**DRAFT**

**UNICEF OPSCEN Brief – Wednesday, 08 October 2014**

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GENERAL

CEE/CIS

**Turkey**

**Erdogan calls for ground operation as Kobane is 'about to fall'**

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan warned on Tuesday that the Syrian border town of Kobane is on the verge of falling to jihadists, saying a ground operation was needed to defeat the militants. He added that air strikes being carried out by the US-led coalition were not enough on their own. The Turkish parliament last week authorized the government to take military action against IS extremists, but so far no plans to carry out military operations have been announced.

**AFP -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/erdogan-calls-ground-operation-kobane-fall-141156568.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/erdogan-calls-ground-operation-kobane-fall-141156568.html)

**At least 12 dead as Kurds protest**

At least 12 people have been killed in clashes between Kurdish protesters and police in Turkey, they are unhappy at perceived Turkish inaction in defending the town of Kobane in Syria from an attack by Islamic State militants. Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Yalcin Akdogan said that Turkey was doing whatever can be done for Kobane. Turkish troops and tanks have lined the border but have not crossed into Syria.

**BBC -** [**http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29530640**](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29530640)

EAP

**DPRK**

**N Korea official admits use of labour camps**

A North Korean official has publicly acknowledged for the first time the existence of "reform through labour'' camps, after a highly critical UN report into the country's human rights record earlier this year, but dismissed the report's accusations. Choe Myong Nam, a North Korean foreign ministry official in charge of UN affairs and human rights issues, briefly discussed the camps with journalists at the UN on Tuesday. The UN report, released in February, was compiled from testimony from North Korean exiles and listed "extermination, murder, enslavement, torture, imprisonment, rape, forced abortions and other sexual violence".

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia-pacific/2014/10/n-korea-official-admits-use-labour-camps-20141080576899804.html**](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia-pacific/2014/10/n-korea-official-admits-use-labour-camps-20141080576899804.html)

ESA

**Kenya**

**Kenyatta appears before ICC court**

Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta became the first sitting president to appear before the International Criminal Court in The Hague where he faces charges of crimes against humanity. Kenyatta faces crimes against humanity charges at The Hague-based court for allegations that he helped instigate violence that followed Kenya's December 2007 presidential election, when more than 1,000 people were killed. On Tuesday, Kenyatta invoked a never-before-used article of the constitution, handing over power temporarily to Deputy President William Ruto.

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2014/10/kenyatta-netherlands-hague-face-icc-charges-201410802514574650.html**](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2014/10/kenyatta-netherlands-hague-face-icc-charges-201410802514574650.html)

LAC

**Dominican Republic**

**Dominican Republic probes death of 11 children**

Authorities in the Dominican Republic say they are investigating 11 deaths at the main children's hospital in Santo Domingo. Among those who died over the weekend were eight children who were less than a year old, including three newborns. The children who died were in the intensive care unit in serious condition and suffered from various ailments. She said that they received mechanical and manual ventilation after the system failed.

**AP -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/dominican-republic-probes-death-11-children-154119887.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/dominican-republic-probes-death-11-children-154119887.html)

**Colombia**

**US general urges Colombian rebels to sign peace deal**

A top US general urged Colombia's Marxist FARC rebels on Tuesday to sign a peace accord to end a decades-long civil war. The current negotiations between President Juan Manuel Santos's government and the FARC have made the most progress so far toward ending the conflict. As part of the two-year-old talks, victims of the conflict -- which has killed 220,000 people and caused more than five million to flee their homes -- are giving testimony in Havana in a bid to help the two sides reach a deal on reparations.

**AFP -** [**http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/141007/us-general-urges-colombian-rebels-sign-peace-deal**](http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/141007/us-general-urges-colombian-rebels-sign-peace-deal)

**Mexico**

**Mexico pressed to find missing students**

Several countries are putting pressure on Mexico to solve the disappearance of 43 missing students who vanished last month after clashing with police in the town of Iguala in the state of Guerrero. The US and the Organisation of American States (OAS) have joined appeals for the country to find the young men, who were last seen 10 days ago. Authorities have detained about 30 people in the case, including 22 Iguala police officers, while the mayor and city security chief are on the run.

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/news/americas/2014/10/mexico-pressured-find-missing-students-20141085047244301.html**](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/americas/2014/10/mexico-pressured-find-missing-students-20141085047244301.html)

MENA

**Iraq**

**IS progress near Baghdad raises fears**

Anbar province, a crucial buffer zone between Islamic State militants and the Iraqi capital here, is at new risk of falling to the militant group, officials from the region said. The officials said the militants have strengthened their positions in Anbar in recent weeks and on Thursday overran the small city of Hit—a strategically important route between Anbar’s provincial capital of Ramadi and Haditha city, home to Iraq’s second-biggest dam. Falih Al Essawi, deputy head of the Anbar provincial council worries that while attention has shifted to Syria’s border with Turkey—where IS forces threaten to seize the [Syrian city of Kobani](http://online.wsj.com/articles/turkeys-president-calls-for-ground-troops-to-fight-islamic-state-1412675627)—the threat to Anbar and Iraq’s capital Baghdad is growing.

**WSJ -** [**http://online.wsj.com/articles/islamic-state-progress-near-baghdad-raises-fears-1412724668?tesla=y**](http://online.wsj.com/articles/islamic-state-progress-near-baghdad-raises-fears-1412724668?tesla=y)

**Syria**

**IS and Syria Kurds in fierce gun battles**

Kurdish fighters are engaged in fierce gun battles with IS in the Syrian border town of Kobane, as US-led coalition air strikes continue. A BBC correspondent near the fighting says dozens of weapons are firing, with regular grenade explosions. In its latest report, the US Central Command said six air strikes had destroyed IS weaponry around Kobane. The UN envoy for Syria has urged the international community to act now to prevent IS from seizing the key town. Staffan de Mistura told the BBC that the fall of Kobane would be "a massacre and a humanitarian tragedy".

**BBC -** [**http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29532291**](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29532291)

**Yemen**

**Yemen rebels reject new prime minister**

Shia rebels have rejected a new Yemeni prime minister just hours after his appointment, in a blow to hopes of restoring order two weeks after they overran the capital. President Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi appointed his chief of staff, Ahmed Awad bin Mubarak, as the country's new premier on Tuesday. Houthi rebels said they reject the new prime minister as no agreement officially took place.

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/10/yemen-rebels-reject-new-prime-minister-2014107165014952535.html**](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/10/yemen-rebels-reject-new-prime-minister-2014107165014952535.html)

SA

**Across SA**

**Five more civilians killed in worst India-Pakistan fighting for years**

Fighting intensified between India and Pakistan in the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir on Wednesday October 08, 2014, wounding a dozen along a more than 200-km stretch of border. Pakistan’s military fired machine guns and mortars at about 60 Indian army posts, a senior Indian border security force official said, adding that India retaliated. The firing is still going on, Indian civilians and a member of India’s border security force were wounded. The mostly Muslim Himalayan region of Kashmir is claimed by both India and Pakistan and has been a major focus of tension in South Asia.

**Reuters -** [**http://ca.reuters.com/article/topNews/idCAKCN0HX0EV20141008**](http://ca.reuters.com/article/topNews/idCAKCN0HX0EV20141008)

**Afghanistan**

**Five Afghans hanged for gang rape**

Five Afghan men have been hanged for the gang rape of four women despite the United Nations and human rights groups criticizing the trial and calling for new president Ashraf Ghani to stay the executions. "Five men in connection to the Paghman incident and one other big criminal were executed this afternoon," Rahmatullah Nazari, the deputy attorney general, told the AFP news agency on Wednesday. The rapes took place in Paghman, outside Kabul, in August.

There was no immediate comment from the office of the president, who faced strong public pressure to not stay the executions after he came to power last week.

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2014/10/five-afghan-men-executed-over-gang-rape-201410811941931228.html**](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2014/10/five-afghan-men-executed-over-gang-rape-201410811941931228.html)

**20 dead in Kandahar, Helmand attacks**

Two separate roadside bomb explosions killed six people and injured several others, including children in southern Kandahar province, where nine militants were also killed. A relatively heavy explosion rocked southern Helmand province on Wednesday, leaving at least 5 people dead and 19 others injured. The blast took place due to a suicide attack in Lashkargah city around 11:00 am local time. The suicide bomber detonated a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED) near the residence of former police chief for Nawzad district.

**Khaama Press-**[**http://www.khaama.com/explosion-rocks-southern-helmand-province-casualties-feared-8770**](http://www.khaama.com/explosion-rocks-southern-helmand-province-casualties-feared-8770)

**Pajhwok Afghan -** [**http://en.news.af/2014/10/07/civilians-among-15-dead-in-kandahar-violence/**](http://en.news.af/2014/10/07/civilians-among-15-dead-in-kandahar-violence/)

**Pakistan**

**Bomb kills polio vaccinators**

A roadside bomb has exploded in northwest Pakistan killing two off-duty polio vaccinators and wounding their relative, officials said. The blast occurred on Wednesday in the Safi town of Mohmand agency along the Afghan border where Taliban fighters are active. The bomb went off near the house of polio vaccinator Mohammad Gul who was out walking with his brother, also a polio worker, and his cousin, although it was not clear whether they were specifically targeted.

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2014/10/bomb-kills-pakistani-polio-vaccinators-2014108105416888731.html**](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2014/10/bomb-kills-pakistani-polio-vaccinators-2014108105416888731.html)

WCA

**Across WCA**

**West Africa fine-tunes multi-national force to fight Boko Haram**

The leaders of Nigeria and its neighboring countries met in Niger on Tuesday for talks on finalizing a multi-national force to fight Boko Haram Islamist militants. Nigerian leader Goodluck Jonathan, Niger President Mahamadou Issoufou, Idriss Deby from Chad and Benin's Thomas Boni Yayi gathered in the Niger capital Niamey to discuss joint military action against the militants.

AFP - <http://news.yahoo.com/west-africa-finetunes-multi-national-force-fight-boko-172048245.html>

**Liberia**

**Liberia’s Justice Minister Resigns**

Liberia’s Justice Minister, Christiana Tah, has resigned. Tah said she could not be the Minister of Justice and not supervise the operations of the security agencies under her department. The letter cited her lack of independence to investigate allegations of fraud against the National Security Agency.

**VoA -** [**http://www.voanews.com/content/liberias-justice-minister-resigns/2475000.html**](http://www.voanews.com/content/liberias-justice-minister-resigns/2475000.html)

**Mali**

**UN Security Council slams deadly attacks on blue helmets in Mali**

The UN on Tuesday condemned a deadly attack against peacekeepers in Mali and urged Malian authorities to bring the attackers to justice. In the targeted assault, which occurred earlier in the day on a joint French-UN military camp in the northern Malian town of Kidal, one Senegalese peacekeeper was killed. In a statement issued Tuesday night by his spokesman, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said he "is outraged" by the attack, which also left another wounded.

"This attack brings the total number of casualties from hostile acts since 1 July 2013 to 31 peacekeepers killed and 91 peacekeepers wounded," said the statement.

**Xinhuanet -** [**http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/africa/2014-10/08/c\_133698572.htm**](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/africa/2014-10/08/c_133698572.htm)

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