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GENERAL

**Across Regions**

**UN humanitarian chief calls for aid revamp**

The UN's top humanitarian official called Thursday for major changes in the delivery of relief, as funding falls short because of a growing number of conflicts and disasters. "Needs are growing so fast, the funding cannot keep pace," said Valerie Amos, the undersecretary general for humanitarian affairs. “We need to review how we do humanitarian response, who does it, who's involved, how we equip communities ... to come in, step in, support each other, so that the global international response becomes almost the last resort. We need to invest a lot more in prevention, in managing risk.”

**AP -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/un-humanitarian-chief-calls-aid-revamp-041157102.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/un-humanitarian-chief-calls-aid-revamp-041157102.html)

**UNDP urges sustained effort to improve flagging development**

Governments must act together to lift more people out of poverty and reduce inequality, UNDP said on Thursday, warning that global improvement in life expectancy, education and other measures of development is flagging. "Capabilities can be enhanced and choices protected at the national level, but national measures are more easily enacted when global commitments are in place and global support is available," the UNDP said in its annual Human Development Report.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140724063958-4qak6/?source=search**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140724063958-4qak6/?source=search)

**UNHCR calls for urgent European action to end refugee and migrant deaths at sea**

UNHCR agency called Thursday for urgent European action to stop rising refugee and migrant deaths at sea, after more than 260 people have died or been reported missing trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea to get to Europe in the last 10 days alone. Survivors reported disturbing incidents of mass drownings, suffocations and a suspected multiple stabbing, UNHCR said in a statement issued in Geneva. The grim tally brings to some 800 the total number of deaths at sea so far this year, compared to a total of 600 deaths in all of 2013, and 500 in 2012.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140724120344-ij3lo/?source=jtTheWire**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140724120344-ij3lo/?source=jtTheWire)

CEE/CIS

**Across CEE/CIS**

**Azerbaijani side undergoes heavy fire from Armenia**

The ceasefire on the Armenian-Azerbaijani contact line was broken 31 times in numerous positions last night, the Azerbaijani Defense Ministry said on July 24. The conflict between the two South Caucasus countries began in 1988 when Armenia made territorial claims against Azerbaijan. As a result of the ensuing war, in 1992 Armenian armed forces occupied 20 percent of Azerbaijan, including the Nagorno-Karabakh region and seven surrounding districts.

**Trend-** [**http://en.trend.az/news/karabakh/2297025.html**](http://en.trend.az/news/karabakh/2297025.html)

**Russia**

**Russian court finds opposition leaders guilty of inciting mass riots**

A Moscow court on Thursday found Russian opposition leaders Sergei Udaltsov and Leonid Razvozhayev guilty of inciting mass riots against President Vladimir Putin. Udaltsov, who has been under house arrest since February 2013, and Razvozhayev were accused of coordinating the protests which turned violent on May 6, 2012, the eve of Putin's inauguration for a third term as president. The state prosecution has called for eight-year jail terms for both of them and they were expected to be sentenced later on Thursday.

**Reuters -** [**http://af.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idAFKBN0FT10U20140724**](http://af.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idAFKBN0FT10U20140724)

**Ukraine**

**Two Ukrainian fighter jets shot down over rebel-held territory**

Kiev said two of its fighter jets were shot down over the rebel-held territory in eastern Ukraine on Wednesday, and the missiles that brought them down might have been fired from Russia. A spokesman for Ukraine's military operations said the planes were shot down near Savur Mogila, not far from where a Malaysian airliner was brought down last week, killing all 298 passengers on board. Ukraine's Security Council said the military jets were hit at the altitude of 5,200 metres by missiles that, according to preliminary information, were launched from Russia.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140723162724-0vivz/?source=search**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140723162724-0vivz/?source=search)

**Artillery fire echoes in east Ukraine's Donetsk**

Artillery fire echoed in the south and northwest of rebel-held Donetsk in eastern Ukraine overnight and one district near the city was without electricity as Ukrainian forces pressed a military campaign against pro-Russian separatists. The rebels ordered the removal of all vehicles in a square near the train station, and local authorities said damage to dozens of electricity substations had left at least one district, called Petrovsky, without electricity.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140724075538-868e0/?source=jtTheWire**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140724075538-868e0/?source=jtTheWire)

**Ukraine rebel commander acknowledges fighters had BUK missile**

A powerful Ukrainian rebel leader has confirmed that pro-Russian separatists had an anti-aircraft missile of the type Washington says was used to shoot down Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 and it could have originated in Russia. In an interview with Reuters, Alexander Khodakovsky, commander of the Vostok Battalion, acknowledged for the first time since the airliner was brought down in eastern Ukraine on Thursday that the rebels did possess the BUK missile system and said it could have been sent back subsequently to remove proof of its presence.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/23/us-ukraine-crisis-commander-exclusive-idUSKBN0FS1V920140723**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/23/us-ukraine-crisis-commander-exclusive-idUSKBN0FS1V920140723)

EAP

**Across EAP**

**Child labour falls in Asia Pacific but numbers still high – ILO**

Asia Pacific has more child labourers than any other region in the world, despite recording the largest drop in child labour in the past four years, ILO said in a report on Monday. There were 78 million child labourers in the world’s most populous region in 2012, down from 114 million in 2008, the ILO said. Asia Pacific also has the largest number of children engaged in hazardous work – 33.9 million. This is work that directly endangers a child’s health, safety and moral development.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20130923114236-cw7bo/**](http://www.trust.org/item/20130923114236-cw7bo/)

**Philippines**

**Philippine province proves mass storm deaths can be avoided**

Nearly 100 people were killed in the Philippines last week when Typhoon Rammasun roared through, raising doubts about efforts to end the heavy tolls from storms that are only expected to get more intense as the global climate changes. But in Albay province, which bore the brunt of the strongest storm in the new typhoon season, no one was killed. Joey Salceda, the three-term governor of Albay told Reuters that he uses relief supplies as a tool, offering residents of low-lying areas emergency rice packs but only if they moved into shelters.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140723205426-d7mxy/?source=leadCarousel**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140723205426-d7mxy/?source=leadCarousel)

ESA

**Somalia**

**Islamists gun down Somali protest singer-turned-lawmaker**

A veteran Somali protest singer who had become a member of parliament was shot dead in central Mogadishu on Wednesday by al-Shabaab who blocked her car and sprayed it with bullets. Saado Ali Warsame was one of fewer than 30 women lawmakers in the 275-seat parliament, MPs said. Believed to be in her 70s, she was renowned for songs that landed her in jail when she challenged the former dictator Siad Barre before he was toppled in 1991 and Somalia plunged into conflict.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140723145726-ad6cc/?source=jtOtherNews3**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140723145726-ad6cc/?source=jtOtherNews3)

**South Sudan**

**Danish diplomat to head UNIMSS**

UN SG Ban Ki-moon on Wednesday named Danish diplomat Ellen Margrethe Loj as his new special envoy to South Sudan and head of the UN peacekeeping mission. Loj replaces Hilde Johnson of Norway, who stood down this month after three years in the job and amid renewed violence sparked by a power struggle between President Salva Kiir and his sacked deputy Riek Machar. Ban said Loj "brings to the position a wealth of experience in peacekeeping and international affairs, having served as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the UN Mission in Liberia from 2008 to 2012." She has also been Denmark's ambassador to the Czech Republic, the UN and Israel.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/23/us-southsudan-unrest-un-idUSKBN0FS1UV20140723**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/23/us-southsudan-unrest-un-idUSKBN0FS1UV20140723)

**South Sudan warring sides to resume talks**

South Sudan's warring leaders will resume peace talks by the end of the month, mediators said Thursday, as warnings grow of famine within weeks if fighting continues. Peace talks between President Salva Kiir and his former deputy Riek Machar stalled last month with each side blaming the other for the failure. Mediators from the East African IGAD bloc said the rivals had both "reiterated their commitment to the negotiation process," adding that talks were "tentatively scheduled to commence on July 30."

**AFP -** [**http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/140317-south-sudan-warring-sides-to-resume-talks**](http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/140317-south-sudan-warring-sides-to-resume-talks)

LAC

**Bolivia**

**Bolivia's new law allowing child labour at 10 breaches international conventions – UNICEF**

A new law in Bolivia lowering the legal working age from 14 to 10 years old could drive poverty and school drop-out rates and breaches international conventions on child labour, says UNICEF. The law, which came into effect earlier this month, allows 10-year-olds to work as long as they attend school, are under parental supervision and are self-employed.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140724064729-bx215**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140724064729-bx215)

**Venezuela**

**Trial starts for Venezuela opposition leader Lopez**

Jailed opposition leader Leopoldo Lopez went on trial in Venezuela on Wednesday, accused of masterminding anti-government protests that turned violent and left 43 people dead. Days after the demonstrations began in mid-February, Lopez turned himself in to authorities and has been in a military jail since, but protests continued for about three months. A Caracas court heard accusations against him of inciting crime and being the intellectual author of damages and arson.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140724020545-95w85/?source=search**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140724020545-95w85/?source=search)

MENA

**Iraq**

**Attack on bus in Iraq kills 51 prisoners, 9 policemen**

A shooting and bombing attack on a bus in Iraq killed 51 prisoners and nine policemen on Thursday, Ministry of Justice and medical sources said. The bus was transporting prisoners from a military base in the town of Taji to Baghdad when it was hit by roadside bombs, the sources said. Gunmen then opened fire.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140724070602-bwhhk/?source=search**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140724070602-bwhhk/?source=search)

**Libya**

**Libya power handover agreed as airport battle rages on**

The General National Congress said Wednesday it will hand over legislative power to a newly elected parliament on 4 August. But hopes that the announcement would signal an end to fighting among rival factions were dashed as a more than week-long battle intensified for control of Tripoli airport. The handover is to take place within two weeks as specified in Monday's publication of the election results. Under a law passed by the GNC, the new assembly is to sit in the eastern city of Benghazi.

**AFP -** [**http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/140179-libya-power-handover-agreed-as-airport-battle-rages-on**](http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/140179-libya-power-handover-agreed-as-airport-battle-rages-on)

**Clashes in Benghazi kill at least nine**

At least nine people were killed and 19 wounded, mostly civilians, in Benghazi after heavy clashes between Islamist fighters and regular forces trying to oust the militants from the eastern Libyan city, medical sources said. The fighting late on Wednesday involving aircraft and troops followed a week of the fiercest clashes between militants, former rebel fighters and government forces in Benghazi and the capital Tripoli since the 2011 war against Muammar Gaddafi.

**Reuters -** [**http://af.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idAFKBN0FT0QW20140724**](http://af.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idAFKBN0FT0QW20140724)

**Turkey may evacuate embassy in Libya amid security fears: minister**

Turkey may evacuate its embassy in Tripoli, foreign minister Ahmet Davutoglu said on Thursday, a day after his ministry advised all Turkish citizens to leave the North African country due to the worsening security situation. "There has been serious conflict in Libya for the recent months... We have taken measures for the evacuation of a few hundred Turks in Libya," Davutoglu said in an interview with the Turkish broadcaster AHaber.

**Reuters -** [**http://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFKBN0FT0ZK20140724**](http://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFKBN0FT0ZK20140724)

**State of Palestine/Israel**

**Israeli minister: Gaza truce unlikely "in coming days"**

An Israeli cabinet minister said on Thursday that a pullout of troops from Gaza was not imminent and that Israel's army would continue hunting Palestinian cross-border tunnels under any humanitarian truce. Egyptians mediating between Israel and Gaza's dominant Hamas Islamists have said hostilities could be suspended, perhaps by the Muslim Eid al-Fitr festival early next week, to allow aid to reach the territory and to faciliate more permanent truce talks.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140724060524-kgyeo/?source=search**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140724060524-kgyeo/?source=search)

**UN rights council launches probe into Israel's Gaza offensive**

The UN Human Rights Council on Wednesday launched a probe into the Gaza offensive, backing calls by the Palestinians to hold Israel to account. The decision came after a marathon seven-hour emergency session of the top UN human rights body, where the Israelis and the Palestinians traded accusations over war crimes. The 46-member council backed a Palestinian-drafted resolution by 29 votes, with Arab and fellow Muslim countries joined by China and Russia, plus Latin American and African nations. The US was the sole member to vote against. The 17 abstentions were by the council's European members, plus Japan and South Korea.

**AFP -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/un-rights-council-launches-probe-israels-gaza-offensive-172848559.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/un-rights-council-launches-probe-israels-gaza-offensive-172848559.html)

**Hamas says Gaza blockade must end before ceasefire**

The leader of Hamas has said there can be no ceasefire to ease the conflict in Gaza without an end to Israel's blockade. Khaled Meshaal said Hamas would continue to reject a lasting ceasefire until its conditions were met. It follows further Israeli air strikes and ground operations in Gaza, as Hamas continues to fire rockets into Israel.

**BBC -** [**http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-28451691**](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-28451691)

**Oxfam warns food, water running perilously low in Gaza**

Thousands of Palestinians have fled their homes but have nowhere safe to shelter from Israeli airstrikes, Oxfam said on Wednesday, warning supplies of water and food are dangerously low. "The terrible toll on civilians is shocking. Hospitals and water supplies are under massive strain and the needs are increasing by the day. People are fleeing terrified," said Nishant Pandey, Oxfam's head in Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel.

**AFP -** [**http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/140261-oxfam-warns-food-water-running-perilously-low-in-gaza**](http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/140261-oxfam-warns-food-water-running-perilously-low-in-gaza)

**More than 50 Israeli reservists refuse to serve**

More than 50 former Israeli soldiers have refused to serve in the nation's reserve force, citing regret over their part in a military they said plays a central role in oppressing Palestinians, the Washington Post reported on Wednesday. "We found that troops who operate in the occupied territories aren't the only ones enforcing the mechanisms of control over Palestinian lives. In truth, the entire military is implicated. For that reason, we now refuse to participate in our reserve duties, and we support all those who resist being called to service," the soldiers wrote in a petition posted online and first reported by the newspaper.

**Reuters –** [**http://news.yahoo.com/more-50-israeli-reservists-refuse-serve-washington-post-171156407.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/more-50-israeli-reservists-refuse-serve-washington-post-171156407.html)

**Syria**

**Staffan de Mistura nominated as** **new UN envoy**

Damascus on Wednesday said it welcomes the nomination of Staffan de Mistura as new UN peace envoy, while demanding he show "objectivity and integrity" in pursuing his Syria mission. The Italian-Swedish diplomat was on July 10 named to replace hugely respected Algerian Lakhdar Brahimi, who resigned in May after two frustrating rounds of peace talks between the regime and rebels ended in failure.

**AFP -** [**http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/140175-syria-wants-objectivity-and-integrity-from-new-u-n-envoy**](http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/140175-syria-wants-objectivity-and-integrity-from-new-u-n-envoy)

SA

**Afghanistan**

**Two foreign aid workers killed in western Afghanistan**

Two Finnish aid workers with the International Assistance Mission, an international Christian organization were shot dead on Thursday in Herat, a regional official said. The attack comes at a sensitive time as Afghanistan audits votes from a disputed presidential election to pick a successor to the incumbent, Hamid Karzai. "The two women who were gunned down were working in the health sector for a foreign aid organisation in Herat," provincial governor Fazlullah Wahidi told Reuters.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140724094246-ox5vk/?source=jtOtherNews2**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140724094246-ox5vk/?source=jtOtherNews2)

**Motorbike bomb kills six civilians in north Afghanistan: officials**

A suicide bomber detonated an explosive-packed motorcycle in northern Afghanistan Thursday, killing six civilians and wounding more than 20 in a crowded market as shoppers bought supplies for the upcoming festival of Eid-ul-Fitr, officials said. The attack in Takhar province came as Afghanistan is conducting an audit of its presidential vote aimed at ending an impasse that has threatened to plunge the country into a crisis as foreign troops prepare to withdraw by the end of the year.

**AFP -** [**http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/Jul-24/264964-motorbike-bomb-kills-six-civilians-in-north-afghanistan-officials.ashx#ixzz38NNhyDj3**](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/Jul-24/264964-motorbike-bomb-kills-six-civilians-in-north-afghanistan-officials.ashx#ixzz38NNhyDj3)

**India**

**Country faces crisis over dwindling numbers of girls: UN Women**

The dwindling numbers of Indian girls, caused by the illegal abortion of millions of babies, has reached "emergency proportions", fuelling an increase in crimes such as kidnapping and trafficking, the UN warned. Despite laws that ban expectant parents from running tests to determine the gender of unborn children, female foeticide remains a common practice in parts of India, where a preference for sons runs deep. "It is tragically ironic that the one who creates life is herself denied the right to be born," said Lakshmi Puri, deputy executive director of UN Women, at the launch of a new study on sex ratios and gender-biased sex selection.

**Reuters -** [**http://in.reuters.com/article/2014/07/22/us-india-foeticide-idINKBN0FR13G20140722**](http://in.reuters.com/article/2014/07/22/us-india-foeticide-idINKBN0FR13G20140722)

**Children killed in rail accident**

A passenger train has crashed into a school bus in southern India, killing at least 11 children, with fears the death toll could rise further, officials say. A senior police officer said "11 students and the bus driver were killed", while a railway official said he feared as many as 25 children were dead after Accidents are common on India's railroad network, one of the world's largest with 20 million people riding daily on about 11,000 passenger trains. In 2012 a government report said almost 15,000 people were killed every year on the network, describing the deaths as an annual "massacre" due mainly to poor safety standards.

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/news/southasia/2014/07/children-killed-rail-accident-india-20147246014646310.html**](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/southasia/2014/07/children-killed-rail-accident-india-20147246014646310.html)

WCA

**CAR**

**CAR factions announce ceasefire**

Rival armed groups in the CAR have signed a ceasefire agreement aimed at ending over a year of religious conflict. The agreement was signed in Congo-Brazzaville between mainly Muslim Seleka rebels and the largely Christian anti-Balaka militia. As part of the deal, the Seleka dropped their demand for CAR's partition. Thousands of people have been killed and almost a quarter of the 4.6 million population forced from their homes. Both sides have been accused of war crimes such as torture and unlawful killing. The negotiations began in the Congolese capital of Brazzaville on Monday.

**BBC -** [**http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-28457599**](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-28457599)

**Mali**

**Air Algerie plane disappears from radar**

An Air Algerie flight carrying 116 people from Burkina Faso to Algeria's capital has disappeared from radar over northern Mali after heavy rains were reported, according to the owner and and government officials in France and Burkina Faso. Air navigation services lost track of the MD-83 about 50 minutes after takeoff from Ougadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso, at 1.55am GMT on Thursday, the official Algerian news agency APS said. Burkina Faso's transport minister said 50 French nationals were among those onboard, along with 24 Burkina Faso nationals, six Lebanese, five Canadians, four Algerians, two Luxemburg nationals, one Swiss, one Nigerian, one Cameroonian and one Malian.

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2014/07/air-algerie-plane-disappears-from-radar-201472493522369992.html**](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2014/07/air-algerie-plane-disappears-from-radar-201472493522369992.html)

**Nigeria**

**Bombs in Kaduna kill 82, ex-leader Buhari targeted**

At least 82 people were killed on Wednesday in two bombings in the northern Nigerian city of Kaduna targeting opposition leader and former president Muhammadu Buhari at a busy market and a moderate Muslim cleric about to lead a crowd in prayer. The attacks bore the hallmarks of Boko Haram. The deadlier blast targeted Buhari's convoy at the crowded Kawo market, his son told Reuters on the scene. A Red Cross official said at least 50 people were killed there. Buhari was the main opposition party contender against President Goodluck Jonathan in the 2011 election and remains a key figure in the opposition alliance.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/23/us-nigeria-violence-idUSKBN0FS19L20140723**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/23/us-nigeria-violence-idUSKBN0FS19L20140723)

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