of the Strip may be desperately short of water," Jacques de Maio, head of ICRC delegation in Israel and the occupied territories, said in a statement. "Water is becoming contaminated and sewage is overflowing, bringing a serious risk of disease," de Maio added.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140715134617-l3p7x/?source=dpagehead**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140715134617-l3p7x/?source=dpagehead)

**Sudan**

**Almost 7 million need aid in Sudan: UN**

Worsening conflict in Darfur and an influx of people fleeing war in South Sudan helped push to almost seven million the number needing aid in Sudan, the UN says. The figure is a jump from the UN previous estimate of 6.1 million, issued last year. Aid agencies urgently need funding "to assist 6.9 million people in need of humanitarian assistance (roughly 20 per cent of Sudan's population)," a UN statement on Wednesday said. "The Sudan humanitarian response plan has been revised to reflect the deteriorating situation in Darfur, the influx of new refugees from South Sudan, and Sudan's acute malnutrition crisis," Ali Al-Za'tari, the UN's Sudan humanitarian coordinator, said in the statement.

**AAP-** [**http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2014/07/16/almost-7-million-need-aid-sudan-un**](http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2014/07/16/almost-7-million-need-aid-sudan-un)

**Syria**

**Syria's Assad sworn in for new seven-year term as president**

President Bashar al-Assad was sworn in for a new seven-year term on state television on Wednesday after an election victory that underlined his grip on power more than three years into Syria's civil war. The presidential election, dismissed as a sham by Assad's opponents, was held last month in areas of central and northern Syria that remain under state control.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140716094537-hdhzg/?source=jtTheWire**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140716094537-hdhzg/?source=jtTheWire)

**Assad says foreign states will pay for supporting "terrorism"**

President Bashar al-Assad, who was sworn in for a new term on Wednesday, said Western and Arab states that have supported "terrorism" will pay a "high price" and that he would fight insurgents until security was restored to the whole country. "Soon we will see that the Arab, regional and Western states that supported terrorism will pay a high price," he told his supporters at the presidential palace.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140716102610-kimkr/?source=search**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140716102610-kimkr/?source=search)

**Yemen**

**Underfed and underfunded: Yemen food crisis persists – UNICEF mention**

Ten million Yemenis, over 40% of the population, do not know where their next meal will come from, and half that number are even more short of food, according to a new survey by two UN agencies. The survey also found that 12 of Yemen’s 22 governorates had critical levels of “stunting”, children who fail to grow properly due to severe malnutrition. “Of the estimated 4.5 million children under the age of five, more than two in five are stunted while almost 13 percent are acutely malnourished,” Jeremy Hopkins, Acting **UNICEF** Representative in Yemen, said in a statement. WFP spokesman Greg Barrow said Yemen’s long-running food crisis had many causes: civil conflict and resulting displacement, endemic poverty, political instability, a refugee influx from the Horn of Africa, and high food prices. Yemen imports 90% of its food.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140715173741-k4mbr/?source=quickview**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140715173741-k4mbr/?source=quickview)

**Yemen clashes between rebels, Islamists kill 35**

Yemeni security officials say two days of clashes between Shiite rebels and Islamist tribesmen in the country's north have killed at least 35 fighters on both sides. The officials say the Hawthi rebels, who belong to a Shiite sect, have been battling their conservative Sunni rivals from one of Yemen's largest tribes, backed by a local army unit, in Jouf province since Tuesday. The two sides are using artillery fire and Katyusha rockets. Jouf is 175 km northeast of the capital, Sanaa, and borders Saudi Arabia.

**AP -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/yemen-clashes-between-rebels-islamists-kill-35-085931558.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/yemen-clashes-between-rebels-islamists-kill-35-085931558.html)

SA

**Afghanistan**

**Afghanistan back from brink, but vote recount fraught with risk**

The euphoria over a US-brokered deal between Afghanistan's rival presidential candidates at the weekend was a sign of how close some people believe the country came to a split along ethnic lines that could quickly turn violent. The speed at which that relief has evaporated suggests the political crisis, playing out as foreign troops prepare to withdraw after more than a decade policing the war-torn nation, is not over yet. The solution that pacified both parties, at least for now, was an ambitious, UN-supervised recount of all eight million votes cast - an exercise aimed at appeasing Abdullah who has alleged mass fraud and refuses to accept defeat. But in a country where infrastructure is basic, it is a mammoth task that could take weeks, and there is no clear indication yet as to how fraudulent ballots will be identified and eliminated.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140715135449-3tbn7/?source=jtOtherNews1**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140715135449-3tbn7/?source=jtOtherNews1)

**Bangladesh**

**Bangladesh hopes storm warning system will cut deaths from lightning**

Bangladesh is working on a new scheme that will give early warning of storms and lightning strikes in a bid to combat rising deaths from the hazards. “We are going to set up 10 thunderstorm observation centres in maritime ports, aiming to provide early warning to avoid deaths from increasingly frequent lightning strikes,” Local Government and Rural Development Minister Syed Ashraful Islam told parliament last month. The centres will track storms across the whole country but are being built near ports, as coastal and river areas are especially vulnerable to extreme weather, with fishermen often working out on the open water. The government-funded centres have been built and equipment is now being installed. The project is due to be up and running by next year.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140716081302-ykle6/?source=quickview**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140716081302-ykle6/?source=quickview)

**Pakistan**

**Pakistan arrests key Taliban commander**

Pakistani security forces raided a militant hideout in a troubled northwestern tribal region and captured a key Taliban commander linked to a 2003 assassination attempt on former President Pervez Musharraf, officials said Wednesday. The troops acted on a tip in the arrest of Adnan Rashid, a former air force officer-turned-militant, two intelligence officials told The Associated Press.

**AP -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/officials-pakistan-arrests-key-taliban-commander-053542728.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/officials-pakistan-arrests-key-taliban-commander-053542728.html)

**Pakistan jets, US drones attack militants, at least 50 said killed**

The Pakistani military said its jets killed 35 suspected militants on Wednesday as part of an anti-Taliban offensive hours after U.S. drones attacked another area nearby and killed up to 20 people. The violence in Pakistan comes as the United States struggles to bring stability to neighbouring Afghanistan before most of its forces pull out after 12 years of inconclusive war.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140716082159-ecj1c/?source=search**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140716082159-ecj1c/?source=search)

**WCA**

**Across WCA**

**As Ebola epidemic stalks West Africa, medics fight mistrust, hostility**

Governments and health agencies trying to contain the world's deadliest ever Ebola epidemic in West Africa fear the contagion could be worse than reported because suspicious locals are chasing away health workers and shunning treatment. Over the border in Liberia's Lofa County, health workers trying to screen two communities for the deadly disease were chased off by locals armed with cutlasses, knives, and stones, according to an internal UN report seen by Reuters. In eastern Sierra Leone, police had to fire teargas to stop relatives trying to recover bodies of Ebola victims for family burial - a serious contagion risk - amid popular suspicions the cadavers might be used for experiments or macabre rituals.

**Reuters -** [**http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/rest-of-world/As-Ebola-epidemic-stalks-West-Africa-medics-fight-mistrust-hostility/articleshow/38361144.cms**](http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/rest-of-world/As-Ebola-epidemic-stalks-West-Africa-medics-fight-mistrust-hostility/articleshow/38361144.cms)

**CAR**

**Sectarian violence escalating**

A deadly cycle of sectarian violence is escalating in eastern parts of the Central African Republic. Scores of civilians have been killed since early June 2014 and tens of thousands displaced from their homes, adding to the hundreds of thousands who have fled their homes since the violence began in March 2013. A Human Rights Watch research mission in June found that at least 62 people were killed in and around Bambari, in the eastern province of Ouaka, between June 9 and 23, 2014, when fighting escalated between the mostly Muslim Seleka rebels and the Christian and animist anti-balaka militias. Witnesses on both sides frequently described the attacks as retaliatory in nature, indicating a growing cycle of tit-for-tat revenge killings between the communities. Most of the victims were men who were chopped to death by machetes.

**HRW -** [**http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/07/15/central-african-republic-sectarian-violence-escalating**](http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/07/15/central-african-republic-sectarian-violence-escalating)

**CAR death toll higher than thought - refugee survey**

The death toll in Central African Republic may be higher than initial estimates because many Muslim victims were never taken to state hospitals and families buried their dead at home because of security fears, aid workers say. Medical charity MSF said on Wednesday that a survey of nearly 33,000 Central African refugees in neighbouring Chad had shown 8 percent of those questioned had lost at least one member of their family. The refugees reported 2,599 deaths between November 2013 and April 2014, the report said. One-third of the 3,449 families questioned had lost at least one member, while a quarter had lost at least two.

Reuters - <http://www.trust.org/item/20140716110153-hmk4l>

**Little help for CAR rape survivors**

The presence of armed groups and continued fighting causing displacement across CAR has led to an escalation of insecurity leaving women and girls vulnerable to forced marriage and extreme violence, including rape. Despite recent commitments from governments, UN agencies and NGOs to prioritize protecting women and girls from sexual and physical violence, current efforts in CAR remain underfunded. In the capital Bangui less than one third of clinics and health centres in internally displaced sites have the means to assist survivors of gender-based violence (GBV).

**IRIN -** [**http://www.irinnews.org/report/100354/little-help-for-car-rape-survivors**](http://www.irinnews.org/report/100354/little-help-for-car-rape-survivors)

**Mali**

**Mali and Tuareg rebels swap prisoners ahead peace talks**

Mali's government and Tuareg rebels have exchanged prisoners in a goodwill gesture on the eve of peace talks. The army said 45 Malian soldiers held by the rebels in the north of the country arrived at Bamako airport. They were replaced on the plane by 41 Tuaregs, who had been held prisoner in the capital.

The move comes a day before the peace talks due to open in Algeria's capital Algiers. The two sides agreed a ceasefire in May. However, there is not much optimism for any quick progress at Wednesday's gathering, the BBC Alex Duval Smith in Bamako reports.

**BBC -** [**http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-28321073**](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-28321073)

**Nigeria**

**Over 25 killed in Nigeria militant attack, government air strike**

At least 26 people were killed when suspected Islamist Boko Haram militants stormed a village in northeast Nigeria and a government warplane opened fire to repel the attackers, local residents and a security source said on Tuesday. The warplane strafed Boko Haram fighters fleeing in pick-up trucks after raiding Dille, near Lassa in the south of Borno State, for several hours on Monday. The attackers fired on inhabitants and burned homes and churches.

**Reuters -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/over-25-killed-nigeria-militant-attack-government-air-115139673.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/over-25-killed-nigeria-militant-attack-government-air-115139673.html)

**Boko Haram kills 2,053 civilians in 6 months**

The Islamist insurgency Boko Haram in Nigeria killed at least 2,053 civilians in an estimated 95 attacks during the first half of 2014. The figures are based on detailed analyses of media reports as well as field investigations. The killings and other abuses were part of widespread attacks on civilians in over 70 towns and villages in northeastern Nigeria, in the federal capital, Abuja, and elsewhere that are apparent crimes against humanity. There has been a dramatic increase during 2014 in the numbers of casualties from bomb blasts, including several apparent suicide bombings. Since January, at least 432 people have been reported killed in 14 blasts in crowded marketplaces, a brothel, a technical college, and, on two occasions, places where people were watching soccer matches, Human Rights Watch said.

**HRW -** [**http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/07/15/nigeria-boko-haram-kills-2053-civilians-6-months**](http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/07/15/nigeria-boko-haram-kills-2053-civilians-6-months)

**Nigeria hopes to eradicate Polio despite insurgency**

A Nigerian military offensive against Islamist insurgent group Boko Haram has opened up a corridor for mobile units of health workers to vaccinate children against polio in parts of the northeast. But the worsening insurgency poses a grave risk to the campaign to stamp out the crippling virus in Africa's most populous nation. Nigeria, Pakistan and Afghanistan are the three countries in the world in which polio is still endemic. Aid workers say a change of approach in Nigeria, using 'hit and run' mobile units that can race into dangerous places when security improves and then get out quickly, has enabled vaccination in zones that previously were off limits.

**VoA -** [**http://www.voanews.com/content/reu-nigeria-hopes-to-eradicate-polio-despite-insurgency/1958002.html**](http://www.voanews.com/content/reu-nigeria-hopes-to-eradicate-polio-despite-insurgency/1958002.html)

**Nigeria president blasts activists for 'Cancelling' meet with kidnap victims**

Nigeria's leader Goodluck Jonathan on Tuesday accused activists of playing politics, saying they cancelled a meeting between him and family members of more than 200 schoolgirls kidnapped by Boko Haram in April.

Jonathan had been scheduled to meet some parents of the victims, as well as five girls who escaped captivity hours after the attack in the remote town of Chibok in the northeast. But a statement from the presidency accused the activists, who started the Bring Back Our Girls campaign, of using the plight of the hostages "to play politics". Some of the president's allies have claimed that the group is working with Jonathan's political opponents and exploiting the kidnapping to embarrass the government.

**AFP -** [**http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/139080-nigeria-president-blasts-activists-for-cancelling-meet-with-kidnap-victims**](http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/139080-nigeria-president-blasts-activists-for-cancelling-meet-with-kidnap-victims)

**Nigeria arrests Boko Haram 'butcher' in restive northeast**

Nigerian police on Tuesday said they had arrested a senior Boko Haram Islamist commander known as "Chief Butcher" during a raid on an insurgent camp in the restive northeast. Mohammed Zakari, 30, was arrested on Saturday "following the massive onslaught by security forces on the activities of the insurgent group", at Balmo Forest in Bauchi state, a statement said. Zakari was implicated in "the recent slaughter of seven people, including women and children," it added.

**AFP -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/nigeria-arrests-boko-haram-butcher-restive-northeast-141816911.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/nigeria-arrests-boko-haram-butcher-restive-northeast-141816911.html)

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