**UNICEF OPSCEN Brief – Friday, 25 July 2014**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| [GENERAL](#GENERAL) | **Across Regions** | Militants planning imminent attack in Norway: police |
|  |  | Australia to send 100 extra police, troops to Ukraine |
|  |  | US says new evidence shows Russia 'firing artillery into Ukraine' |
| [CEE/CIS](#CEE) | **Ukraine** | Unguided rockets killing civilians |
|  |  | Armed forces take another strategic city |
|  |  | Mass grave uncovered in the east |
|  |  | Prime Minister resigns amid parliamentary turmoil |
|  |  | UN says 230,000 people have fled homes in crisis |
| [EAP](#EAP) | **Myanmar** | Muslims in Rakhine suffer worsening health crisis |
| [ESA](#ESA) | **Across ESA** | Ethiopia faces wave of refugees from South Sudan, warns UN relief official |
|  | **Kenya** | Peace Corps pulling more than 50 volunteers over security fears |
|  |  | Tourist killed in Mombasa, second in July - police |
|  | **Uganda** | Teen pregnancies’ plan under fire |
| [LAC](#LAC) | **Across LAC** | Obama to meet Central American leaders on child migrants |
|  | **Argentina** | Argentina is now very close to default |
| [MENA](#MENA) | **Across Mena** | [Moroccan planes carrying humanitarian aid to Palestinians arrive in Egypt](#Moroccan) |
|  | **Iraq** | [Hospitals destroyed by air strikes](#Hospitals) |
|  | **State of Palestine** | [At least 15 killed by shelling of Gaza school; toll exceeds 800](#Gazaschool) |
|  |  | [Israel boosts security after deadly West Bank clashes](#westbank) |
|  | **Syria** | [First UN aid convoy enters Syria from Turkey](#unaid) |
|  |  | [UN chief says arbitrary denial of aid a tactic of war in Syria](#unchief) |
| [SA](#SA) | **Afghanistan** | Country risks losing health gains made in the last decade |
|  |  | Gunmen kill 15 civilians travelling in central region |
|  | **Pakistan** | Polio case reported after two-and-a-half years in Balochistan – UNICEF mention |
| [WCA](#WCA) | **Across WCA** | Liberian man in Lagos being tested for Ebola |
|  | **CAR** | Malaria is the leading killer in CAR |
|  | **Nigeria** | Bomb hidden in fridge kills 1, wounds 8 in bus park in Kano |
|  | **Mali** | Government, rebels ink accord on ending hostilities |

GENERAL

**Across Regions**

**Militants planning imminent attack in Norway**

Militants with fighting experience in Syria may be planning an attack in Norway in the coming days, police said on Thursday, as they deployed armed units at borders, airports and railway stations.

A small group of Norway-based militants who have gained combat experience in conflicts around the globe have become the biggest threat to the Nordic nation and up to 50 have traveled to Syria in recent years, police said.

**Reuters -** <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/24/us-norway-threat-idUSKBN0FT0WK20140724>

**Australia to send 100 extra police, troops to Ukraine**

Australia will send 100 additional police and some defense force personnel to Europe to join a planned Dutch-led international security force to secure the Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 crash site, the Australian Prime Minister said on 25 July. The Australian Federal Police (AFP) officers, some of whom will be armed, will join a contingent of 90 AFP officers already in London waiting for a deal with Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko to be approved by Ukraine's parliament. "This is a humanitarian mission, with a clear and simple objective," Abbott told reporters. "I expect the operation on the ground in Ukraine, should the deployment go ahead, to last no longer than a few weeks." Abbott announced on 24 July that 50 police officers had been deployed to London ahead of the mission, but a police spokeswoman said on 25 July that the number was 90.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/25/us-ukraine-crisis-australia-idUSKBN0FU0JM20140725**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/25/us-ukraine-crisis-australia-idUSKBN0FU0JM20140725)

**US says new evidence shows Russia 'firing artillery into Ukraine'**

US officials claim to have evidence that Russia has been firing artillery from within its own territory across the border into Ukraine. The US state department said it had evidence from “human intelligence information” that Russia intends on supplying separatists groups with heavy weapons and missile launchers. A state department spokesperson, said on 24 July: “We have new evidence that the Russians intend to deliver heavier and more powerful rocket launchers to the separatists in Ukraine, and have evidence that Russia is firing artillery from within Russia to attack Ukrainian military positions.”

**The Independent -** [**http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-says-new-evidence-shows-russia-firing-artillery-into-ukraine-9628034.html**](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-says-new-evidence-shows-russia-firing-artillery-into-ukraine-9628034.html)

CEE/CIS

**Ukraine**

**Unguided rockets killing civilians**

Unguided Grad rockets launched apparently by Ukrainian government forces and pro-government militias have killed at least 16 civilians and wounded many more in insurgent-controlled areas of Donetsk and its suburbs in at least four attacks between 12 and 21 July 2014, Human Rights Watch said. The use of indiscriminate rockets in populated areas violates international humanitarian law, or the laws of war, and may amount to war crimes. Grads are unguided rockets that cannot be targeted accurately, and are often fired in salvos from multi-barrel rocket launchers to saturate a wide area.

**HRW -** [**http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/07/24/ukraine-unguided-rockets-killing-civilians**](http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/07/24/ukraine-unguided-rockets-killing-civilians)

**Armed forces take another strategic city**

Ukrainian troops have retaken the strategically-important city of Lysychansk in eastern Ukraine, as they press on with their offensive to stamp out a pro-Russian rebellion. 'Ukrainian forces have raised the flag over the town council in Lysychansk,' the presidency said in a statement late on 24 July. Operations were continuing to drive the remaining insurgents out of the town, the statement said. Lysychansk - a city of around 105,000 about 90 kilometres northwest of the rebel stronghold of Lugansk - was seized by separatists in early April at the start of a bloody insurgency that has now claimed the lives of 1000 people.

**AFP -** [**http://www.skynews.com.au/news/world/europe/2014/07/25/ukraine-forces-take-another-strategic-city.html**](http://www.skynews.com.au/news/world/europe/2014/07/25/ukraine-forces-take-another-strategic-city.html)

**Mass grave uncovered in the east**

Forensic experts are excavating a mass grave that witnesses to the burial say could contain the bodies of as many as 20 people killed by pro-Moscow separatist fighters. The digging began with a bulldozer at the grassy area on the grounds of a children’s hospital. Witnesses said they saw a man and several armed rebels dig a deep hole in June before tossing numerous corpses into the open pit. Two of the bodies in the grave are believed to be those of the two sons of a local Protestant minister, they were kidnapped in June after attending a service at their church and then they were shot, according to an aide to the Ukranian Minister of Interior Affairs. Their abduction coincided with the occupation of Slovyansk by pro-Moscow rebels, who claimed the industrial city of 120,000 as part of the self-declared Donetsk People’s Republic.

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/7/24/grave-mass-slovyansk.html**](http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/7/24/grave-mass-slovyansk.html)

**Prime Minister resigns amid parliamentary turmoil**

Ukraine's Prime Minister has resigned in protest at the collapse of the ruling coalition and a parliamentary schism that has hurt the nation's fight against pro-Russian rebels. Several parties had earlier withdrawn from the majority European Choice coalition. The speaker, announced the formal dissolution of the ruling coalition, giving the Ukranian President the right over the next month to announce fresh elections.

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2014/07/ukraine-pm-resigns-amid-parliamentary-turmoil-2014724145321500842.html**](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2014/07/ukraine-pm-resigns-amid-parliamentary-turmoil-2014724145321500842.html)

**UN says 230,000 people have fled homes in crisis**

A total of 230,000 people have fled their homes during the spiralling armed conflict in eastern Ukraine, the UNHCR said on 25 July. The UNHCR spokesperson reported that the number of people who have left the conflict zone for other Ukrainian regions was now close to 100,000, while some 130,000 had crossed the border into Russia. “They are mainly from the Lugansk and Donetsk regions. Those are figures that have risen in recent weeks,” he said. The number of people who have fled the fighting but remained within Ukraine has nearly doubled from the figure of 54,000 released by the UNHCR at the end of June. The number of refugees in Russia had then been 110,000.

**AFP -** [**http://www.khaleejtimes.com/kt-article-display-1.asp?xfile=data/international/2014/July/international\_July519.xml&section=international**](http://www.khaleejtimes.com/kt-article-display-1.asp?xfile=data/international/2014/July/international_July519.xml&section=international)

EAP

**Myanmar**

**Muslims in Rakhine suffer worsening health crisis**

Since international aid groups were forced out of the area in February and March, members of the minority Muslim Rohingya community who relied on them say basic health care services have all but disappeared. Worst affected are those in Northern Rakhine State, home to most of Myanmar's 1.3 million Rohingya who are stalked by sickness and malnourishment and as yet untouched by reforms under a semi-civilian government which took power in 2011. MSF's departure has had "a major humanitarian impact", said Pierre Peron, spokesman for OCHA. "MSF had built up a program over 20 years and it was reaching places that were very difficult to reach, and that's not something that can be done overnight," he said. MSF hopes it can return soon after the government announced on Thursday that the group could go back to Rakhine, a decision the organization welcomed.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/24/us-myanmar-rohingya-idUSKBN0FT1L020140724**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/24/us-myanmar-rohingya-idUSKBN0FT1L020140724)

ESA

**Across ESA**

**Ethiopia faces wave of refugees from South Sudan, warns UN relief official**

South Sudan is the most rapidly deteriorating humanitarian crisis in the world today, according to a John Ging, Operations Director for OCHA, who made an urgent appeal for desperately-needed funding for Ethiopia. An estimated 180,000 refugees have arrived in Ethiopia from South Sudan since the violence erupted in late 2013 with numbers set to reach 300,000-350,000 by the end of this year. Ging said 90% of those arriving in Ethiopia are women and children and 70% are under the age of 18. People are arriving in a dire state, with some 30% of new arrivals under the age of five acutely malnourished, and 10% severely acutely malnourished, meaning that without urgent treatment they are likely to die of starvation.

**UN News Centre -** [**http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=48335#.U9FBWGjD\_cs**](http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=48335#.U9FBWGjD_cs)

**Kenya**

**Peace Corps pulling more than 50 volunteers over security fears**

The Peace Corps says it is suspending its operations in Kenya and pulling out more than 50 volunteers because of security concerns. The Peace Corps said Thursday it is closely monitoring the security environment and will determine when the volunteers can return. The decision comes shortly after the State Department reduced the number of people who work in the US Embassy in Kenya, which increased the number of armed guards on site earlier this year.

**AP -** [**http://www.foxnews.com/world/2014/07/24/officials-peace-corps-pulling-more-than-50-volunteers-out-kenya-over-security/**](http://www.foxnews.com/world/2014/07/24/officials-peace-corps-pulling-more-than-50-volunteers-out-kenya-over-security/)

**Tourist killed in Mombasa, second in July - police**

A German female tourist was killed in the Kenyan port city of Mombasa on Thursday in the same area where a Russian visitor was murdered earlier in July by a criminal gang, police sources said. Kenya's coast has been the scene of a series of bombings and shootings by militants and gunmen that have left dozens of Kenyans dead in recent months. Some Western nations have warned against travel to Mombasa because of the violence. "A female tourist was shot in Kibokoni area," head of Tourist Police Unit in Kenya's Coast region said, adding that the case was being investigated. He did not give details about the woman's identity but a police source said she was a 28-year-old German and that she had not been robbed. The source said her Ugandan male companion was injured in the attack.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/24/us-kenya-killings-idUSKBN0FT25320140724**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/24/us-kenya-killings-idUSKBN0FT25320140724)

**Uganda**

**Teen pregnancies’ plan under fire**

A new Ugandan sex-education campaign to reduce teen pregnancy, maternal mortality among young women and girls, and the cost of post-abortion medical care, is generating heated debate. The one year campaign “Let Girls Be Girls” was officially launched on by the Health Ministry and UNFPA. It aims to address the growing vulnerability of girls to early pregnancy and birth related complications, and hopes to reduce deaths among young mothers aged 15-24 from the current 24% to 15% by July 2015. The programme provides free contraceptives to adolescents in schools, and sex education to local communities, parents, pupils and teachers on the rights children have to a safe and secure environment within their homes, schools and communities. However, Uganda’s Ethics and Integrity Ministry and religious leaders have opposed the campaign on the grounds that it promotes sexual immorality and promiscuity among youths.  
**IRIN -** [**http://www.irinnews.org/report/100399/uganda-teen-pregnancies-plan-under-fire**](http://www.irinnews.org/report/100399/uganda-teen-pregnancies-plan-under-fire)

LAC

**Across LAC**

**Obama to meet Central American leaders on child migrants**

President Barack Obama will meet three Central American leaders on Friday to discuss the surge of children crossing the southern US border without parents or papers, in flight from violence and poverty. The White House summit will mark the first time since the influx erupted into public view two months ago that Obama has met with leaders of the countries where most of the minors are from. Presidents Otto Perez of Guatemala, Salvador Sanchez Ceren of El Salvador and Juan Orlando Hernandez of Honduras are expected to come with a joint proposal for dealing with the crisis, officials said.

**AFP -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/obama-meet-central-american-leaders-child-migrants-181342233.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/obama-meet-central-american-leaders-child-migrants-181342233.html)

**Argentina**

**Argentina is now very close to default**

The clock is ticking. Argentina will default in just a few days unless the country can find a way to satisfy creditors that are owed roughly $1.5 billion. The country's only remaining option appears to be negotiations -- and a compromise. If a deal is not reached, the country could miss its next bond payment on 30 July. NML Capital, one of the holdout hedge funds, said in a statement that Argentina had shown a "total lack of willingness" to solve the problem. "Argentina's government made clear that it will be choosing to default next week," NML said. "Argentina again refused to negotiate any aspect of the dispute. Instead, its representatives simply stated that no solution was possible."

**CNN -** [**http://money.cnn.com/2014/07/25/investing/argentina-default/index.html?hpt=hp\_t4**](http://money.cnn.com/2014/07/25/investing/argentina-default/index.html?hpt=hp_t4)

MENA

**Across MENA**

**M1 - Moroccan planes carrying humanitarian aid to Palestinians arrive in Egypt**

Two Moroccan military planes carrying humanitarian aid dispatched by Morocco to Palestinians in the Gaza strip, arrived Thursday morning at the Ismailia airport in Egypt. This aid, ordered by King Mohammed VI, will be transported overland to Gaza. Raised by the Royal Armed Forces (FAR), the Moroccan Agency for International Cooperation and the Mohammed V Foundation for Solidarity, the relief includes 155 tons of medicines, powdered milk for kids, rice, hygiene products, tents, blankets, mattresses and generators.

<http://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2014/07/135235/moroccan-planes-carrying-humanitarian-aid-to-palestinians-arrive-in-egypt/>

**Iraq**

**Hospitals destroyed by air strikes**

Intense shelling and aerial assaults in northern and central Iraq have struck hospitals and other medical facilities, depriving civilians of much-needed medical care, the MSF said. The latest attack occurred when the hospital in the town of Shirqat, between Mosul and Tikrit, was bombed. MSF, which supports some of the hospitals that have been struck, called upon all parties to the conflict to respect health facilities, to allow medical staff to continue their work, and to preserve full access to health services.

**MSF -** [**http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/article/iraq-hospitals-destroyed-air-strikes**](http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/article/iraq-hospitals-destroyed-air-strikes)

**State of Palestine**

**At least 15 killed by shelling of Gaza school; toll exceeds 800**

Gazan authorities said Israeli forces shelled a shelter at a UN-run school on 24 July, killing at least 15 people as the Palestinian death toll in the conflict climbed over 800 and attempts at a truce remained elusive. A spokesperson for the UNRWA said it had tried in vain to arrange an evacuation of civilians from the school with the Israeli army, and noted reports of Hamas rockets falling in the area at the same time. Scores of crying families who had been living in the school ran with their children to a hospital where the victims were being treated a few hundred meters away.

**AFP -** [**http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/world/pressure-for-gaza-truce/1281840.html**](http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/world/pressure-for-gaza-truce/1281840.html)

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/24/us-mideast-gaza-idUSKBN0FT06I20140724**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/24/us-mideast-gaza-idUSKBN0FT06I20140724)

**Israel boosts security after deadly West Bank clashes**

Israeli security forces were on heightened alert Friday after a Palestinian man was shot dead during a huge protest in the West Bank against Israel's military offensive in Gaza. Palestinian factions in the West Bank declared a 'Day of Rage' after the 24 July night clashes, which took place around the West Bank and in some sectors of Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem. Police said that due to fears of violent protest over the deadly Israeli military campaign in the Gaza Strip, they would bar men under the age of 50 from Jerusalem's flashpoint Al-Aqsa mosque for what are usually packed prayers on the last Friday of the Muslim holy fasting month of Ramadan. Police said that 39 protesters were arrested in various violent disturbances in Palestinian areas of the city.

**AFP -** [**http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/world/israel-boosts-security/1282238.html**](http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/world/israel-boosts-security/1282238.html)

**Syria**

**First UN aid convoy enters Syria from Turkey**

A first convoy of humanitarian aid crossed into Syria from Turkey on Thursday under a new UN-authorized plan to send relief without Damascus' approval. "Nine trucks crossed at Bab Al-Salam into Syria this morning," said Amanda Pitt of OCHA. "They were carrying food, shelter, water and sanitation supplies," she said. More relief shipments are due to leave from three other crossing points -- Bab Al-Hawa in Turkey, Al-Ramtha in Jordan and Al-Yarubiyah in Iraq -- in the coming months. UN SG Ban Ki-moon said in a report to the UNSC on Thursday that Syrian government forces were stepping up their attacks on hospitals and clinics, and that all sides were blocking aid deliveries as a "tactic of war."

**AFP -** [**http://zeenews.india.com/news/world/first-un-aid-convoy-enters-syria-from-turkey\_949979.html**](http://zeenews.india.com/news/world/first-un-aid-convoy-enters-syria-from-turkey_949979.html)

**UN chief says arbitrary denial of aid a tactic of war in Syria**

Warring parties in Syria are arbitrarily denying the delivery of humanitarian aid to millions of people in need as a tactic of war, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said in a report to the United Nations Security Council. In his fifth monthly report on access to aid in Syria, obtained by Reuters, Ban said an estimated 10.8 million people need help, of which 4.7 million are in hard to reach areas of the war-torn country, including at least 241,000 people in areas besieged by government or opposition forces.

**Reuters -** <http://www.firstpost.com/world/u-n-chief-says-arbitrary-denial-of-aid-a-tactic-of-war-in-syria-1633251.html>

SA

**Afghanistan**

**Country risks losing health gains made in the last decade**

Afghanistan risks losing even the basic health gains it has made over the past decade if it becomes a “forgotten crisis” when international troops leave the country at the end of the year, MSF’s Afghanistan chief said. “A lot of improvements have been made, but they are very precarious,” Benoit De Gryse, head of MSF in Afghanistan said. If donors cut funding after the troops leave, healthcare is likely to worsen quickly too, he said. About 90% of the government’s entire budget is funded by donors, so any cuts to that are likely to result in the government charging patients, closing district clinics and losing staff to a private sector which is completely unregulated, he said. “The worst-case scenario is that everything that was built gets lost,” he said. That would mean fewer vaccinations, more outbreaks of measles and polio, and a return to the very high levels of maternal deaths of the early 2000s.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140724171502-a3xuh/?source=fiOtherNews2**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140724171502-a3xuh/?source=fiOtherNews2)

**Gunmen kill 15 civilians travelling in central region**

Suspected Taliban gunmen stopped two vehicles in central Afghanistan and shot dead 15 passengers at the side of the road, officials said on 25 July, in the latest attack to highlight the growing civilian toll from violence. Only one man escaped the execution-style killing in Ghor province when the armed attackers gunned down 11 men, three women and one child. The Ghor provincial police chief, confirmed the incident and blamed suspected Taliban militants for the killings. There was no immediate claim of responsibility, and the Taliban often deny links to incidents where civilians are the victims. The attack occurred the same day that two Finnish female aid workers were shot dead by unidentified gunmen while in a taxi in the western city of Herat. A suicide bomber on a explosive-packed motorcycle in Takhar province also killed six civilians and wounded more than 20 in a crowded market as shoppers bought supplies for the upcoming festival of Eid-ul-Fitr.

**AFP -** [**http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/gunmen-kill-15-civilians/1282106.html**](http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/gunmen-kill-15-civilians/1282106.html)

**Pakistan**

**Polio case reported after two-and-a-half years in Balochistan – UNICEF mention**

A fresh case of polio was found in Balochistan's Killa Abdullah district on Thursday after a period of two-and-a-half years. According to UNICEF sources, the crippling virus was found in a 18-month-old girl in union council Maizai area of district Killa Abdullah. "Doctors have confirmed [the] polio virus", the sources said. The latest case of polio virus was reported after two-and-a-half years in Balochistan. "The girl's family had lived in Karachi for four years", UNICEF sources said, adding that the family had arrived in Balochstan's Killa Abdullah district this year. With the emergence of the new case, the total number of polio cases in Pakistan this year have reached to 102.

**Dawn -** [**http://www.dawn.com/news/1121323/polio-case-reported-after-two-and-a-half-years-in-balochistan**](http://www.dawn.com/news/1121323/polio-case-reported-after-two-and-a-half-years-in-balochistan)

WCA

**Across WCA**

**Liberian man in Lagos being tested for Ebola**

A Liberian man in his 40s is being tested for the deadly Ebola virus in Nigeria's commercial capital of Lagos, a mega-city of 21 million people, the Lagos State Health Ministry said on Thursday. Ebola has killed 660 people across Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone since an outbreak in February, straining their flimsy healthcare systems despite international help. A spokesman for WHO in Geneva confirmed Nigeria had "one suspect case" and said samples had been sent to a WHO lab for testing. "The Nigerian Ministry of Health has implemented control measures in the meantime," he said. If confirmed, the case would be the first on record of one of the world's deadliest diseases in Nigeria, Africa's biggest economy and, with 170 million people, its most populous country.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140724172408-sr4tn/?source=fiOtherNews2**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140724172408-sr4tn/?source=fiOtherNews2)

**CAR**

**Malaria is the leading killer in CAR**

As a recent ceasefire deal boosts prospects for peace in the CAR, MSF warned that malaria was the leading killer in the country. An MSF report found that malaria cases in Bossangoa, about 300 km north of Bangui, had more than tripled to 6,507 in May with almost two-thirds of those children under the age of five.

**Reuters -** [**http://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFKBN0FU0HG20140725**](http://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFKBN0FU0HG20140725)

**Nigeria**

**Bomb hidden in fridge kills 1, wounds 8 in bus park in Kano**

A bomb hidden in a refrigerator killed one and wounded eight at a crowded bus park in northern Nigeria's biggest city of Kano on Thursday, police said. A local trader who witnessed the blast said emergency services had arrived to rescue the wounded from the New Road bus park in Sabon Gari, an area of the mostly Muslim northern city with a high population of Christian southerners. There was no immediate claim of responsibility, but Boko Haram has repeatedly targeted Kano, historically a medieval Islamic caliphate and a hub for trade across the Sahara.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/24/us-nigeria-violence-idUSKBN0FT24120140724**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/24/us-nigeria-violence-idUSKBN0FT24120140724)

**Mali**

**Government, rebels ink accord on ending hostilities**

The Malian government and six rebel groups signed an accord on an end to hostilities as part of ongoing peace talks that opened in Algiers last week. A ceasefire has been in force with the mainly Tuareg and Arab rebel groups since a last eruption of fighting in May. The two sides also signed a roadmap aimed at "putting in place a framework for the peace talks to allow the emergency of comprehensive negotiated settlement." The talks, which opened on 17 July, are to resume next month aimed at reaching an agreement by the autumn on power-sharing short of secession. While separatist demands have officially been dropped by the rebel Tuareg groups attending the talks, they are demanding greater autonomy or a special status for northern Mali, known by the Tuareg as Azawad.

**AFP -** [**http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/World/2014/Jul-24/265029-mali-government-rebels-ink-accord-on-ending-hostilities.ashx**](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/World/2014/Jul-24/265029-mali-government-rebels-ink-accord-on-ending-hostilities.ashx)

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