**UNICEF OPSCEN Brief – Tuesday, 21 October 2014**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| [GENERAL](#GENERAL) | **Across Regions** | Violence kills a child every five minutes, most outside war zones |
| [CEE/CIS](#CEECIS) | **Tajikistan** | Militants held for plotting attacks |
|  | **Ukraine** | Widespread use of cluster munitions |
|  |  | UNHCR welcomes adoption of law to protect IDPs by conflict |
| [EAP](#EAP) | **China** | At least 22 people dead in attack on market in Xinjiang |
|  | **Philippines** | As volcano awakens, 'zero casualty' record faces test |
| [ESA](#ESA) | **South Sudan** | Country at ‘crossroads’ as it seeks to combat sexual violence |
|  | **Tanzania** | Warring South Sudan rivals meet in Tanzania |
| [LAC](#LAC) | **Mexico** | Federal police deployed to Guerrero towns |
|  |  | Country facing worst human rights crisis since 1968 |
|  |  | Children increasingly recruited, abducted, killed |
|  | **Panama** | Panama arrests supreme court judge on suspicion of corruption |
|  | **Venezuela** | UN rights boss urges government to free opposition leader |
| [MENA](#MENA) | **Egypt** | 60 judges face disciplinary action over 'Brotherhood support' |
|  | **Iraq** | IS insurgents advance into town of Qara Tappa |
|  | **Libya** | Death toll hits 65 in eastern strife |
|  |  | Parliament allies with general, struggles to assert authority |
|  | **State of Palestine** | UN questions Israel on Palestinians' rights |
|  | **Syria** | IS 'launches fierce new assault' on Kobane |
|  | **Yemen** | 15 killed in Yemen suicide car bomb targeting rebels: witnesses |
| [SA](#SA) | **Afghanistan** | Soldiers killed in Afghan bomb blast |
|  | **Sri Lanka** | Drought drives 42 percent crash in crop production |
|  |  | Sri Lanka announces early presidential poll in January |
| [WCA](#WCA) | **Nigeria** | Elders question Boko Haram 'ceasefire' deal |
|  |  | At least 30 killed in northeast clashes despite "truce" |
|  |  | US says talks to free girls ongoing |

GENERAL

**Across Regions**

**Violence kills a child every five minutes, most outside war zones**

One child dies every five minutes as a result of violence, but only a minority die in war zones, according to a report by UNICEF. About 75% of the estimated 345 violent deaths that occur daily happen in countries at peace, the report said. "We are uncovering the fact that children experience extreme violence in everyday life, everywhere," Susan Bissell, global head of child protection for UNICEF reported. In some countries, deaths from violence are rolling back gains made in preventing childhood deaths from disease or hunger.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20141020230043-f9jls/?source=fiTheWire**](http://www.trust.org/item/20141020230043-f9jls/?source=fiTheWire)

CEE/CIS

**Tajikistan**

**Militants held for plotting attacks**

Police in Tajikistan have reportedly arrested 20 alleged militants for plotting to blow up two road tunnels. An unidentified Interior Ministry spokesperson reported that the group wanted to blow up the tunnels linking the center to the north of the country. He said all those arrested had returned to Tajikistan after fighting against the regime in Syria. Tajikistan’s authorities estimate that more than 200 Tajiks are currently fighting in Syria.

**RFE/RL -** [**http://www.rferl.org/content/tajik-islamists-detained-for-terror-plots/26644459.html**](http://www.rferl.org/content/tajik-islamists-detained-for-terror-plots/26644459.html)

**Ukraine**

**Widespread use of cluster munitions**

Ukrainian government forces used cluster munitions in populated areas in Donetsk city in early October 2014, Human Rights Watch (HRW) said. The use of cluster munitions in populated areas violates the laws of war due to the indiscriminate nature of the weapon and may amount to war crimes. During a week-long investigation in eastern Ukraine, HRW documented widespread use of cluster munitions in fighting between government forces and pro-Russian rebels in more than a dozen urban and rural locations. An employee of the ICRC was killed in October in an attack on Donetsk that included use of cluster munition rockets.

**HRW -** [**http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/10/20/ukraine-widespread-use-cluster-munitions**](http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/10/20/ukraine-widespread-use-cluster-munitions)

**UNHCR welcomes adoption of law to protect IDPs by conflict**

UNHCR welcomes the passage of the “law on the rights and freedoms of internally displaced persons” by the Ukrainian parliament. UNHCR appreciates the constructive efforts made by parliament, the presidential administration and civil society actors over recent months to draft this legislation in consultation with UNHCR and with reference to international standards and best practices. This law gives IDPs a specific set of rights – protection against discrimination, forcible return and assistance in voluntary returns. It also simplifies access to different social and economic services, especially residence registration and unemployment benefits. Furthermore, the law obliges the government to start developing a policy on integration of internally displaced persons, which is expected to lead to better long-term planning for these individuals.

**UNHCR -** [**http://unhcr.org.ua/en/2011-08-26-06-58-56/news-archive/1362-unhcr-welcomes-adoption-of-the-law-by-ukrainian-parliament-to-protect-people-displaced-by-conflict**](http://unhcr.org.ua/en/2011-08-26-06-58-56/news-archive/1362-unhcr-welcomes-adoption-of-the-law-by-ukrainian-parliament-to-protect-people-displaced-by-conflict)

EAP

**China**

**At least 22 people dead in attack on market in Xinjiang**

Four Uighur men armed with knives and explosives attacked a marketplace in northwestern China’s Xinjiang region, leaving 22 people dead, including police officers, Radio Free Asia reported. The attackers were among the dead. It quoted police as saying the attack occurred at an ethnic Han Chinese farmers’ market in Bachu County. The four Uighurs stabbed an unknown number of police officers as they stormed into the market on two motorcycles, hurling explosives and attacking Han Chinese stall owners before they were gunned down by security personnel, the radio network said.

**Kyodo -** [**http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2014/10/20/asia-pacific/crime-legal-asia-pacific/22-dead-in-attack-on-han-chinese-market-in-xinjiang-report-says/#.VEW1q2jD\_cs**](http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2014/10/20/asia-pacific/crime-legal-asia-pacific/22-dead-in-attack-on-han-chinese-market-in-xinjiang-report-says/#.VEW1q2jD_cs)

**Philippines**

**As volcano awakens, 'zero casualty' record faces test**

The Philippines’ most active volcano, Mayon, is showing signs of a big eruption within weeks, with streams of lava seen flowing out of its dome. But local officials and civil disaster authorities as early as last month began moving more than 57,000 people in 40 villages located within an eight-kilometre "extended danger zone" to evacuation centres.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20141020120230-yijnc/?source=jtDontmiss**](http://www.trust.org/item/20141020120230-yijnc/?source=jtDontmiss)

ESA

**South Sudan**

**Country at ‘crossroads’ as it seeks to combat sexual violence, says UN official**

Sexual violence has become a key feature of the continuing conflict in South Sudan, the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Zainab Hawa Bangura, has declared, while affirming that the widespread use of rape could ultimately be stopped through greater political and legal efforts by the Government and civil society. According to reports, incidents of sexual violence in Bentiu include rape, gang rape, forced abortion and sexual harassment with perpetrators counting members of the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA), the South Sudan national police service and more recently, the Justice and Equity Movement (JEM) among their ranks, as they exchanged control over the town at least 8 times.

**UN News Centre -** [**http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=49123#.VEWFxGjD\_cs**](http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=49123#.VEWFxGjD_cs)

**Tanzania**

**Warring South Sudan rivals meet in Tanzania**

Warring South Sudanese factions were meeting Monday in Tanzania in the latest bid to end a 10-month civil war in which thousands of people have been killed, a presidential aide said. It would be the first time the rivals meet since signing a ceasefire in August in Ethiopia, which like three previous agreements swiftly collapsed. The talks in the northern Tanzanian tourist town of Arusha follow an invitation from President Jakaya Kikwete, who has also met with both leaders. Earlier this month, a group of 19 major aid agencies warned that while massive food drops had helped avert famine for now, the threat remained, and the risk grew greater the longer the war continues and the weaker the people suffering become.

**Yahoo -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/warring-south-sudan-rivals-meet-tanzania-105318627.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/warring-south-sudan-rivals-meet-tanzania-105318627.html)

LAC

**Mexico**

**Federal police deployed to Guerrero towns**

Mexican federal police have taken control of 12 towns in Guerrero state, where 43 students disappeared after clashing with the municipal police. Eyewitnesses say the students were bundled into police cars after clashes in the town of Iguala in September. They have been missing ever since and forensic tests carried out on bodies found in nearby mass graves indicate they are not those of the students. Thirty-six municipal officers are being questioned over their disappearance.

**BBC -** [**http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-29685800**](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-29685800)

**Children increasingly recruited, abducted, killed**

The number of Mexican children abducted, recruited by organized crime, mutilated and murdered has surged alarmingly, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights said on 20 October. Several organizations report that at least 2,000 children were killed between 2006 to 2014, often with "extreme forms of violence," she said. There have also been a huge number of minors being forcibly recruited to work for organized crime, especially in poorer areas.

**AFP -** [**http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/world/mexico-children/1426538.html**](http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/world/mexico-children/1426538.html)

**Panama**

**Panama arrests Supreme Court judge on suspicion of corruption**

A Panamanian Supreme Court judge who previously headed the tribunal has been placed under house arrest and suspended from his post pending an investigation into suspected corruption, a congressional committee said on Monday. Alejandro Moncada is suspected of crimes including money laundering and illicit enrichment, marking the first case of its kind for the Central American country.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20141021001716-jipp9/?source=jtOtherNews2**](http://www.trust.org/item/20141021001716-jipp9/?source=jtOtherNews2)

**Venezuela**

**UN rights boss urges government to free opposition leader**

Top United Nations human rights official Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein called on Monday for the release of Venezuelan opposition leader Leopoldo Lopez and scores of others detained in a crackdown on protests that began in February. Zeid said in a statement issued after meeting Lopez' wife Lilian Tintori in Geneva on Friday that the "prolonged and arbitrary detention" of political opponents and protesters was only exacerbating tensions in the oil-rich Andean country. A U.N. panel of independent experts said last month that Lopez, who led protests that rocked the country, and Daniel Ceballos, a former mayor of the border city

**Reuters –** [**http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/10/20/uk-venezuela-un-rights-idUKKCN0I91OP20141020**](http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/10/20/uk-venezuela-un-rights-idUKKCN0I91OP20141020)

MENA

**Egypt**

**60 judges face disciplinary action over 'Brotherhood support'**

Sixty judges were referred to the disciplinary committee calling for their dismissal after they signed a statement supporting the Muslim Brotherhood as a political faction, according to state-run Al-Ahram. Investigations showed a number of people were guilty of "incitement" for preparing the statement. Those facing disciplinary action include former Minister of Justice Ahmed Mekki and his brother, former Vice President Mahmoud Mekki, and Head of the Central Auditing Authority Hesham Genina.

**Daily News Egypt -** [**http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2014/10/20/60-judges-face-disciplinary-action-brotherhood-support**](http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2014/10/20/60-judges-face-disciplinary-action-brotherhood-support)

**Iraq**

**Islamic State insurgents advance into Iraqi town of Qara Tappa**

Islamic State militants advanced on the Iraqi town of Qara Tappa on Monday disguised as Kurdish peshmerga fighters, Kurdish security sources said. They seized two Kurdish villages after surprising the Kurdish fighters before launching the attack on Qara Tappa, 120 km north of Baghdad, seeking to expand their territory and heap pressure on Kurdish forces in disputed areas. Reinforcements were sent from the Kurdish-controlled city of Khanaqin to repel the insurgents and prevent the town of Qara Tappa from falling, the sources said. Qara Tappa is a mixed area of Sunni Arabs, Kurds and Turkmen that came under Kurdish control when Iraqi Kurds took advantage of the fall of much of northern Iraq's Sunni territories to Islamic State fighters in June to expand their own boundaries.

**Yahoo -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/islamic-state-insurgents-advance-iraqi-town-qara-tappa-171212845.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/islamic-state-insurgents-advance-iraqi-town-qara-tappa-171212845.html)

**Libya**

**Death toll hits 65 in Libya’s eastern strife**

A Libyan official says fighting in the eastern city of Benghazi between Islamist militias and pro-government fighters has left 65 people dead as fierce battles continued for a sixth day. The official says the death toll includes all those killed since a pro-government offensive began on October 15.The fighting has displaced thousands of residents.

**AP –** [**https://news.yahoo.com/death-toll-hits-65-libyas-eastern-strife-123401425.html**](https://news.yahoo.com/death-toll-hits-65-libyas-eastern-strife-123401425.html)

**Parliament allies with general, struggles to assert authority**

Libya's beleaguered elected parliament has declared a formal alliance with a renegade former general, as it struggles to assert some authority in a country many fear is sliding into outright civil war. The House of Representatives, Libya's elected parliament which has relocated to Tobruk, has endorsed Haftar's Operation Dignity against militants, giving him an official role, the parliament spokesperson said. The move appears to contradict past calls from the House of Representatives for all militias to be disarmed to help restore order and rebuild the state.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/10/20/us-libya-security-idUSKCN0I91B620141020**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/10/20/us-libya-security-idUSKCN0I91B620141020)

**State of Palestine**

**UN questions Israel on Palestinians' rights**

U.N. experts questioned Israeli officials on Monday over alleged rights abuses ranging from the demolition of Palestinian houses to mistreatment of detainees and limited Palestinian access to water. Israel's delegation defended its record before the United Nations Human Rights Committee, which examined respect for civil and political rights in Israel, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Each U.N. member state is reviewed every four years. Israel says that its obligations under international covenants do not extend to the two Palestinian territories but the U.N. panel and International Court of Justice disagree.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/10/20/us-israel-palestinians-un-rights-idUSKCN0I91W820141020**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/10/20/us-israel-palestinians-un-rights-idUSKCN0I91W820141020)

**Syria**

**IS 'launches fierce new assault' on Kobane**

Kurdish fighters in the battle for the Syrian town of Kobane weathered a fresh onslaught by fighters from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant as they awaited promised reinforcements from Iraq.

The Kurdish militia faced fierce attacks on Tuesday, fresh from heavy battles on Monday evening in which ISIL appeared to be trying to cut off the border with Turkey before the reinforcements could arrive. Ankara's announcement on Monday that it would facilitate Kurdish forces from Iraq crossing its border with Syria to relieve Kobane's beleaguered defenders marked a major shift of policy and was swiftly welcomed by the US.

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/10/isil-launches-fierce-new-assault-kobane-201410219413238741.html**](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/10/isil-launches-fierce-new-assault-kobane-201410219413238741.html)

**Yemen**

**15 killed in Yemen suicide car bomb targeting rebels: witnesses**

A suicide bomber killed 15 people, including children, when he detonated an explosives-laden car near a Shiite rebel checkpoint in central Yemen on Monday, witnesses said. The blast went off within metres of the checkpoint in the town of Rada, scene of heavy fighting between the Al-Qaeda militants, backed by Sunni tribesmen, and rebels seeking to expand their territorial control.

**AFP –** [**http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/Oct-20/274714-15-killed-in-yemen-suicide-car-bomb-targeting-shiite-rebels-witnesses.ashx**](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/Oct-20/274714-15-killed-in-yemen-suicide-car-bomb-targeting-shiite-rebels-witnesses.ashx)

SA

**Afghanistan**

**Soldiers killed in Afghan bomb blast**

At least four Afghan soldiers were killed, and about a dozen people, including six civilians, wounded after a roadside bomb planted by the Taliban exploded in the Afghan capital, officials said. The blast on Tuesday, caused by a remote-controlled bomb, targeted an Afghan army bus at about 06.45am in the western part of Kabul, the defence ministry said. The Taliban, who have this year stepped up their attacks against Afghan security forces, claimed responsibility via their official Twitter account.

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2014/10/soldiers-killed-afghan-bomb-blast-2014102153446479691.html**](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2014/10/soldiers-killed-afghan-bomb-blast-2014102153446479691.html)

**Sri Lanka**

**Drought drives 42 percent crash in crop production**

An 11-month drought, considered by experts to be the worst in recent history, has forced sharp increases in food prices in Sri Lanka – and the worst may be yet to come, according to recent updates. Rice, the island’s staple food, has seen double digit price hikes in all varieties compared to a year ago. Some of the more popular varieties such as Samba have recorded price increases of 30 percent compared to a year back, according to [government statistics](http://www.statistics.gov.lk/price/retail/DCSB-WRP-2014-09-W4.pdf).

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20141021105853-sxe53/?source=fiOtherNews2**](http://www.trust.org/item/20141021105853-sxe53/?source=fiOtherNews2)

**Sri Lanka announces early presidential poll in January**

Sri Lanka will hold a presidential poll in January nearly two years ahead of schedule, the government's spokesman said on Monday, with President Mahinda Rajapaksa expected to run for a third term. "There will be the presidential elections in January," spokesman Keheliya Rambukwella told a public gathering in the central city of Kandy. He declined to name a specific date. Rambukwella's comment was the first official announcement of an early poll.

**Reuters -** [**http://in.reuters.com/article/2014/10/20/sri-lanka-election-idINKCN0I91GJ20141020**](http://in.reuters.com/article/2014/10/20/sri-lanka-election-idINKCN0I91GJ20141020)

WCA

**Nigeria**

**Nigerian elders question Boko Haram 'ceasefire' deal**

Nigeria's government may have negotiated a supposed ceasefire with only one faction of Boko Haram, an influential regional group has said, as violence continued unabated in the far northeast. The Borno Elders Forum, made up of retired senior civilian and military officials from the state, said attacks in recent days indicated that not all Boko Haram fighters were aware of the deal. "If they are aware and they are in agreement that there is a ceasefire, I don't think they would continue attacking innocent people and taking over places," said spokesman Bulama Mali Gubio. The military has claimed to have taken back five towns but residents maintain the occupation is ongoing.

**AFP -** [**https://news.yahoo.com/nigerian-elders-boko-haram-ceasefire-deal-151632399.html**](https://news.yahoo.com/nigerian-elders-boko-haram-ceasefire-deal-151632399.html)

**At least 30 killed in northeast Nigeria clashes despite "truce"**

At least 25 suspected Boko Haram insurgents were killed in clashes between soldiers and the militants in northeast Nigeria and five civilians were killed in fighting elsewhere in the region, a military source and residents said on Monday. A ceasefire agreement between Boko Haram and the Nigerian government was expected to lead to the liberation of more than 200 school girls kidnapped by the militants six months ago, and talks were due to continue in neighboring Chad on Monday. Boko Haram has not confirmed the truce and there have been at least six attacks over the weekend -- blamed by security sources on the insurgents -- that have killed several dozen people since the announcement of the ceasefire. A government spokesman has said that the fighting on Sunday may be the work of criminal gangs in the lawless region.

**Reuters –** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/10/20/us-nigeria-violence-idUSKCN0I91N420141020c**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/10/20/us-nigeria-violence-idUSKCN0I91N420141020c)

**US says talks to free girls ongoing**

A US official confirmed that a ceasefire deal appeared to have been reached between Nigeria and Boko Haram militants, but said talks to release some 200 kidnapped girls were ongoing. "We can confirm reports that a ceasefire has been announced, (and) appears to have been put into place," a State Department deputy spokeswoman said. "We would welcome that ceasefire, call on all parties both to implement and maintain such a ceasefire, and hope that such a ceasefire would herald the return of peace to the northeast. But she said it was Washington's "understanding that the negotiations about a deal to release the girls continue."

**AFP -** [**http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/us-says-talks-to-free-nigerian-girls-ongoing-114102100051\_1.html**](http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/us-says-talks-to-free-nigerian-girls-ongoing-114102100051_1.html)

The Brief is produced by UNICEF's Emergency Operations Centre (OPSCEN) and is a daily compilation of the main humanitarian, political and security-related media stories from around the world. It aims to provide field offices and senior decision-makers with critical information related to humanitarian emergencies and staff security.

Disclaimer: The views presented here are those of the original authors and are not necessarily shared by UNICEF. Please note that these news stories should be used solely for official purposes. Our license agreement does not permit users to store, post or redistribute the contents beyond personal use. We kindly ask that UNICEF colleagues be responsible users of copyrighted material. For information on this service please contact: