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GENERAL

**Across Regions**

**Natural disaster costs down so far in 2014 - Munich Re**

Floods, storms and other natural disasters claimed more than 2,700 lives and caused around $42 billion in damage worldwide in the first half of 2014, but this was well below the first half of last year and a 10-year average, reinsurer Munich Re said on Wednesday. The world's biggest reinsurer said landslides and flash floods in Afghanistan were the deadliest disasters, claiming more than 650 lives, while snow storms in Japan were the costliest, with insured losses of more than $2.5 billion. Storm "Ela", which hit parts of western Europe in early June, is expected to cost insurers about 1.8 billion euros ($2.5 billion), Munich Re said. The number of deaths worldwide fell to a fraction of the 53,000 seen on average over the last 10 years and the 9,100 recorded in the first half of 2013.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140709105613-gxmvk/?source=fiOtherNews3**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140709105613-gxmvk/?source=fiOtherNews3)

**De Mistura succeeds Brahimi as UN Syria mediator**

Veteran United Nations official Staffan de Mistura, a former UN special envoy to Afghanistan and Iraq, will replace Lakhdar Brahimi as the international mediator seeking an end to Syria's civil war. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told reporters later on Wednesday that consultations were still continuing on the appointment and he hoped to make an announcement "very soon." Algerian diplomat Brahimi stepped down on May 31, frustrated by global deadlock over how to end the three year civil war in Syria. He had long threatened to quit, just as his predecessor - former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan - did in 2012.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/09/us-syria-crisis-mediator-idUSKBN0FE1RR20140709**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/09/us-syria-crisis-mediator-idUSKBN0FE1RR20140709)

**Rain batters Japan as storm makes landfall, three dead**

Heavy rain battered a wide swathe of Japan on Thursday, sending rivers over their banks and setting off a landslide as a weakened but still dangerous storm made landfall and headed east, leaving three people dead.

Neoguri, which first threatened Japan as a super typhoon this week, had weakened to a tropical storm by the time it ploughed ashore on the westernmost main island of Kyushu. But it was still packing wind gusts of up to 126 kph (78 mph). Heavy rains prompted the cancellation of hundreds of flights and trains and closed schools. The storm also fed into a stalled seasonal rain front, threatening flooding in distant regions. A landslide sent mud and rock tumbling down a mountainside in the town of Nagiso in central Japan late on Wednesday, killing a 12-year-old boy and bringing to three the death toll from the storm.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140710030040-yadpi/?source=search**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140710030040-yadpi/?source=search)

**Russia, France and Germany back new Ukraine ceasefire – Kremlin**

The leaders of Russia, Germany and France agreed on the need of a new ceasefire in eastern Ukraine during a telephone call on Thursday and called for new talks on resolving the crisis, the Kremlin said. "The three heads of state supported a swift renewal of the ceasefire and a meeting of the contact group (on resolving the crisis)," the Kremlin press services said after Russian President Vladimir Putin, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Francois Hollande spoke.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/10/ukraine-crisis-talks-idUSL6N0PL3C920140710**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/10/ukraine-crisis-talks-idUSL6N0PL3C920140710)

**Algeria seeks meeting on Mali crisis next week**

Algeria has proposed a regional meeting next week to tackle conflict in Mali after talks with Burkina Faso's leader, who has been mediating in the troubled west African state. "We offer to launch the initial phase of an inclusive inter-Malian dialogue on July 16 in Algiers, in the presence of ministers from countries in the region," Algerian Foreign Minister Ramtane Lamamra said late Wednesday in Ouagadoudou. "Our role is... to enable Malians themselves to speak directly to each other and envisage the most appropriate solutions to help them," Lamamra said after meeting Burkina Faso's President Blaise Compaore. Algeria, experienced in fighting armed extremism, has become increasingly involved in diplomatic efforts to bring peace to neighboring Mali.

The north African nation shares a long border with the sub-Saharan state, which has been troubled by Islamist insurgency and uprisings by the traditionally nomad Tuaregs of the desert.

**AFP -** [**http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/138298-algeria-seeks-meeting-on-mali-crisis-next-week**](http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/138298-algeria-seeks-meeting-on-mali-crisis-next-week)

CEE/CIS

**Ukraine**

**EU agrees to add 11 names to sanctions list**

The EU agreed to add 11 new names on Wednesday to the list of persons targeted with asset freezes and travel bans over the Ukraine crisis and the sanctions are likely to take effect on Saturday, an EU diplomat said. "The list consists mainly of Ukrainian separatists; there may be one or two Russians there as well," the diplomat said after a meeting of EU ambassadors that addressed the issue. The names will be published in the official journal of the EU in the coming days.

**Reuters -** [**http://in.reuters.com/article/2014/07/09/eu-ukraine-sanctions-idINKBN0FE2BT20140709**](http://in.reuters.com/article/2014/07/09/eu-ukraine-sanctions-idINKBN0FE2BT20140709)

**Three Ukrainian soldiers killed in further clashes in the east**

Three Ukrainian soldiers have been killed and 27 wounded in clashes with pro-Russian separatist rebels in the east of the country, the military said on Thursday. Government forces have recently gained the upper hand in the three-month conflict against separatists in the Russian-speaking eastern regions in which more than 200 government troops have been killed as well as hundreds of civilians and rebel fighters. But though government forces pushed the rebels out of a stronghold in Slaviansk at the weekend, the heavily armed separatists have dug in in Donetsk, a city of 900,000 people, and remain active in and around Luhansk on the Russian border.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140710072552-1ggn9/?source=jtTheWire**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140710072552-1ggn9/?source=jtTheWire)

**Ukrainian armoured vehicles mass South of Donetsk**

Ukrainian forces have massed tanks and armored vehicles around 20 km south of the rebel-held city of Donetsk, AFP journalists said Thursday. A column of vehicles stretching a kilometer and a half (one mile) arrived on Wednesday without facing any resistance, Ukrainian soldiers said, as part of a campaign to surround Donetsk and the neighboring city of Lugansk, also controlled by pro-Russian separatists.

**AFP -** [**http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/138265-ukrainian-armoured-vehicles-mass-south-of-donetsk**](http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/138265-ukrainian-armoured-vehicles-mass-south-of-donetsk)

**Landmine fears hamper grain harvest in Ukraine's east**

A fear of landmines is hampering grain harvesting in parts of Ukraine's east where separatists are fighting government forces, agricultural ministry officials said. Ukraine, one of the world's key exporters of wheat, barley and maize, is likely to harvest around 60 million tonnes of grain this year, analysts and traders say. But agriculture minister Ihor Shvaika said the harvest, which began in late June, would be complicated in the eastern regions because of farmers' fears of mines planted in fields.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140710104832-51g80**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140710104832-51g80)

EAP

**China**

**China seeking foreign counterterror experts**

China is recruiting foreign experts in counterterrorism to assist the training of anti-terror personnel, state-run media reported Thursday, following a spate of deadly attacks which authorities blame on Islamist-inspired separatists. The People's Public Security University of China will offer visiting professorships to top specialists in the field from countries including the US, Israel, Pakistan and Australia, the government-run China Daily said. "The US and Israel have accumulated rich practical experience in fighting terrorism," Mei Jianming, director of the university's Research Center for Counterterrorism, told the paper.

**AFP -** [**http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/138234-report-china-seeking-foreign-counterterror-experts**](http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/138234-report-china-seeking-foreign-counterterror-experts)

**China says more than half of foreign aid given to Africa**

More than half of China's foreign aid of over $14 billion between 2010 and 2012 was directed to Africa, the government said on Thursday, underscoring Beijing's interest in the resource-rich continent to fuel its economy. Some Chinese projects have attracted attention for China's support of governments with poor human rights records and lack of transparency, such as Zimbabwe, Sudan and Angola. It provided no breakdown of aid recipients or any yearly figures. In 2011, China put its total foreign aid over the past six decades at 256.29 billion yuan ($41.32 billion). While the number pales in comparison with the United States' foreign aid, which is about $46 billion for fiscal 2015, China says its aid has no political strings attached, unlike many Western countries.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140710095428-fhobz**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140710095428-fhobz)

**DPR Korea**

**N. Korea's Kim issues warning at live rocket firing drill**

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has warned the reclusive communist country could become "a bargaining chip for the strong" in a statement at a tactical rocket firing drill, official news agency KCNA reported early Thursday. Kim's statement and the report of the drill came a day after North Korea fired what appeared to be two short-range missiles into the sea in the latest of a series of launches interspersed with spurned peace overtures to South Korea. It came a week after the president of China, the North's only ally, visited the South in a trip seen as a pointed snub to Pyongyang, and as exposing a slow but steady shift in Cold War alliances in East Asia.

**AFP -** [**http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/138227-n-korea-s-kim-issues-warning-at-live-rocket-firing-drill**](http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/138227-n-korea-s-kim-issues-warning-at-live-rocket-firing-drill)

**Indonesia**

**Likely new Indonesian leader warns against tampering with vote**

The man most likely elected Indonesia's new president warned on Thursday against tampering with ballots ahead of a final count of votes later this month. Joko "Jokowi" Widodo, named the winner of Wednesday's disputed election by several non-partisan pollsters who have been accurate in the past, also displayed fledgling presidential credentials at a news conference, condemning Israel's Gaza offensive. Both Jokowi and rival candidate, former general Prabowo Subianto, claimed victory in the election, the closest ever such contest in the world's third biggest democracy. The Elections Commission is to announce the official result around July 22.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/10/us-indonesia-election-idUSKBN0FF0A520140710**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/10/us-indonesia-election-idUSKBN0FF0A520140710)

**Myanmar**

**Leader warns media over religious violence**

Myanmar's reformist president has warned that newly-won media freedoms could be curtailed if stability is threatened by religious bloodshed shaking the former military-ruled country. Thein Sein, whose administration has been accused of failing to stem two years of sporadic anti-Muslim violence, vowed "zero tolerance" against the perpetrators of fighting in the second largest city Mandalay that left two dead last week. But he also fired a shot across the bows of the media, after inflammatory material posted online was blamed for stoking the unrest.

**AFP -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/myanmar-leader-warns-media-over-religious-violence-095731036.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/myanmar-leader-warns-media-over-religious-violence-095731036.html)

**Myanmar journalists jailed for 10 years over 'Chemical Weapon' claims**

A Myanmar court on Thursday sentenced five journalists to a decade in prison with hard labor over a newspaper report alleging that a military facility was producing chemical weapons, their lawyer said. The reporters for the Unity Weekly News were jailed by a court in central Magway region under the former junta-run country's official secrets act, amid concerns that Myanmar is backsliding on press freedoms. "All five journalists were sentenced to 10 years imprisonment," said lawyer Wah Win Maung, who is acting on behalf of four of the men. "This verdict is legally wrong. We will appeal," he told AFP.

**AFP -** [**http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/138264-myanmar-journalists-jailed-for-10-years-over-chemical-weapon-claims**](http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/138264-myanmar-journalists-jailed-for-10-years-over-chemical-weapon-claims)

ESA

**Ethiopia**

**Dissident paraded on state TV after arrest, extradition**

An Ethiopian opposition leader sentenced to death in absentia has been paraded on state television proclaiming "peace" with Addis Ababa after his controversial extradition from Yemen. Andargachew Tsige, a leader of the outlawed Ginbot 7 group who also holds British citizenship, was convicted in absentia in 2009 and 2012 for terrorism. But Andargachew claimed to be no longer at war with the government and vowed to "calm down." Andargachew was arrested on 23 June in Yemen's Sanaa airport en route to Eritrea, and transferred to Addis Ababa the same day, according to Ethiopia's state broadcaster, ETV.

**AFP -** [**http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/140709/ethiopia-dissident-paraded-state-tv-after-arrest-extradition**](http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/140709/ethiopia-dissident-paraded-state-tv-after-arrest-extradition)

**Critical conditions for South Sudanese refugees in Gambella**

South Sudanese refugees fleeing widespread violence in their homeland continue to arrive in Gambella, Ethiopia, after walking for days seeking safe shelter and food. By the end of June 2014, between 600 to 800 refugees were arriving at Burubiey transit camp each day, an increase from the 100 to 300 daily arrivals in previous weeks. Currently more than 140,000 South Sudanese refugees have fled to Gambella since the outbreak of the current conflict in South Sudan in December 2013.

**MSF -** [**http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/article/ethiopia-critical-conditions-south-sudanese-refugees-gambella**](http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/article/ethiopia-critical-conditions-south-sudanese-refugees-gambella)

**Kenya**

**'Drop Kenyatta Case' defense again tells ICC**

Lawyers representing Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta have renewed calls for the International Criminal Court to drop charges of crimes against humanity against him. "We have reached a stage where there is no evidence" to support the charges, Kenyatta's lawyer Steven Kay told judges in The Hague on Wednesday. "It is my submission at this stage to this court to dispose of this matter," Kay told the ICC, where Kenyatta faces five counts for his role in deadly 2007-08 post-election violence that rocked the east African country. The court convened on Wednesday for a so-called status conference to check on the progress of Kenyatta's much-delayed trial, now scheduled to start on October 7.

**AFP -** [**http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/138206-drop-kenyatta-case-defense-again-tells-icc**](http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/138206-drop-kenyatta-case-defense-again-tells-icc)

**Mozambique**

**Mozambique presidential candidate pleads for peace**

Mozambique's ruling party presidential candidate Felipe Nyusi on Wednesday made a plea for peace with the opposition Renamo party, which has launched a new insurgency in the southern African nation. Nyusi, 55, appearing alongside President Armando Guebuza at a rally in the village of Buzi in the conflict-hit central Sofala province, pledged "continuity" with the policies of the outgoing president. "Peace is me. Peace is... not waiting in the bush for people to pass in order to kill them so that I can be president," Nyusi said."Peace is not using weapons to resolve the differences between people." Guebuza, 75, who is set to step down in October after serving the two terms allowed by the constitution, has introduced the previously little-known Nyusi at public rallies as part of a country-wide farewell tour.

**AFP-** [**http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/138210-mozambique-presidential-candidate-pleads-for-peace**](http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/138210-mozambique-presidential-candidate-pleads-for-peace)

**South Sudan**

**Sudan, South in 'life-saving' deal for millions of hungry**

Life-saving aid could move from Sudan to its former enemy South Sudan under a deal to feed some of the millions battling hunger in the war-torn South, a diplomat said Wednesday. The two countries signed on Tuesday evening a memorandum of understanding for WFP to deliver food to northern South Sudan, said Kau Nak, the South's charge d'affaires in Khartoum. "It's a kind of a life-saving mission," he told AFP on the third anniversary of the South's separation from Sudan. Aid agencies have warned that without massive funding, famine zones will be declared within weeks.

**AFP -** [**http://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/sudan-south-life-saving-deal-millions-hungry**](http://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/sudan-south-life-saving-deal-millions-hungry)

**Sudan Tribune -** [**http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article51626**](http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article51626)

**President urges rebel leader to resume talks**

South Sudan President Salva Kiir on Wednesday called on rebels to resume peace talks as the country marked its third birthday with celebrations overshadowed by fighting that has killed thousands and brought it to the verge of famine. In a swift response, rebel leader Riek Machar told Reuters in Ethiopia that he was ready to resume dialogue but warned his troops would target South Sudan's oil installations if fighting resumed and the government used oil revenues to buy arms. "Put down your guns and come home," Kiir said in Juba during a ceremony marking the anniversary of independence. "I still renew my call upon him (Machar) to accept the logic of peaceful resolution to the conflict so that we resolve this issue." "On our side, we are ready to continue negotiations," Machar told Reuters in Addis Ababa, adding that he has also called for the talks to be resumed soon.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140709162817-uyfib/?source=jtOtherNews1**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140709162817-uyfib/?source=jtOtherNews1)

**Aid groups say threats stalling relief efforts – UNICEF mention**

Relief workers in war-torn South Sudan say they have been beaten, arrested and on one occasion forced to bury a dead soldier, hampering efforts to deliver aid to a population on the brink of famine. Government and rebel forces who have been fighting for seven months have targeted WFP staff and MSF facilities, according to WFP spokeswoman Amanda Lawrence-Brown and MSF Mission Head Raphael Gorgeu. The threats limited access to conflict areas and led to the theft of food rations for more than a quarter of a million people, they said. Four million South Sudanese are in urgent need of humanitarian aid, according to the UN. In addition, at least 235,000 children under the age of five will require treatment for severe acute malnutrition this year, twice as many as last year, according to the **UNICEF** and WFP.

**Bloomberg-** [**http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-07-09/south-sudan-aid-groups-say-threats-stalling-race-against-famine.html**](http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-07-09/south-sudan-aid-groups-say-threats-stalling-race-against-famine.html)

LAC

**Across LAC  
More than 300 Honduran children repatriated from Mexico**

Mexican authorities have repatriated to Honduras 309 underage undocumented migrants so far this week, the Casa Alianza humanitarian organization said. On Wednesday, 242 Honduran migrants arrived in the northern city of San Pedro Sula, 139 of them children, on seven buses from the Mexican municipality of Tapachula, Casa Alianza spokesman Carlos Flores said. Another 170 undocumented Honduran children were deported on Monday by Mexican authorities, Flores said. In addition, he called on parents not to allow their children to travel to the US alone because of the serious danger to which that exposes them. Mexico has deported more than 6,000 Honduran children so far this year, an increase of 24.5% compared to the same period in 2013, Flores said.

**EFE -** [**http://www.efe.com/efe/noticias/english/world/more-than-300-honduran-children-repatriated-from-mexico/4/2060/2365945**](http://www.efe.com/efe/noticias/english/world/more-than-300-honduran-children-repatriated-from-mexico/4/2060/2365945)

**Pressure builds on US to treat young immigrants as refugees**

Pressure continues to mount on the federal government to treat as refugees the thousands of children traveling alone from Central America and crossing the border into the US Officials from the UNHCR said this week that they hoped the US and Mexico will consider the children refugees displaced by armed conflict, meaning they would not automatically be sent back to their home countries but receive international protection. Many of the 50,000 young people who have arrived unaccompanied since last fall fled violence in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. Many experts say that while tens of thousands of children are fleeing Central America because of gang violence and criminal activity, most cannot prove they qualify for asylum after entering the US.

**AP -** [**http://www.stltoday.com/news/national/pressure-builds-on-u-s-to-treat-young-immigrants-as/article\_a8fc8d4b-1108-571d-8b4e-fcd527399e1d.html**](http://www.stltoday.com/news/national/pressure-builds-on-u-s-to-treat-young-immigrants-as/article_a8fc8d4b-1108-571d-8b4e-fcd527399e1d.html)

**Obama to Central American parents: don't send kids over border**

US President Barack Obama on Wednesday warned parents in Central America not to send their children alone on a perilous journey through Mexico to illegally cross the US border. Obama also called on Congress to stop playing politics and to work with him to pass his request for $3.7 billion in emergency funding to deal with the building immigration crisis. "Parents need to know this is an incredibly dangerous situation, and it is unlikely that their children will be able to stay," Obama said, referring to a flow of 57,000 unaccompanied minors from Central America who have crossed the southwestern US frontier since October.

**AFP -** [**http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/10958185/Barack-Obama-tells-Central-American-parents-dont-send-your-kids-over-the-border.html**](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/10958185/Barack-Obama-tells-Central-American-parents-dont-send-your-kids-over-the-border.html)

**33 Cuban rafters rescued in Honduras**

A group of 33 Cubans refugees were rescued in Honduras, after a two-week voyage on a rickety raft, local media reported on Wednesday. The migrants arrived Tuesday in the Baja Mar region of Cortes state, some 300km north of the capital city Tegucigalpa. The Cubans, who were suffering from dehydration, were discovered adrift by a Honduran fishermen, who provided them with food and coconut water.

**AFP -** [**http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/140709/33-cuban-rafters-rescued-honduras**](http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/140709/33-cuban-rafters-rescued-honduras)

MENA

**Across MENA  
Death toll hits 50 as Israel pounds Gaza**

Seventeen women and children were among 29 Palestinians killed in an Israeli military operation in Gaza Wednesday, hiking the overall toll to 50 in two days, the emergency services said. Nearly 500 people have been wounded. Among the dead were at least three militants as well as 10 children and seven women. It was not immediately clear whether the other fatalities were civilians or militants. In at least five of the strikes, the victims were all women and children, emergency services spokesman Ashraf al-Qudra said.

**AFP -** [**http://www.yourmiddleeast.com/news/death-toll-hits-50-as-israel-pounds-gaza\_25015**](http://www.yourmiddleeast.com/news/death-toll-hits-50-as-israel-pounds-gaza_25015)

**Israel mobilizes 20,000 troops for possible Gaza invasion**

Israel has mobilized 20,000 soldiers for a possible ground invasion of the Gaza Strip, as militants there extended their rocket barrage and the Palestinian death toll climbed to at least 75. “Where is this leading, is it leading to a ground force incursion? I can’t confirm that,” Israel army spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Peter Lerner said today in a phone briefing. “I can confirm we are making all the necessary preparations to be ready for that.” The Israeli government has authorized the call-up of as many as 40,000 troops as it seeks to stop the rocket fire from the Hamas-controlled Palestinian coastal enclave.

**Bloomberg-** [**http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-07-10/israel-pm-says-gaza-offensive-to-intensify-as-rockets-fly.html**](http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-07-10/israel-pm-says-gaza-offensive-to-intensify-as-rockets-fly.html)

**Syrian refugees in Iraq move to a new camp in Kurdistan**

Amid the growing displacement of Iraqis fleeing war in their homeland, UNHCR is continuing to help thousands of Syrian refugees who had fled to Iraq to escape their own conflict. The UN refugee agency has opened a new long-term refugee camp in Iraq’s northern Kurdistan region for some of the 225,000 Syrians who registered as refugees in Iraq over the past two years.

**UNHCR -** [**http://www.unhcr.org/53bd331a6.html**](http://www.unhcr.org/53bd331a6.html)

**Egypt**

**Egyptian soldier killed in Sinai bombing**

An Egyptian soldier was killed Wednesday when a roadside bomb targeted an armored vehicle in the restive Sinai Peninsula, medical and security officials said. Four soldiers were also wounded in the attack near the north Sinai capital of El-Arish, the officials said. Security forces are struggling to quell an Islamist insurgency that has killed scores of soldiers and policemen in the peninsula bordering Israel and the Palestinian Gaza Strip.

**AFP -** [**http://www.timesofisrael.com/egyptian-soldier-killed-in-sinai-bombing/**](http://www.timesofisrael.com/egyptian-soldier-killed-in-sinai-bombing/)

**Egypt steps back as Israel pounds Gaza militants**

Having crushed the Muslim Brotherhood, Cairo's new government has taken a back seat as Israel pounds Hamas, the Egyptian movement's Islamist allies across the border in Gaza, analysts said. Egypt, which has a peace treaty with Israel, brokered a 2012 truce between it and Hamas that favored the militants, the Palestinian branch of now ousted President Mohammad Morsi's Brotherhood. With the Brotherhood now quashed, the new government in Cairo has taken a passive approach to the latest conflict, denying Hamas a truce that could see it emerge again as a winner. Morsi himself is being tried on charges of having colluded with Hamas to plot attacks inside Egypt, which has blacklisted both the Brotherhood and Hamas.

**AFP -** [**http://dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/Jul-10/263396-egypt-steps-back-as-israel-pounds-gaza-militants.ashx#ixzz373xxLCsl**](http://dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/Jul-10/263396-egypt-steps-back-as-israel-pounds-gaza-militants.ashx#ixzz373xxLCsl)

**Iraq**

**Christians' flee violence, fear end of long history**

The violence in Iraq is hastening the end of nearly 2,000 years of Christianity there as the few remaining faithful flee Islamic State militants, archbishops from Baghdad, Mosul and Kirkuk said on Wednesday. War and sectarian conflict have shrunk Iraq's Christian population to about 400,000 from 1.5 million before the US-led invasion in 2003, and now even those who stayed are leaving for Turkey, Lebanon and western Europe, the prelates said on a visit to Brussels seeking EU help to protect their flocks. "The next days will be very bad. If the situation does not change, Christians will be left with just a symbolic presence in Iraq," said one of the archbishops.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140709141131-0anvx/?source=jtOtherNews2**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140709141131-0anvx/?source=jtOtherNews2)

**Lebanon**

**Challenges highlight urgent need to fill presidential vacuum – UN envoy**

The UN envoy for Lebanon stressed the urgent need for the country’s leaders to agree on the election of a new president as soon as possible in light of the situation on the ground, which is marked by renewed terrorist threats and the growing refugee population resulting from the conflict in neighbouring Syria. There has been a presidential vacuum in Lebanon after the term of Michel Sleiman came to an end on 25 May. UN officials and the Security Council have repeatedly urged the Lebanese Parliament to elect a new leader without delay.

**UN News Centre -** [**http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=48232#.U74IjWjD\_ct**](http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=48232#.U74IjWjD_ct)

**Islamist gathering meets over Tripoli protests**

The Internal Security Forces announced that Tripoli’s roads were closed again Thursday, after protests the day before, which have prompted a meeting of the National Islamic Gathering. Tripoli residents blocked several roads in north Lebanon Wednesday after news emerged that the health of a militia leader in prison had deteriorated. Ziad Allouki, a former militia commander in the Tripoli neighborhood of Bab al-Tabbaneh, was taken from Roumieh prison to Hayat Hospital overnight Wednesday after suffering fatigue. The protesters are demanding the release of all militia leaders who had turned themselves in to the Lebanese Army with promises they would be released before the holy month of Ramadan.

**The Daily Star-** [**http://dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2014/Jul-10/263384-tripoli-protests-continue-islamist-gathering-to-meet.ashx#ixzz373z4tUw2**](http://dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2014/Jul-10/263384-tripoli-protests-continue-islamist-gathering-to-meet.ashx#ixzz373z4tUw2)

**Syria**

**Air raids kill 20 Islamic State jihadists, says monitor**

Twenty members of the Islamic State were killed in Syrian air force raids on Wednesday against the jihadists' bastion in Raqa, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said. The report comes after Syrian rebels killed at least 14 people overnight, among them women, in the village of Khatab in central province of Hama, state media and the Observatory said. "At least 20 members of IS were killed and others were injured in air strikes... targeting an IS training base in Raqa," said the Observatory. The strikes also destroyed 14 of IS' military vehicles, the Observatory added.

**AFP -** [**http://www.straitstimes.com/news/world/middle-east/story/syria-air-raids-kill-20-islamic-state-jihadists-says-monitor-20140709**](http://www.straitstimes.com/news/world/middle-east/story/syria-air-raids-kill-20-islamic-state-jihadists-says-monitor-20140709)

**De Mistura succeeds Brahimi as UN mediator**

Veteran UN official Staffan de Mistura, a former UN special envoy to Afghanistan and Iraq, will replace Lakhdar Brahimi as the international mediator seeking an end to Syria's civil war, diplomats said. UNSG Ban Ki-moon told reporters later on Wednesday that consultations were still continuing on the appointment and he hoped to make an announcement "very soon." The move comes amid worsening violence as Islamist militants seized swathes of Syria and Iraq and after Syrian President Bashar al-Assad was re-elected in a 3 June poll described by Ban as a blow to international efforts to end to the conflict.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/09/us-syria-crisis-mediator-idUSKBN0FE1RR20140709**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/09/us-syria-crisis-mediator-idUSKBN0FE1RR20140709)

**Government forces squeeze insurgents in Aleppo**

Syrian armed forces have taken strategic ground around Aleppo this week, residents and state media said on Wednesday, squeezing the main rebel supply line into the city after months of battlefield gains by Damascus. The government advance, after close to two years of stalemate, was bolstered by fighters from the Lebanese Shi'ite Muslim group Hezbollah, an ally of President Bashar al-Assad, according to sources close to Hezbollah. Syrian state news agency SANA said that the army had taken control of an industrial complex in northeast Aleppo on Sunday. Control of the complex means rebels are now hemmed in on three sides by government forces and can only resupply neighbourhoods in the city through a northern corridor.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140709153608-5x45z/?source=jtOtherNews2**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140709153608-5x45z/?source=jtOtherNews2)

**Syria war toll tops 170,000, one-third civilians: NGO**

The death toll in Syria´s three-year war has eclipsed 170,000 people, one-third of them civilians, a monitoring group said in a new toll released on Thursday. "Ever since the first casualty of the Syrian revolution was registered on March 18, 2011 in Daraa province, the deaths of 171,509 people have been documented," said the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. Among the dead were 56,495 civilians, including 9,092 children, according to the toll, which included casualties documented up to July 8 this year. Another 65,803 were regime troops and pro-regime militiamen, while 46,301 were rebels seeking President Bashar al-Assad´s ouster and members of the Islamic State (IS) jihadist group. The rebel toll includes 15,422 non-Syrians who travelled to the war-torn country to join the ranks of jihadists or local Islamist opposition groups.

**PKT -** [**http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-153397-Syria-war-toll-tops-170,000,-one-third-civilians:-NGO**](http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-153397-Syria-war-toll-tops-170,000,-one-third-civilians:-NGO)

**Sudan**

**Unknown fever hits South Darfur camp**

A sudden high fever has caused the death of three displaced in El Salam camp, near South Darfur’s capital of Nyala. The causes are unknown. Speaking to Radio Dabanga, camp sheikh Mahjoub Adam Tabaldiya reported that a baby girl and her mother died of the fever on Monday, a few hours after the mother had given birth. Another woman died last week. Tabaldiya said that the two hospitals at the camp daily receive more than 600 people suffering from the fever, including many children.

**Radiodabanga -** [**https://radiotamazuj.org/en/article/unknown-fever-hits-south-darfur-camp**](https://radiotamazuj.org/en/article/unknown-fever-hits-south-darfur-camp)

**Yemen**

**Refugee agency says more than 35,000 people displaced by fighting**

More than 35,000 people have been displaced in Yemen's Omran province, a local government refugee agency said on Wednesday, a day after Shi'ite Muslim tribal fighters overran the provincial capital following fighting that killed more than 200 people. In an urgent appeal sent to relief organisations operating in Yemen, the head of the Yemeni government refugee agency in Omran reported "mass flight of Yemenis from Omran and surrounding areas after the city's fall." "Based on the monitoring and follow-up that we have been doing, there are more than 35,000 people that have left for other areas in Omran or to the greater Sanaa area, Hajja and Mahaweet," Mutahhar Yahya Abu Sheeha wrote in his appeal. He said that most of these families were now staying in the open with no shelter and were in desperate need of humanitarian aid.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140709160042-octlk/?source=fiHeadlineStory**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140709160042-octlk/?source=fiHeadlineStory)

**Yemen govt curbs travel, recruitment in austerity drive**

Yemen's president has ordered a raft of austerity steps, including a review of state-owned companies' viability and curbs on foreign travel by government officials, to ease pressure on the impoverished state's crumbling public finances. Sanaa has struggled to pay public sector salaries and finance food and energy imports, which has led to power cuts and fuel shortages as a fight against al Qaeda militants and other rebel groups undermines the state budget. In a statement late on Wednesday, the government described President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi's belt-tightening package as urgent.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140710104801-4eli6**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140710104801-4eli6)

ROSA

**Across ROSA**

**Bangladesh wins sea border dispute with India**

A UN tribunal has awarded Bangladesh nearly four-fifths of an area sprawling over 25,000 sq km in the Bay of Bengal, ending a three-decade old dispute over a sea border with India, officials of both countries have said. The verdict, binding on both countries, opens the way for Bangladesh to explore for oil and gas in the Bay of Bengal, the site of important energy reserves. India also welcomed the judgment, reflecting new Prime Minister Narendra Modi's focus on building closer regional ties.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2014/07/bangladesh-wins-sea-border-dispute-with-india-20147881221238354.html**](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2014/07/bangladesh-wins-sea-border-dispute-with-india-20147881221238354.html)

**Afghanistan**

**Taliban kill six de-miners in western Afghanistan**

The Taliban shot and killed six people working for a demining company in western Afghanistan, police said on Thursday, a day after the UN said the number of civilian casualties in the country jumped by a quarter in the first half of 2014. "The Taliban killed six de-miners from the Halo Trust landmine clearance organisation while they were on an operation in Kohsan district of Herat. They abducted three people," said the spokesman for the provincial police chief.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140710092127-ep7rf/?source=search**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140710092127-ep7rf/?source=search)

**Pakistan**

**More than 800,000 flee anti-militant offensive**

More than 800,000 people have fled a major military offensive against the Taliban in a Pakistani tribal area, officials said Wednesday. Tens of thousands of families have left the North Waziristan tribal area for the   
nearby town of Bannu. Hundreds more have moved further afield to the towns of Lakki Marwat, Karak and Dera Ismail Khan since the attacks began in mid-June. So far 399 militants and 20 soldiers have been killed in the offensive, according to the military.

**AFP -** [**http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/more-than-800000-flee-pakistan-anti-militant-offensive/articleshow/38069493.cms**](http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/more-than-800000-flee-pakistan-anti-militant-offensive/articleshow/38069493.cms)

**Pakistan army seizes control of key city from Taliban**

The Pakistani military has seized control of 80 percent of Miranshah, the capital of the remote tribal region of North Waziristan, where the military launched an operation against Islamist militants last month, a general said on Wednesday. Previously, the city was largely under the control of the Taliban and militants used it as a base to prepare bombs and plan attacks, said General Zafarullah Khan, the top commander in rugged North Waziristan, which borders Afghanistan.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/10/us-pakistan-security-idUSKBN0FF0FQ20140710**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/10/us-pakistan-security-idUSKBN0FF0FQ20140710)

**Drone kills six in NW Pakistan, army seizes most of key city from Taliban**

Missiles from a US drone slammed into a mud house and killed six suspected militants in Pakistan's rugged northwest on Thursday, officials said, as the Pakistani military said it had seized control of 80 percent of a key city from the Taliban. Drone strikes in Pakistan resumed after a six-month hiatus, days before the military launched an air campaign on June 15 to drive Pakistani Taliban militants out of the remote border region of North Waziristan.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140710090356-xr49n/?source=search**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140710090356-xr49n/?source=search)

WCA

**CAR**

**UN condemns attack on civilians sheltering in church**

In what it termed a “brutal” attack, the UN peacekeeping operation in CAR condemned the killing of dozens of displaced people at the site of Saint Joseph Cathedral and the Bishop's residence in Bambari. As many as 6,000 people are believed to have been taking shelter at the church, according to media reports. On 7 July, rebels purportedly entered the site and killed at least 27 people, including women and children. Violence in Bambari has escalated at an alarming rate, according to UN officials, and there is increased targeting of civilians in the area, which is reportedly home to one of the country's Roman Catholic diocese.

**UN News Centre -** [**http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=48234#.U74IimjD\_ct**](http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=48234#.U74IimjD_ct)

**Perpetrators of atrocities must have nowhere to hide from justice – Amnesty**

The identities of some of those suspected of ordering or committing the atrocities that have been taking place in CAR have been made public today by Amnesty International, with a call for justice to be delivered to the people of the beleaguered nation. The report, [*Central African Republic: Time for Accountability*](http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AFR19/006/2014/en/04291c70-7427-4d9e-b1b0-4bc639e50bd3/afr190062014en.pdf), documents crimes under international law perpetrated across the CAR in 2013 and 2014, and calls for the investigation, prosecution and punishment of the perpetrators. It names members and allies of the anti-balaka and Séléka armed groups suspected of involvement in serious human rights abuses, outlining their roles and establishing their possible criminal responsibilities.

**Amnesty Report -** [**http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AFR19/006/2014/en/04291c70-7427-4d9e-b1b0-4bc639e50bd3/afr190062014en.pdf**](http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AFR19/006/2014/en/04291c70-7427-4d9e-b1b0-4bc639e50bd3/afr190062014en.pdf)

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