**UNICEF OPSCEN Brief - Friday, 23 May 2014**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| GENERAL | **Across Regions** | Immune children aid malaria vaccine hunt |
|  |  | Italy rescues child migrants from seas as concern grows |
| CEE/CIS | **Across CEE/CIS** | Balkan flood devastation 'exceeds war damage' |
|  | **Turkey** | Second person dies from injuries in Istanbul protest, governor says |
|  | **Ukraine** | UN official cites ‘worsening’ human rights situation in southern, eastern regions |
|  |  | Deadliest day for Ukraine troops: 16 slain in raid |
|  |  | Ukraine in "full-scale civil war": Putin |
| EAP | **Across EAP** | North Korea 'shells near South Korea warship' |
|  |  | Head of WFP urges more food aid support for North Korea |
|  |  | Philippines and Indonesia sign border agreement |
|  |  | Vietnamese woman self-immolates to protest China |
|  | **China** | China says Xinjiang attackers influenced by foreign organizations |
|  | **Laos** | “Land grabs” drive subsistence farmers into deeper poverty |
|  | **Myanmar** | Myanmar moves to curb military sway |
|  |  | Myanmar farmers hold sit-in against military |
|  | **Solomon Islands** | Fears of more flash flooding |
|  | **Thailand** | Thai army chief summons ousted PM for talks a day after coup |
|  |  | Thai army stops 155 people from leaving country after coup |
| ESA | **Mozambique** | Mozambique's Renamo opposition leader says to run for president |
|  | **Uganda** | Over 30,000 urban refugees register in Kampala |
| LAC | **Across LAC** | Caribbean hospitals overwhelmed with rapidly spreading virus |
|  | **Colombia** | Peace at stake in presidential vote |
|  | **Dominican Republic** | Thousands flee flash floods as rains drench north |
|  |  | Dominican Republic lawmakers pass citizenship bill |
|  | **Guatemala** | Guatemalan ex-President Alfonso Portillo jailed in US |
|  | **Venezuela** | Government reports 28,038 cases of malaria in 2014 |
| MENA | **Algeria** | Algeria closes most of its land borders |
|  | **Egypt** | Head of Egypt's deadliest terror group killed |
|  | **Iraq** | Thirty-two killed in three attacks on Shi'ite pilgrims in Baghdad |
|  | **Lebanon** | Lebanon heads for presidential vacuum after final failed vote |
|  | **Libya** | Renegade General seeks emergency cabinet |
|  |  | Rocket attack wounds 20 in Benghazi |
|  | **State of Palestine** | Palestinian PM to head unity government |
|  | **Sudan** | Sudan guilty of 'unconscionable' violence against civilians: US envoy |
|  | **Syria** | 21 killed as Syria rebels shell Assad election rally: SOHR |
| ROSA | **Afghanistan** | Presidential runoff campaigns start in Afghanistan |
|  |  | Militants attack on Indian consulate in western Afghanistan |
|  | **Pakistan** | Pakistan religious body endorses underage marriage |
|  |  | Army starts North Waziristan ground offensive |
| WCA | **CAR** | Three people killed in Bambari as French troops clash with crowds |
|  | **DR Congo** | International court sentences Congolese warlord to 12 years for war crimes |
|  | **Mali** | Separatists seize several northern towns |
|  |  | Mali says around 20 soldiers killed in loss of Kidal to rebels |
|  | **Niger** | Niamey ruling party HQ attacked with Molotov cocktails |
|  | **Nigeria** | UN Security Council committee blacklists Nigeria's Boko Haram |
|  |  | 'Boko Haram' destroy village |

GENERAL

**Across Regions**

**Immune children aid malaria vaccine hunt**

A group of children in Tanzania who are naturally immune to malaria are helping scientists to develop a new vaccine. US researchers have found that they produce an antibody that attacks the malaria-causing parasite. Injecting a form of this antibody into mice protected the animals from the disease. The team, who published their results in the journal Science, said trials in primates and humans were now needed to fully assess the vaccine's promise.

**BBC -** [**http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-27522950**](http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-27522950)

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140522175902-0121b/?source=jtHeadlineStory**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140522175902-0121b/?source=jtHeadlineStory)

**Italy rescues child migrants from seas as concern grows**

The Italian navy has rescued nearly 1,000 illegal migrants from the seas off southern Italy inside two days, with 170 children among them. The number of unaccompanied minors arriving this year has alarmed Save the Children. While most children under 10 who arrive in Italy are with families, many adolescents are travelling alone and Save the Children says there are not adequate facilities to accommodate and protect them. Many of those rescued this week are believed to be Syrians, fleeing the civil war at home. Others come from Egypt and Bangladesh.

**BBC -** [**http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-27499877**](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-27499877)

CEE/CIS

**Across CEE/CIS**

**Balkan flood devastation 'exceeds war damage'**

Officials in Bosnia and Serbia say floods that killed scores and displaced half a million will cost countries billions. The cost of the recovery operation following devastating floods in the Balkans may amount to billions of dollars. Officials in Bosnia said they fear the damage caused by heavy rains and landslides would exceed that caused by the entire Balkan conflict fought between Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats between 1992 and 1995. As waters receded, the Serbian Prime Minister said that the damage in his country exceeded 0.64% of GDP, meaning that Serbia can apply for EU solidarity funds.

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2014/05/balkan-flood-devastation-exceeds-war-damage-2014521143138991821.html**](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2014/05/balkan-flood-devastation-exceeds-war-damage-2014521143138991821.html)

**Turkey**

**Second person dies from injuries in Istanbul protest, governor says**

A second person died from injuries sustained during protests in Istanbul overnight following the fatal shooting of a bystander the day before, the provincial governor said on Friday. "Two citizens were seriously injured last night from a fragmentation grenade. Unfortunately, one of them died today," Governor Huseyin Avni Mutlu told reporters. Mutlu also said security forces were working on identifying the deceased. Eight other people were injured during clashes late on Thursday, but none of them was in critical condition.

**Reuters -** [**http://ca.reuters.com/article/topNews/idCABREA4L17620140523**](http://ca.reuters.com/article/topNews/idCABREA4L17620140523)

**Ukraine**

**UN official cites ‘worsening’ human rights situation in southern, eastern regions**

The southern and eastern regions of crisis-racked Ukraine are now awash in weapons and the scene of numerous cases of illegal detentions and abductions, a senior United Nations human rights official warned on 22 May, noting that he had discussed with the parties some rights-based and humanitarian de-escalation measures. "The human rights situation in the east of the country has worsened. There are more arms being used as well as numerous violations being committed,” Ivan Šimonović, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, told reporters following his briefing to the Security Council on his latest report on the situation in the country as well as his recent visit to Kyiv and strife-torn Donetsk and Odessa.

**UN News Centre -** [**http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=47855#.U34xpWjD\_cs**](http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=47855#.U34xpWjD_cs)

**Deadliest day for Ukraine troops: 16 slain in raid**

In the deadliest raid yet on Ukrainian troops, pro-Russia insurgents attacked a military checkpoint Thursday, killing 16 soldiers, and the interim prime minister accused Moscow of trying to disrupt the upcoming election for a new president to lead the divided country out of its crisis. A rebel commander said one of his fighters also died in the raid in eastern Ukraine, which left a gruesome scene of charred military vehicles and scorched bodies near the town of Volnovakha, 30 kilometers (20 miles) south of the city of Donetsk. Witnesses, including a medical worker, said more than 30 Ukrainian troops were wounded, with some in grave condition. Fighting also raged in at least two other villages.

**Bloomberg -** [**http://www.businessweek.com/printer/articles/462728?type=ap**](http://www.businessweek.com/printer/articles/462728?type=ap)

**Ukraine in "full-scale civil war": Putin**

Russian President Vladimir Putin said Friday that the crisis in Ukraine had evolved into a full-scale civil war, blaming Washington for backing the overthrow of former president Viktor Yanukovych. "The Ukrainian crisis arose because Yanukovych postponed the association agreement with the European Union. This was followed by a coup backed by our American friends and as a result there is chaos and full-scale civil war," Putin told an economic forum in Saint Petersburg. He also defended Russia's annexation of Ukraine's Crimean peninsula in March, saying it had followed a democratic vote for independence and prevented a tragedy like the inferno in the port city of Odessa this month that left dozens of pro-Moscow activists dead.

**AFP -** [**http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/world/ukraine-in-full-scale/1118648.html**](http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/world/ukraine-in-full-scale/1118648.html)

EAPR

**Across EAPR**

**North Korea 'shells near South Korea warship'**

North Korea has fired shells into disputed waters near a South Korean warship, South Korean military officials told media. This happened near Yeonpyeong island, on the disputed western maritime border, Yonhap news agency said. On Tuesday, South Korea fired warning shots at three North Korean ships that crossed the maritime border. The North had said it would retaliate. In 2010, North Korean shelling of Yeonpyeong killed four people. The latest incident happened after 18:00 local time (09:00GMT) on Thursday, reports citing South Korean officials said.

**BBC -** [**http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-27520455**](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-27520455)

**Head of WFP urges more food aid support for North Korea**

The head of the WFP is calling on the South Korean government to do more to help malnourished children in North Korea. Arriving in Seoul after a recent three day visit to Pyongyang, the Executive Director of the World Food Programme, Ertharin Cousin, said her agency's nutrition projects in North Korea, that focus on providing food to infants and children, are dangerously underfunded.

**Arirang -** [**http://www.arirang.co.kr/News/News\_View.asp?nseq=162787&category=2**](http://www.arirang.co.kr/News/News_View.asp?nseq=162787&category=2)

**Philippines and Indonesia sign border agreement**

The Philippines and Indonesia have signed an agreement resolving a sea border dispute after 20 years of negotiations, with the neighbors' leaders vowing to forge closer ties. Philippine President Benigno Aquino III and outgoing Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono on Friday witnessed the signing of the deal delimiting the countries' Exclusive Economic Zone boundary in the Mindanao Sea and Celebes Sea. Also signed were agreements on cooperation on anti-terrorism and higher education. Aquino says the border deal serves as proof "to our steadfast commitment to uphold the rule of law and pursue the peaceful and equitable settlement of maritime concerns."

**AP -** [**http://www.nzherald.co.nz/world/news/article.cfm?c\_id=2&objectid=11260652**](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/world/news/article.cfm?c_id=2&objectid=11260652)

**Vietnamese woman self-immolates to protest China**

Vietnamese state media say a 67-year-old woman has died after setting herself on fire in a protest against China. The report on a website of Thanh Nien newspaper says the incident occurred in downtown Ho Chin Minh City early Friday in front of the former presidential palace. It quotes a senior government official Le Truong Hai Hieu as saying the woman had banners protesting China's recent deployment of an oil rig off the Paracel Islands in waters also claimed by Vietnam. The three-week standoff has raised fears of confrontation after Vietnam deployed ships in an effort to stop China's drilling operations. Vietnam's government has clamped down on street protests after they morphed into anti-Chinese riots that that left two dead and damaged factories.

**AP -** [**http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/vietnamese-woman-immolates-protest-china-23838809**](http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/vietnamese-woman-immolates-protest-china-23838809)

**China**

**China says Xinjiang attackers influenced by foreign organizations**

China said on Friday that the people who carried out an attack which killed 31 people in the capital of the country's troubled Xinjiang region appeared to be influenced by "terrorist" organizations outside China. China's Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei also said at a daily news briefing that the attackers were influenced by religious extremism seen on the Internet.

**Reuters -** [**http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/05/23/uk-china-blast-formin-idUKKBN0E30IS20140523**](http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/05/23/uk-china-blast-formin-idUKKBN0E30IS20140523)

**Laos**

**“Land grabs” drive subsistence farmers into deeper poverty**

"Land grabs" in Laos are driving poor farmers, including ethnic minorities, off their land, away from livelihoods they know and into further poverty, activists and experts say. “When these lands [are given] to companies and converted to industrial agriculture or other uses, it destroys the foundation of rural people’s lives, livelihoods and knowledge systems, as well as their access to food, nutrition, medicines and incomes," Shalmali Guttal, a senior analyst with Focus on the Global South, a Bangkok-based NGO which campaigns for social justice in Laos, told IRIN. Ethnic minorities, which make up about 70 percent of the population, mostly live in resource-rich upland areas, which are often the target of land purchases by international corporations.

**IRIN -** [**http://www.irinnews.org/report/100116/laos-land-grabs-drive-subsistence-farmers-into-deeper-poverty**](http://www.irinnews.org/report/100116/laos-land-grabs-drive-subsistence-farmers-into-deeper-poverty)

**Myanmar**

**Myanmar moves to curb military sway**

A parliamentary committee proposed changing Myanmar's constitution to reduce the military's ability to block amendments, a step toward broader reforms before general elections next year. The proposal is likely to face opposition from the military, which controls 25% of the seats in parliament. Under the constitution drafted by the country's former ruling junta in 2008, changes to the charter require more than 75% approval, giving the military an effective veto, as any change would require the consent of at least one general. The vote is a major test of how much far the nation will be able to democratize without a military trump card.

**Wall Street Journal -** [**http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702303749904579577411152612936?mg=reno64-wsj&url=http%3A%2F%2Fonline.wsj.com%2Farticle%2FSB10001424052702303749904579577411152612936.html**](http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702303749904579577411152612936?mg=reno64-wsj&url=http%3A%2F%2Fonline.wsj.com%2Farticle%2FSB10001424052702303749904579577411152612936.html)

**Myanmar Times -** [**http://www.mmtimes.com/index.php/national-news/10441-nld-to-launch-constitutional-amendment-petition-next-week.html**](http://www.mmtimes.com/index.php/national-news/10441-nld-to-launch-constitutional-amendment-petition-next-week.html)

**Myanmar farmers hold sit-in against military**

Dozens of farmers have been holding peaceful protest in the heart of Yangon in Myanmar's capital for nearly two months, trying to get back their land that was seized by the previous military regime. Four years ago, such a protest would never have been tolerated. While some view the government's tolerance of public protests as a sign of reform, others are less convinced.

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/video/asia/2014/05/myanmar-farmers-hold-sit-against-military-201452232113601376.html**](http://www.aljazeera.com/video/asia/2014/05/myanmar-farmers-hold-sit-against-military-201452232113601376.html)

**Solomon Islands**

**Fears of more flash flooding**

There are more fears of flash flooding for riverside settlers on the Fiu and Kwaiafa Rivers in Solomon Islands, as continuous heavy rain caused both rivers to rise. The Solomon Star reports people living near the rivers have started to move to higher ground. Villagers say flooding is happening more and more often and people live in a constant state of panic. The paper reports an officer from the Solomon Islands Meteorological Services has confirmed the heavy rains in Malaita since Sunday, which has been mostly concentrated in Auki, is at an average rate of 74 litres per square metre. The average monthly rainfall in Auki for May is 223 litres per square metre.

**RNZI -** [**http://www.radionz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/245091/fears-of-more-flash-flooding-in-solomon-islands**](http://www.radionz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/245091/fears-of-more-flash-flooding-in-solomon-islands)

**Thailand**

**Thai army chief summons ousted PM for talks a day after coup**

Thailand's army chief, General Prayuth Chan-ocha, will begin to govern a polarized country on Friday, a day after he seized power in a bloodless coup in a bid to end six months of turmoil. Prayuth launched his coup after factions refused to give ground in a struggle for power between the royalist establishment and a populist politician that has raised fears of serious violence and damage to Thailand's economy, southeast Asia's second biggest. Soldiers detained some politicians from both sides when Prayuth announced the coup after talks he was presiding over broke down. The military censored the media, dispersed protesters and imposed a 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. curfew. Later, the military summoned ousted Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra and 22 associates including powerful relatives and ministers in her government, to a meeting at an army facility at 10 a.m. on Friday.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/22/us-thailand-protest-idUSBREA4J0HN20140522**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/22/us-thailand-protest-idUSBREA4J0HN20140522)

**BBC -** [**http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-27530817**](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-27530817)

**Thai army stops 155 people from leaving country after coup**

Thailand's military government has banned 155 people including politicians and activists from leaving the country after staging a coup following months of political turmoil, according to a statement read on television on Friday. It said the decision was taken "in order to maintain peace and resolve the conflict". After the coup, soldiers dispersed rival groups of protesters who had set up camp in and around the capital, Bangkok.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140523052129-vxwm2**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140523052129-vxwm2)

ESA

**Mozambique**

**Mozambique's Renamo opposition leader says to run for president**

Mozambique's Renamo opposition leader Afonso Dhlakama said on Friday he intended to run as a candidate in an October 15 presidential election, but he demanded safety guarantees from the government to be able to leave his bush hideout. Dhlakama, who led the former Renamo rebel movement in Mozambique's 1975-1992 civil war and has been repeatedly defeated by the ruling Frelimo party in subsequent elections, has lived in the central Mozambican bush for more than a year to escape what he says is government persecution.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/23/us-mozambique-dhlakama-idUSBREA4M07920140523**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/23/us-mozambique-dhlakama-idUSBREA4M07920140523)

**Uganda**

**Over 30,000 urban refugees register in Kampala**

The office of prime minister at the department of refugees in Uganda says it has registered over 31,000 urban refugees in Kampala over a period of three weeks. Douglas Asiimwe, the senior protection officer at the refugees department desk in Kampala, told Sudan Tribune on Thursday that a huge number of urban refugees are from South Sudanese, Somalia, Congo and Eritrean. The senior official says the identity cards will be valid for a year and will help refugees’ status safety while they stay in Uganda.

**Sudan Tribune -** [**http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article51088**](http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article51088)

LAC

**Across LAC**

**Caribbean hospitals overwhelmed with rapidly spreading virus**

Hospitals and clinics throughout the Caribbean are seeing thousands of people with the same symptoms, victims of the chikungunya. Health officials are now working feverishly to educate the public about the illness, knock down the mosquito population, and deal with an onslaught of cases. Authorities are attempting to control mosquitoes throughout the Caribbean, from dense urban neighbourhoods to beach resorts. The Pan American Health Organization reports more than 55,000 suspected and confirmed cases since December throughout the islands.

**AP -** [**http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2014/05/22/caribbean-hospitals-overw\_n\_5369753.html**](http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2014/05/22/caribbean-hospitals-overw_n_5369753.html)

**Colombia**

**Peace at stake in presidential vote**

Colombians vote on 25 May in a tightly fought presidential election that has seen the top two candidates tainted by scandal as they wrestle over the pivotal issue of how to end a five-decade insurgency by FARC rebels. The battle for the presidential palace in Latin America's No. 4 economy is between incumbent leader Juan Manuel Santos and Oscar Ivan Zuluaga, an economist whose late surge in polls has left them neck-and-neck. Neither is likely to get the over 50 percent needed to avoid a runoff on June 15.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/22/us-colombia-election-idUSBREA4L0GW20140522**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/22/us-colombia-election-idUSBREA4L0GW20140522)

**Dominican Republic**

**Thousands flee flash floods as rains drench north**

The Emergency Operations Center (COE) reported that the downpours in several provinces during the last several days have displaced 5,560 people and affected nearly 400 homes, with flash flood warnings issued for 16 provinces. From María Trinidad Sánchez in the northeast to Elías Piña in the west are under flash flood warnings, COE said, and that swelled rivers have damaged homes in northern La Vega and Espaillat provinces.

**Dominican Today -** [**http://www.dominicantoday.com/dr/local/2014/5/21/51542/Thousands-flee-flash-floods-as-rains-drench-Dominican-Republic-north**](http://www.dominicantoday.com/dr/local/2014/5/21/51542/Thousands-flee-flash-floods-as-rains-drench-Dominican-Republic-north)

**Dominican Republic lawmakers pass citizenship bill**

The Dominican senate has unanimously approved a bill which will set up a system to grant citizenship to Dominican-born children of immigrants. It was proposed by the president after the country's highest court ruled last year that the children of undocumented migrants were not automatically eligible for Dominican nationality. The ruling drew international criticism and soured relations with Haiti. The new law will create different categories for people depending on whether they have documents proving they were born in the Dominican Republic. Critics say this still discriminates against those who do not possess such documents, but the government says they will be given the opportunity to apply for naturalisation two years after registering in the Dominican Republic.

**BBC -** [**http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-27514955**](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-27514955)

**Guatemala**

**Guatemalan ex-President Alfonso Portillo jailed in US**

A court in New York has sentenced former Guatemalan President Alfonso Portillo to five years and 10 months in jail for taking bribes from Taiwan. Portillo, who was extradited to the United States last year, has also been ordered to pay a $2.5m fine. He pleaded guilty in March for attempting to launder the illegal money through American banks. The judge has not decided whether he will serve the remainder of his sentence in the US or Guatemala.

**BBC -** [**http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-27531896**](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-27531896)

**Venezuela**

**Government reports 28,038 cases of malaria in 2014**

Malaria is on the rise in Venezuela. The Epidemiology Bulletin of 4 -10 May, issued by the Ministry of Health has confirmed 28,153 events thus far this year. The situation continues being critical in the states of Bolívar and Amazonas. There, local authorities are still in state of emergency due to the epidemics. The report also reveals that in the past couple of weeks, and as a result from visits to the states of Bolívar and Amazonas, 14 people were diagnoses with the disease in areas previously free from transmission. Also, in Caracas, 25 people who had traveled to Higher Orinoco were diagnosed with malaria.

**El Universal -** [**http://english.eluniversal.com/nacional-y-politica/140520/venezuela-records-28038-events-of-malaria-in-2014**](http://english.eluniversal.com/nacional-y-politica/140520/venezuela-records-28038-events-of-malaria-in-2014)

MENA

**Algeria**

**Algeria closes most of its land borders**

Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika transferred the file of Algeria’s land border with six neighboring countries from the Ministry of Interior to the Ministry of National Defense, after the closure of border crossings with Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Libya and Algeria. As per the new [presidential] decisions, Algeria is heading toward militarizing all its land borders stretching over 6,385 kilometers (3,967 miles), except for the border with Tunisia.

**Al Monitor -** [**http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/security/2014/05/algeria-border-closing-military-terrorism-threat.html#**](http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/security/2014/05/algeria-border-closing-military-terrorism-threat.html)

**Egypt**

**Head of Egypt's deadliest terror group killed**

The top leader of an extremist group, Ansar Beit al-Maqdis in Egypt's restive Sinai and three of his associates were killed in a drive-by shooting in the peninsula on Thursday, senior Egyptian security officials said. The development deals a heavy blow to the militant group, which has claimed scores of deadly attacks across Egypt since the ouster of Islamist President Mohammed Morsi last July. It is also a boost for Egypt's military-backed authorities ahead of the country's presidential elections next week.

**CBS -** [**http://www.cbsnews.com/news/head-of-egypts-deadliest-terror-group-killed/**](http://www.cbsnews.com/news/head-of-egypts-deadliest-terror-group-killed/)

**Iraq**

**Thirty-two killed in three attacks on Shi'ite pilgrims in Baghdad**

Thirty-two people were killed in three attacks on Shi'ite pilgrims walking in Baghdad on 22 May evening ahead of a major religious holiday, police and medical sources said. All the bombings happened in the space of 30 minutes. The deadliest was in eastern Baghdad, near Tayaran Square, where a minibus approached a crowd of pilgrims and exploded, killing 14 people and wounding 17 others, according to police and medical sources.

**Reuters -** [**http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/05/22/uk-iraq-violence-idUKKBN0E21VL20140522**](http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/05/22/uk-iraq-violence-idUKKBN0E21VL20140522)

**Lebanon**

**Lebanon heads for presidential vacuum after final failed vote**

Lebanese parliamentarians failed on Thursday in a last effort to elect a successor to President Michel Suleiman before his term expires, leaving a political vacuum as the country struggles to cope with spillover from Syria’s civil war. Parliament’s fifth attempt to vote for a new president was abandoned when deputies failed to reach a quorum on Thursday, 48 hours before Suleiman is due to leave the presidential palace.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.arabnews.com/news/575391**](http://www.arabnews.com/news/575391)

**Libya**

**Renegade General seeks emergency cabinet**

A renegade general who has launched an assault against militias in Libya's east warned that the country has become a "terrorist hub.” Claiming to speak in the name of the Libyan army, Khalifa Haftar urged Libya's highest judicial authority "to form a civilian presidential high council tasked with forming an emergency cabinet and organizing legislative elections." Speaking from the eastern town of Al Abyar, he said the presidential council he envisions would hand over power to an elected parliament. "Libya has become a hub for terrorists who control power," said Haftar, who has been branded an outlaw by Libyan authorities after launching an assault that killed at least 79 people in the eastern city of Benghazi on Friday. Haftar, who was once among former strongman Muammar Gaddafi's top generals before falling from grace and going into US exile, read a statement broadcast on several Libyan networks.

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/5/22/libya-renegade-chiefseeksemergencycabinet.html**](http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/5/22/libya-renegade-chiefseeksemergencycabinet.html)

**Rocket attack wounds 20 in Benghazi**

Twenty members of a single family were wounded when a rocket slammed into their home near an army base in Libya's second city Benghazi overnight, medical and security sources said Friday. The family's home lies close to the headquarters of the army's special forces unit in Benghazi, which is backing a rogue general who has vowed to crush Islamists in the city, a security official said. Another rocket hit the base but caused no casualties, the official said. Rogue general Khalifa Haftar launched an assault on Islamists in the city last Friday in which at least 79 people were killed.

**AFP -** [**http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/May-23/257551-rocket-attack-wounds-20-in-libyas-benghazi.ashx#axzz32WkVHfPl**](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/May-23/257551-rocket-attack-wounds-20-in-libyas-benghazi.ashx#axzz32WkVHfPl)

**State of Palestine**

**Palestinian PM to head unity government**

Palestinian Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah is to head the consensus government to be formed under a deal with Hamas to end seven years of rival administrations in the West Bank and Gaza, an official said Thursday. “The government is nearly ready, and Rami Hamdallah will be prime minister,” the official close to the reconciliation negotiations told AFP. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas “informed Mr. Hamdallah yesterday [Wednesday] that he would head the government,” the official said.

**AFP -** [**http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/May-22/257416-current-palestinian-pm-to-head-new-unity-govt-source.ashx#ixzz32U8gtFVT**](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/May-22/257416-current-palestinian-pm-to-head-new-unity-govt-source.ashx#ixzz32U8gtFVT)

**Sudan**

**Sudan guilty of 'unconscionable' violence against civilians: US envoy**Sudan has carried out "unconscionable" violence including aerial strikes and aggression against civilians in its war-torn regions, the US special envoy to the country charged Thursday. A senior official from the ruling party in Khartoum disputed the allegation and said the envoy, Donald Booth, was not qualified to make such comments. Booth said the strains in ties between Washington and Khartoum "has to do with the way that the government has treated the people of Sudan, particularly those in the periphery."

**AFP -** [**http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/May-22/257478-sudan-guilty-of-unconscionable-violence-against-civilians-us-envoy.ashx#ixzz32U8PuPB2**](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/May-22/257478-sudan-guilty-of-unconscionable-violence-against-civilians-us-envoy.ashx#ixzz32U8PuPB2)

**Syria**

**21 killed as Syria rebels shell Assad election rally: SOHR**

Rebels bombarded a campaign rally in support of President Bashar Assad's re-election in a controversial June 3 poll, killing at least 21 people, a monitoring group said. The mortar fire hit a tent where Assad supporters had gathered in the southern city of Daraa late on Thursday and also wounded at least 30 people, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

**AFP -** [**http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/131833-22-killed-as-syria-rebels-shell-assad-election-rally**](http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/131833-22-killed-as-syria-rebels-shell-assad-election-rally)

ROSA

**Afghanistan**

**Presidential runoff campaigns start in Afghanistan**

The two frontrunners in Afghanistan’s presidential election have started their runoff campaign amid tight security. The political campaigning between former Foreign Minister Abdullah Abdullah and economist Ashraf Ghani will go on until June 11, and the nationwide polling will be conducted soon afterwards on June 14. Meanwhile, Afghanistan’s election commission decided to set up over 4,000 new voting stations across the country in a bid to increase the turnout. An estimated seven million people went to the polls in the first round of the presidential election in the country to choose a successor to two-time President Hamid Karzai.

**PressTV -** [**http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2014/05/22/363677/runoff-campaigns-start-in-afghanistan/**](http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2014/05/22/363677/runoff-campaigns-start-in-afghanistan/)

**Militants attack on Indian consulate in western Afghanistan**

A handful of heavily armed insurgents, including suicide bombers, launched a rocket propelled grenade and gun attack on the Indian consulate in Afghanistan’s western city of Herat hours before dawn on Friday, officials said. Indian staff at the mission escaped soon after the shooting began at around 3 a.m.. Police said Afghan security forces had killed the attackers, who were holed up in buildings overlooking the consulate, following a firefight that lasted several hours.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/indian-consulate-in-west-afghanistan-under-attack-officials-say/article18819032/**](http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/indian-consulate-in-west-afghanistan-under-attack-officials-say/article18819032/)

**Pakistan**

**Pakistan religious body endorses underage marriage**

A religious body in Pakistan has declared girls as young as nine years old eligible to be married “if the signs of puberty were visible”, a media report said today. Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) chairman Maulana Mohammad Khan Sheerani of the Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) said after a meeting yesterday that media and ‘some other segments of society’ were not taking the council’s decisions seriously. Civil society took strong exception to the statement. “Women and children are the most vulnerable groups in the country — if such legal cover as a minimum age prohibiting child marriages are done away with, then exploitation of women and children will increase,” Human Rights Commission of Pakistan Chairperson Zohra Yousuf said.

**PTI -** [**http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/international/pakistan-religious-body-endorses-underage-marriage/article6037152.ece**](http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/international/pakistan-religious-body-endorses-underage-marriage/article6037152.ece)

**Army starts North Waziristan ground offensive**

Pakistani forces on 22 May launched their first major offensive in years against Taliban militants near the Afghan border after several rounds of government-led talks aimed at ending an insurgency in the remote region failed. The offensive targeted the Matchis Camp near the capital of North Waziristan, an area set up to house Afghan refugees but now a hub for local and foreign militants, Siraj Ahmed, the highest government official in the region, told Reuters by telephone. Residents said helicopter gunships flattened houses and compounds in Matchis Camp while ground forces surrounded the area.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/22/us-pakistan-offensive-idUSBREA4L05Z20140522**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/22/us-pakistan-offensive-idUSBREA4L05Z20140522)

**NYT -** [**http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/23/world/asia/pakistani-troops-take-control-of-militant-dominated-area.html**](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/23/world/asia/pakistani-troops-take-control-of-militant-dominated-area.html)

**AFP -** [**http://www.ndtv.com/article/world/pakistan-pounds-taliban-hideouts-for-third-day-529437**](http://www.ndtv.com/article/world/pakistan-pounds-taliban-hideouts-for-third-day-529437)

WCAR

**CAR**

**Three people killed in Bambari as French troops clash with crowds**

Three civilians were killed in CAR on 22 May as hundreds of Muslims armed with rifles and machetes clashed with French peacekeeping troops trying to disarm members of the rebel Seleka coalition in the town of Bambari. A rebel spokesperson in Bambari said the French troops had opened fire on a crowd of protesters, killing three civilians and wounding six. But a French official denied this and said the French had fired warning shots into the air after coming under fire themselves.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/22/us-centralafrica-france-clash-idUSBREA4L0N220140522**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/22/us-centralafrica-france-clash-idUSBREA4L0N220140522)

**DR Congo**

**International court sentences Congolese warlord to 12 years for war crimes**

The International Criminal Court on Friday sentenced Congolese warlord Germain Katanga to 12 years in prison for crimes including murder and pillaging committed during an attack on a village in 11 years ago. Katanga becomes only the second person to be sentenced by the court in more than a decade of existence. He was 24 when he participated in an attack on the Democratic Republic of Congo village of Bogoro in the mineral-rich north-eastern Ituri region, during which some 200 ethnic Hema civilians were killed.

**Reuters -** [**http://af.reuters.com/article/commoditiesNews/idAFL6N0O91MQ20140523**](http://af.reuters.com/article/commoditiesNews/idAFL6N0O91MQ20140523)

**Mali**

**Separatists seize several northern towns**

Separatists said on 22 May they had seized control of several towns in northern Mali after routing government forces but they would respect calls for a ceasefire. Malian government officials were not immediately available for comment. "We now control Anefis, Aguelhok, Tessalit, Menaka, Ansongo, Anderamboukane and Lere," an official with the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), reported from Kidal. He said the MNLA took the towns without a fight after government troops either abandoned their positions and sought refuge at the camps of the UN peacekeeping mission or fled south.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/22/us-mali-fighting-idUSBREA4L0M120140522**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/22/us-mali-fighting-idUSBREA4L0M120140522)

**AFP -** [**http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/world/411347/mali-in-crisis-as-rebels-take-control-of-northern-towns**](http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/world/411347/mali-in-crisis-as-rebels-take-control-of-northern-towns)

**Mali says around 20 soldiers killed in loss of Kidal to rebels**

Around 20 Malian soldiers were killed and 30 wounded in the fighting that saw insurgents led by Tuareg rebels recapture the key northern town of Kidal, the defence minister said Thursday. "There were dead and wounded on both sides," Soumeylou Boubeye Maiga told public television, in reference to Wednesday's clashes. "We counted around 30 wounded... and sadly around 20 dead."

**AFP –** [**http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/140522/mali-says-around-20-soldiers-killed-loss-kidal-rebels**](http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/140522/mali-says-around-20-soldiers-killed-loss-kidal-rebels)

**Niger**

**Niamey ruling party HQ attacked with Molotov cocktails**

Three people were injured, one severely, in a Molotov cocktail attack on 22 May on the ruling party's headquarters in Niamey. "Around 4:00 am, three Molotov cocktails were thrown at the headquarters of our party," a member of the ruling Nigerien Party for Democracy and Socialism (PNDS), reported. "The first was thrown on the roof without exploding, two more exploded on the terrace. They hit three sleeping party members." One of the injured was reported to be in critical condition after they were taken to hospital. There has been a series of attacks in recent days between competing parties in Niamey.

**Cent News -** [**http://www.centnews.com/Education/Niger-ruling-party-HQ-attacked-with-Molotov-cocktails/S-2014-05-22/68085.html**](http://www.centnews.com/Education/Niger-ruling-party-HQ-attacked-with-Molotov-cocktails/S-2014-05-22/68085.html)

**Nigeria**

**UN Security Council committee blacklists Nigeria's Boko Haram**

The UN Security Council committee on al Qaeda sanctions blacklisted Nigeria's Islamist militant group Boko Haram on Thursday after the insurgents' kidnapping of hundreds of schoolgirls, diplomats said. The sanctions on the group include an international asset freeze, travel ban and arms embargo. Nigeria requested the listing of Boko Haram earlier this week. "Today, the Security Council took an important step in support of the government of Nigeria's efforts to defeat Boko Haram and hold its murderous leadership accountable for atrocities," US Ambassador to the United Nations Samantha Power said in a statement.

**Reuters -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/u-n-security-council-committee-blacklists-nigerias-boko-193325455.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/u-n-security-council-committee-blacklists-nigerias-boko-193325455.html)

**'Boko Haram' destroy village**

Suspected militant Islamists have killed more than 25 people in an attack on a village in north-eastern Nigeria, residents say. The gunmen burnt nearly all the homes in Chikongudo, and stole food in Wednesday night's attack, they said. This came a day after a double bombing killed 122 in the central city of Jos. Chikongudo is near the town of Gamboru Ngala, where more than 300 residents were killed in an attack earlier this month. Two other villages were raided this week in north-east Nigeria, killing 27 people.

**BBC -** [**http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-27526620**](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-27526620)

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