**UNICEF OPSCEN Brief – Friday, 8 August 2014**

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GENERAL

**WHO declares Ebola epidemic an international health emergency**

West Africa's Ebola epidemic is an "extraordinary event" and now constitutes an international health risk, WHO said on Friday. WHO said the possible consequences of a further international spread of the outbreak, which has killed almost 1,000 people in four West African countries, were "particularly serious" in view of the virulence of the virus. "A coordinated international response is deemed essential to stop and reverse the international spread of Ebola," WHO said in a statement after a two-day meeting of its emergency committee on Ebola. The agency added that while all states with Ebola transmission - so far Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone - should declare a national emergency, there should be no general ban on international travel or trade.

**Reuters -** [**http://af.reuters.com/article/sierraLeoneNews/idAFL6N0QE1PY20140808**](http://af.reuters.com/article/sierraLeoneNews/idAFL6N0QE1PY20140808)

**WHO -** [**http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/statements/2014/ebola-20140808/en/**](http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/statements/2014/ebola-20140808/en/)

CEE/CIS

**Across CEE/CIS**

**NATO chief urges Russia pull-back as shelling pounds Ukraine rebel city**

NATO chief urged Russia to "step back from the brink" during a visit to Kiev on Thursday and vowed support for Ukraine as fears mounted that Moscow was preparing to send troops into the east of the country. His visit came as the centre of the main rebel bastion Donetsk was hit by sustained bombardment for the first time in four months of fighting, and a dozen civilians were killed around the region.

**AFP -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/nato-chief-urges-russia-pull-back-shelling-pounds-182306732.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/nato-chief-urges-russia-pull-back-shelling-pounds-182306732.html)

**Ukraine**

**Fighter jet shot down over rebel-held east**

A Ukranian fighter jet was blasted out of the air on Thursday while flying low over rebel-held territory in the east. A media crew saw the Sukhoi warplane explode in mid-air and the parachute of at least one pilot opening up. A Ukrainian military spokesman confirmed that rebels had shot down a jet some 40km to the northeast of Donetsk. The location was also some 40km west of the site where Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 was shot down. Meanwhile, the Ukrainian army announced it was scrapping a ceasefire around the MH17 crash site after international investigators decided to suspend their probe there due to ongoing fighting.

**AFP -** [**http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/world/fighter-jet-shot-down/1302446.html**](http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/world/fighter-jet-shot-down/1302446.html)

**Shelling in the city of Donetsk strikes hospital, buildings**

Sustained shelling in the main rebel stronghold in eastern Ukraine struck residential buildings and a hospital, killing at least four people and wounding 10 others, officials said, as government forces pressed forward in their campaign to rout the separatists. Mortar fire struck the Vishnevskiy Hospital in Donetsk on Thursday, killing one and wounding five others, the Donetsk city council spokesperson reported.

**AP -**[**http://www.thestar.com/news/world/2014/08/07/major\_hospital\_in\_eastern\_ukraine\_city\_of\_donetsk\_hit\_by\_shelling.html**](http://www.thestar.com/news/world/2014/08/07/major_hospital_in_eastern_ukraine_city_of_donetsk_hit_by_shelling.html)

**Impunity reigns for abductions and ill-treatment by pro-Kyiv vigilantes in the east**

In the broader context of a deteriorating security situation in the east, Amnesty International has recently raised its concerns with the Ukrainian authorities about one particularly errant MP who has been “detaining” – in effect abducting – and ill-treating individuals across the region. Amnesty International has documented the deteriorating security situation in eastern Ukraine, with abuses perpetrated by both sides of the conflict, including incidents of abduction and ill-treatment of captives by both pro-Kyiv forces and separatist armed groups.

**AI -** [**http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/Impunity-reigns-for-abductions-ill-treatment-eastern-Ukraine-06-08-2014**](http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/Impunity-reigns-for-abductions-ill-treatment-eastern-Ukraine-06-08-2014)

EAP

**Cambodia**

**Opposition ends parliament boycott**

Opposition lawmakers in Cambodia have ended a 10-month boycott of Parliament, attending the assembly for the first time after reaching a breakthrough political deal with the country's ruling party. Legislators from the opposition Cambodia National Rescue Party had refused to take their seats last year after alleging results of a general election were rigged. The opposition reached a deal with PM Hun Sen and his ruling party two weeks ago for political reforms and the sharing of leadership positions in National Assembly committees. On Friday, all 55 opposition lawmakers attended the session.

**AP -** [**http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/cambodia-opposition-ends-parliament-boycott-24896032**](http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/cambodia-opposition-ends-parliament-boycott-24896032)

**China**

**At least 2,000 Uyghur Muslims killed in Xinjiang, says exiled leader**

At least 2,000 Uyghur Muslims, members of Chinese ethnic minority, may have died as a result of attacks by the security forces in Yarkand in Xinjiang autonomous region of China following riots, claims an exiled Uyghurs leader Rebiya Kadeer. According to Radio Free Asia, Kadeer said that the riots started after a group of Uyghurs marched to the government offices and police station to protest against the killing of innocent villagers. Kadeer also said that the police had shot down almost all the protesters. President of Institute for Gilgit Baltistan Studies, Senge Hasnan Sering, said in a Facebook post that a mass slaughter of Uyghur Muslims in China's Yarkand region had been taking place.

**ANI -** [**http://www.aninews.in/newsdetail4/story178525/at-least-2-000-chinese-uyghur-muslims-killed-in-xinjiang-says-exiled-leader.html**](http://www.aninews.in/newsdetail4/story178525/at-least-2-000-chinese-uyghur-muslims-killed-in-xinjiang-says-exiled-leader.html)

**Early warning saves lives in earthquake**

Early warning has been credited with saving the lives of several residents during this week’s earthquake in Yunnan Province. The system, which was developed by a private research organization, transmits warnings via radio waves – which travel several times faster than tremors, during an earthquake of 6.0 magnitude or higher earthquake. It means residents a few km or more from the epicentre can benefit from a short, but often crucial, warning. For instance, residents in Zhaotong, 42km from the epicentre, received the warning 10 seconds before the tremors arrived. Meanwhile, people in Yunnan Province, almost 300km away, received the warning 57 seconds ahead of the tremors.

**UNISDR -** [**http://www.unisdr.org/archive/38869**](http://www.unisdr.org/archive/38869)

**Myanmar**

**Rohingya children in camps going hungry**

A growing number of Muslim Rohingya children are going hungry in Myanmar. Myanmar's child malnutrition rate was already among the region's highest, but it's an increasingly familiar sight in the country's westernmost state of Rakhine, which is home to almost all of the country's 1.3 million Rohingya Muslims. More than 140,000 have been trapped in crowded, dirty camps since extremist Buddhist mobs began chasing them from their homes two years ago, killing up to 280 people. The others are stuck in villages isolated by systematic discrimination, with restrictions on their movement and limited access to food, clean water, education and health care. Even before the violence, the European Community Humanitarian Office reported parts of the country's second-poorest state had acute malnutrition rates hitting 23% - far beyond the 15% emergency level set by WHO.

**AP -** [**http://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/rohingya-children-myanmar-camps-hungry-24896357**](http://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/rohingya-children-myanmar-camps-hungry-24896357)

ESA

**South Sudan**

# Army, rebels should face crime charges - HRW

Members of [South Sudan](http://topics.bloomberg.com/south-sudan/)’s army and rebel forces should be prosecuted for [war crimes](http://topics.bloomberg.com/war-crimes/) after facilitating “extraordinary acts of cruelty” during an almost eight-month conflict that has divided the country on ethnic lines, [Human Rights Watch](http://topics.bloomberg.com/human-rights-watch/) said. Both sides have committed widespread killings of civilians and looting of property that should be investigated by a body such as the [*International Criminal Court*](http://topics.bloomberg.com/international-criminal-court/), the New York-based group said today in a report. Neither South Sudan’s army spokesman, Philip Aguer, nor government spokesman Ateny Wek Ateny, answered three calls each yesterday seeking comment on the report. Rebel spokesman Lul Ruai Koang didn’t answer his mobile phone.

**Bloomberg -** [**http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-08-08/south-sudan-army-rebels-should-face-war-crime-charges-hrw-says.html**](http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-08-08/south-sudan-army-rebels-should-face-war-crime-charges-hrw-says.html)

**Uganda**

**Possible Ebola case sent for tests: health ministry**

Uganda said Friday it had placed a passenger with Ebola-like symptoms in isolation, and was waiting for test results checking for the deadly tropical disease. "There is a suspected case, samples have been taken from the suspect and we are analysing them," said Ugandan health ministry spokesman. The passenger is the first to be tested in East Africa in the current outbreak sweeping West Africa, although Uganda has suffered Ebola outbreaks in the past, most recently in 2012. The patient was stopped as he arrived in Uganda's main Entebbe airport showing signs of fever, Uganda's Daily Monitor newspaper said, quoting airport officials. However, he had reportedly been working in neighbouring South Sudan, the newspaper said, where no cases of the Ebola virus have been reported. Reports of a case in late July in northern Uganda proved to be a false alarm.

**AFP -** [**http://www.straitstimes.com/news/world/more-world-stories/story/uganda-tests-possible-ebola-case-health-ministry-20140808**](http://www.straitstimes.com/news/world/more-world-stories/story/uganda-tests-possible-ebola-case-health-ministry-20140808)

LAC

**Across LAC**

**Flow of child immigrants slows along Texas border**

The number of unaccompanied immigrant children crossing the Texas-Mexico border has slowed considerably in recent weeks, allowing the federal government to close the temporary shelters that it hurriedly opened to handle the surge. The Border Patrol says arrests in South Texas have fallen to about 100 per day, down from 300 or more in June. The decline could be the result of summer temperatures or a messaging campaign in both the US and the migrants' home countries. No one knows for sure.

**AP -** [**http://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/flow-child-immigrants-slows-texas-border-24887486**](http://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/flow-child-immigrants-slows-texas-border-24887486)

**US rules out a "Plan Colombia" for Central America**

US Vice President has ruled out US investment in a massive anti-drugs program in Central America similar to the "Plan Colombia" to combat crime and deter illegal emigration. "Central American governments aren't even close to being prepared to make some of the decisions that the Colombians made, because they are hard", Joe Biden said before a group of legal experts with whom he discussed the immigration crisis. The remarks of the Vice President came a few months after the leaders of Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador visited Washington to address the child immigration crisis at the US-Mexican border. In order to curb illegal emigration, the Central American countries urged President Barack Obama to implement a plan similar to that of Colombia to control drug trafficking and the crime rate.

**EFE -** [**http://www.laht.com/article.asp?ArticleId=2346729&CategoryId=23558**](http://www.laht.com/article.asp?ArticleId=2346729&CategoryId=23558)

**Colombia**

**President Juan Manuel Santos sworn in**

Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos said peace talks could falter if left-wing Farc rebels do not halt attacks, as he was sworn in for a second term. His victory was a resounding vote of confidence for the peace process he began with the rebels in November 2012. Colombia has suffered more than five decades of conflict which has led to more than 200,000 deaths.

**BBC -** [**http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-28684227**](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-28684227)

MENA

**Across MENA  
Jordan accused of barring entry to Palestinians fleeing Syria**

Jordan is barring entry to Palestinians fleeing Syria and in some cases deporting them back to the war-torn country, in violation of its international obligations, Human Rights Watch said. The organization launched a report entitled "Not Welcome: Jordan's Treatment of Palestinians escaping Syria" and said its findings were based on interviews with 30 people affected by "uncompromising treatment" that stood in "marked contrast" with how it treated Syrian nationals. Jordan's PM Abdullah al-Ensour said the report "was not fair", adding that HRW, rather than criticize the kingdoml. Jordan has allowed over 607,000 UN-registered Syrian refugees entry since the beginning of the Syrian conflict. But last year it began to impose tough restrictions on the entry of Syrian nationals. HRW said there were currently over 14,000 Palestinians from Syria who had managed to enter Jordan illegally.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140807153607-7ucgk/?source=fiOtherNews2**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140807153607-7ucgk/?source=fiOtherNews2)

**HRW Report -** [**http://www.hrw.org/node/126091**](http://www.hrw.org/node/126091)

**Iraq**

**President Obama orders action to prevent 'genocide'**

President Obama ordered US warplanes back into the skies over Iraq on Thursday to drop food to refugees and, if necessary, launch air strikes to halt what he said was a potential "genocide." The US air armada's first mission was to drop food and water to thousands of members of the Yazidi religious minority besieged by Sunni extremist fighters from the so-called Islamic State. But Obama warned that he had also authorized the military to carry out targeted strikes in support of Iraqi forces to break the Islamists' advance or to protect US advisors working on the ground.

**AFP -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/jihadist-offensive-sparks-mass-iraq-exodus-084039459.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/jihadist-offensive-sparks-mass-iraq-exodus-084039459.html)

**Lebanon**

**Ceasefire extended in Arsal**

A ceasefire between the Lebanese army and Syrian armed fighters near the border town of Arsal has been extended by 24 hours, Muslim clerics mediating between the sides have said. They also said three Lebanese soldiers taken captive by the fighters had been released, and that the fighters had started withdrawing from the border town of Arsal. "The armed fighters will withdraw and security forces will enter Arsal. We managed to secure the release of three army soldiers today and hopefully tomorrow more will be freed. Our efforts are important to avoid Lebanon a disaster." "We do not know whether these armed fighters are ready to release more than 30 Lebanese security officers they have kidnapped," one of the negotiating clerics said.

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/08/ceasefire-extended-lebanon-arsal-201486152545936235.html**](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/08/ceasefire-extended-lebanon-arsal-201486152545936235.html)

**Former PM Hariri in surprise return from exile**

## Lebanese former PM Saad Hariri arrived in the Lebanese capital of Beirut Friday after a three-year self-imposed exile. His surprise move followed growing calls for his return as Lebanon's Sunnis confront a leadership gap. Footage broadcast by local television stations showed Hariri arriving at government headquarters in Beirut, where he was due to meet PM Tammam Salam. Hariri, Lebanon's most influential Sunni politician, has been in self-imposed exile between France and Saudi Arabia since 2011. He left the country after his government was toppled by a coalition including the Iranian-backed Shiite group Hezbollah.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.france24.com/en/20140808-lebanon-saad-hariri-returns-exile-sunnis/**](http://www.france24.com/en/20140808-lebanon-saad-hariri-returns-exile-sunnis/)

**State of Palestine/Israel**

**Fighting resumes after 3-day ceasefire ends**

Israel and militants from Gaza resumed cross-border attacks on Friday, after a three-day truce expired and talks brokered by Egypt on a new border deal for the blockaded coastal territory hit a deadlock. It was not clear if the renewed fighting would derail the Cairo negotiations, which are aimed at reaching a sustainable truce, or whether the Egyptian mediators can find a way to prevent a further escalation and a return to full-out war. Militants from Gaza fired first after the temporary truce expired at 8 a.m. local time, launching 21 rockets toward Israel. Most landed in open fields, but two were intercepted over the coastal city of Ashkelon.

**CP –** [**http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/gaza-conflict-fighting-resume-after-3-day-ceasefire-ends-1.2730903**](http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/gaza-conflict-fighting-resume-after-3-day-ceasefire-ends-1.2730903)

**UN urges Gaza truce extension so aid can enter**

The UN urged Thursday an extension of the truce between Israel and Hamas to let humanitarian aid reach Gaza, hours before a three-day ceasefire was due to end. "The 72-hour-ceasefire between Israel and Palestinian factions that entered into force on 5 August must continue to hold," UN humanitarian coordinator for the Palestinian territories James Rawley said in a statement. "We need to rapidly scale-up our response to address the needs of the people in Gaza now and in the longer-term, but to do that, we need a sustained halt to the violence," Rawley said in a statement.

**AFP -** [**https://now.mmedia.me/lb/en/mena/559260-un-urges-gaza-truce-extension-so-aid-can-enter**](https://now.mmedia.me/lb/en/mena/559260-un-urges-gaza-truce-extension-so-aid-can-enter)

**Scale of Gaza civilian deaths 'mustn't happen again': Red Cross**

The scale of civilian losses during the four-week conflict in the Gaza Strip must not happen again, the head of the ICRC said on Thursday. Speaking to reporters after visiting Gaza, ICRC President Peter Maurer said he was "deeply distressed and shocked to see the impact of violence on the civilian population". Palestinian officials say 1,886 Palestinians were killed during four weeks of fighting between Israel and Hamas. The UN has said more than 1,300 were civilians. Israel lost 64 soldiers and three civilians, one of them a Thai agricultural worker. Maurer indicated there may have been some violations of international humanitarian law.

**AFP -** [**http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/2/8/107975/World/Region/Scale-of-Gaza-civilian-deaths-mustnt-happen-again-.aspx**](http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/2/8/107975/World/Region/Scale-of-Gaza-civilian-deaths-mustnt-happen-again-.aspx)

**Israel’s supporters try to come to terms with the killing of children in Gaza - UNICEF mention**

While [the precise number of civilians killed](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/06/world/middleeast/civilian-or-not-new-fight-in-tallying-the-dead-from-the-gaza-conflict.html) in Israel’s month-long bombardment of Gaza is [once again](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/17/world/middleeast/17israel.html?pagewanted=all) the subject of a debate, outrage over the hundreds of Palestinian children killed has been expressed by partisans on both sides of the conflict. The two sides differ sharply, however, over the question of who is ultimately to blame for the Israeli strikes that killed, [according to a count from](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/06/world/middleeast/un-reports-dire-impact-on-children-in-gaza-strip.html)  **UNICEF**, 400 children and wounded over 2,500 more. For supporters of the Palestinian cause — as well as senior United Nations officials and some foreign correspondents who [observed the carnage at close range](http://youtu.be/ACgwr2Nj_GQ) — Israel’s military bears responsibility for firing shells and missiles that took so many young lives.

**NYT -** [**http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/08/world/middleeast/israel-supporters-try-to-come-to-terms-with-killing-of-children-in-gaza-strip.html?partner=rss&emc=rss&\_r=1**](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/08/world/middleeast/israel-supporters-try-to-come-to-terms-with-killing-of-children-in-gaza-strip.html?partner=rss&emc=rss&_r=1)

**Sudan**

**39 people killed in heavy flooding across country**

The Sudanese government said that 39 people were killed in various states due to heavy rains and floods which hit the country during the past two weeks. The Sudanese cabinet, which held an extraordinary meeting on Tuesday, declared a state of high alert to face the anticipated rise in the River Nile levels in the states of Khartoum and the River Nile. The spokesperson for the Council of Ministers, Omer Mohamed Saleh, said that 39 people died in areas which were hit by rain and floods, pointing that 17 deaths were in Khartoum state, 14 deaths in Gazira and River Nile states, seven deaths in Gadaref and North and South Kordofan states, and one death in Kassala state.

**ST -** [**http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article51930**](http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article51930)

**Syria**

**Militants storm army base in Raqqa**

Militants from the IS group have seized parts of a military base in Syria's Raqa province after launching triple suicide bomb attacks at its gates, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said. The Observatory said the extremist group was engaged in heavy fighting with troops at Brigade 93 in Raqqa, where the IS already controls the regional capital and significant amounts of territory. The group said IS fighters "were in control of large parts of the base". Many regime troops had withdrawn to Brigade 93 in July, after IS seized the Division 17 base, killing at least 85 soldiers, according to the Observatory. That assault left nearly all of Raqqa province under IS control, except Brigade 93 and Tabaqa military airport, which were still held by the army.

**AFP -** [**http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/Aug-07/266346-jihadists-storm-syrian-army-base-in-raqqa.ashx#axzz39UwsbJRe**](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/Aug-07/266346-jihadists-storm-syrian-army-base-in-raqqa.ashx#axzz39UwsbJRe)

**Yemen**

**15 killed in 'Qaeda' attacks**

Eleven suspected Al-Qaeda militants and four Yemeni soldiers were killed Thursday in attacks on two army posts in the southeastern province of Hadramawt, military and local officials said. The latest bloodshed came a day after clashes in which 18 militants and seven soldiers died in southern and southeast Yemen. An earlier toll had said 10 soldiers were killed on Wednesday. Gunmen attacked the military headquarters in the city of Sayun, a stronghold of jihadists, a military official said, leaving seven dead among the assailants along with one soldier. The army had reinforced its positions in Sayun ahead of an anticipated operation against militants in the city. In another attack on Thursday, militants targeted a military barracks in Qatan, 40km west of Sayun, another military official said.

**AFP -** [**http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/15-killed-in-qaeda-attacks-in-yemen-114080701399\_1.html**](http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/15-killed-in-qaeda-attacks-in-yemen-114080701399_1.html)

SA

**Bangladesh**

**Police used water cannon and tear gas to** [**disperse 400 factory workers**](http://mail2all.akegroup.com/lt.php?c=7492&m=7853&nl=87&s=ad97678289ba812fd8346cd3916590ef&lid=60967&l=-http--www.reuters.com/article/2014/08/07/us-bangladesh-workers-idUSKBN0G711220140807)

Police used water cannon and tear gas to [disperse 400 workers](http://mail2all.akegroup.com/lt.php?c=7492&m=7853&nl=87&s=ad97678289ba812fd8346cd3916590ef&lid=60967&l=-http--www.reuters.com/article/2014/08/07/us-bangladesh-workers-idUSKBN0G711220140807) staging a hunger-strike in a factory in Dhaka. The authorities detained union leaders and workers who attacked police officers to show solidarity with the protesters. The strike began on 28 July when approximately 1,600 garment workers from five factories of the Tuba Group demanded three months' back-pay, overtime pay and a holiday bonus. There is a risk of additional civil unrest as workers continue to reject the Tuba Group's offer.

**AFP -** [**http://www.commondreams.org/news/2014/08/07/bangladesh-police-unleash-rubber-bullets-teargas-hunger-striking-workers**](http://www.commondreams.org/news/2014/08/07/bangladesh-police-unleash-rubber-bullets-teargas-hunger-striking-workers)

WCA

**Benin**

**Country waiting for test results on two possible Ebola cases**

Benin reported on 7 August that it has placed two patients with Ebola-like symptoms in isolation and was waiting for test results to establish if the pair were infected with the disease. The Deputy chief of staff at the health minister reported that the two patients were being treated as suspected cases of Ebola and that blood samples had been sent to foreign labs for conclusive results. If the patients are confirmed to have Ebola, Benin would become the fifth country in the region to be hit by the outbreak. One patient was identified as a Nigerian man being treated at a hospital in Porto-Novo. The other is at hospital in Cotonou.

**AFP -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/benin-waiting-test-results-two-possible-ebola-cases-220918393.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/benin-waiting-test-results-two-possible-ebola-cases-220918393.html)

**CAR**

**LRA poses threat to peace in CAR – report**

The continued presence of the LRA rebels in CAR poses a serious threat to peace and stability in the country. This is according to a joint report by the AU, UN, EU, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the African Security Sector Network (ASSN). The report is a result of a joint assessment of the security sector reforms in CAR carried out between 18 and 24 May this year. The report released last week, analyzed the security situation in CAR and made recommendations for ending the instability to both CAR political leadership and international partners. It revealed that although the LRA numbers are estimated to be fewer than 250 fighters, the group continues to carry out extra-judicial killings, looting, destruction of property and human rights violations alongside groups like Seleka, and the anti-Baraka forces.

**New Vision -** [**http://www.newvision.co.ug/news/658452-lra-poses-threat-to-peace-in-car-report.html**](http://www.newvision.co.ug/news/658452-lra-poses-threat-to-peace-in-car-report.html)

**Resignation of government must not open door to impunity**

Following the resignation of the Prime Minister and his cabinet, Amnesty International has called on the relevant CAR authorities, including Transitional President Catherine Samba-Panza, to ensure that those suspected of involvement in crimes under international law are not given a seat in government. These individuals must instead be brought to justice in fair trials with no recourse to the death penalty. “CAR transitional authorities must ensure that the changes in the make-up of the government do not result in a situation where new cabinet members use their position to commit further violations or prevent effective investigations against themselves or their allies,” said Christian Mukosa, Amnesty International’s CAR Researcher. Amnesty International has received credible information that persons suspected of serious human rights abuses are seeking positions within the new government.

**Amnesty -** [**http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/car-resignation-government-must-not-open-door-impunity-2014-08-06**](http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/car-resignation-government-must-not-open-door-impunity-2014-08-06)

**Liberia**

**Health system collapsing as Ebola spreads**

The health care system in Liberia is collapsing, hospitals closing down and medical workers fleeing from the Ebola epidemic, which is poised to worsen, Liberia's FM said Thursday. Treatable diseases such as malaria and diarrhea are left untended because frightened Liberians are shunning medical centers, and these deaths could outstrip those from the Ebola virus by three or four fold, he said. The number of trained doctors and nurses, already in critical short supply after years of civil war, is shrinking as medical workers get infected, quarantined or are afraid to report to work. The country entered the epidemic with only about 50 doctors for 4 million people, he said.

**Reuters -** [**http://af.reuters.com/article/liberiaNews/idAFL2N0QD29620140807**](http://af.reuters.com/article/liberiaNews/idAFL2N0QD29620140807)

**Mali**

**Militant leader reappears to threaten France**

The leader of a militant group driven from northern Mali by French troops has reappeared for the first time in 18 months with a video message calling for Muslims to rise up against France, "which detests Islam". Iyad Ag Ghaly, who led a rebellion in the Sahara before setting up the armed group Ansar Dine ("Defenders of the Faith"), disappeared in January 2013 soon after France intervened to stop a column of insurgents taking Bamako and toppling the government. In a 23-minute video in Arabic put online on Tuesday, he signalled a return to combat, saying his group was "ready to unite with our brothers on the ground to face up to the crusaders and infidels who have

**AFP -** [**http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/2/9/107972/World/International/Mali-jihadi-leader-reappears-to-threaten-France.aspx**](http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/2/9/107972/World/International/Mali-jihadi-leader-reappears-to-threaten-France.aspx)

**War and peace in the north**

Continued violence in northern Mali which saw three separatist rebel groups retake control of much of the north, has put peace talks set for August, and the July roadmap to peace signed by rebel groups and the Malian government, on shaky ground. Clashes have continued in the small town of Tabankort (near Kidal town), between armed elements of the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), and the Arab Movement of Azawad (MAA - allegedly fighting on behalf of the government), since a May ceasefire was agreed between the MNLA, MAA and the High Council for the Unity of Azawad (HCUA), alongside the UN, AU, EU, and ECOWAS. Attacks have also been carried out against peacekeeping staff, French forces and humanitarian organizations. Some fear peace talks set for August will not work amid ongoing instability.

**IRIN -** [**http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportID=100458**](http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportID=100458)

**Leader warns north could become criminal hub**

Mali's leader warned on 7 August that a lack of air surveillance in his country's troubled north could pose risks for the world by allowing criminals to use it as a base. On a visit to Washington for a US-Africa summit, President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita said his government was committed to negotiating a peaceful solution with separatists after rebels and Al-Qaeda-linked militants overran much of the north in 2012. But he said the central government lacked air surveillance in the vast Saharan area. He said that drug traffickers, jihadists or other undesirable elements could take advantage of the lack of control and use the area as a base to fly small aircraft.

**AFP -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/mali-leader-warns-north-could-become-criminal-hub-222103665.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/mali-leader-warns-north-could-become-criminal-hub-222103665.html)

**Nigeria**

**Boko Haram takes town, resident says**

Fighters from Nigeria's Boko Haram militant group seized the northeastern town of Gwoza, overwhelming soldiers based in the area before attacking civilians, security officials and a witness said Thursday. The whereabouts of the new Emir of Gwoza, Muhammed Idrissa Timta, were unknown after attackers were seen approaching his residence during the attack on Wednesday, the resident said. Timta succeeded his father who was killed by Boko Haram in May.

**AP -** [**http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/boko-haram-takes-nigeria-town-resident-24884789**](http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/boko-haram-takes-nigeria-town-resident-24884789)

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