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GENERAL

**Across Regions  
Challenges of Central Africa require continued international support, says UN envoy**  
Significant gains have been made in recent years in combating the threat of the rebel Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) but the countries of Central Africa still face numerous challenges that require continued international support, a senior United Nations official told the Security Council. Abou Moussa, the Secretary-General’s Special Representative and head of the UN Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) reported that the number of LRA-related deaths, abductions and displaced persons have continued to decline, while military operations and the defections campaign have further weakened the LRA.

**UN News Centre -** [**http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=47770#.U3KgxmjD\_cs**](http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=47770#.U3KgxmjD_cs)

**First MERS case reported in the Netherlands**

The same day the World Health Organization said the deadly [Middle East Respiratory Syndrome](http://www.orlandosentinel.com/topic/health/diseases-illnesses/mers-HEDAI000364.topic) virus is not a global health emergency, Dutch officials announced the first case of MERS in the Netherlands. A man who visited Saudi Arabia has been admitted to a hospital in The Hague with MERS, a spokesman for the National Institute for Public Health said Wednesday. He is the first Dutch person known to be affected. The virus, which causes coughing, fever and sometimes fatal pneumonia, has been reported in more than 500 patients in Saudi Arabia alone and has spread to neighboring countries and in a few cases, to Europe, Asia and the United States. It kills about 30 percent of those who are infected. In London, WHO said Wednesday even though concern about MERS has "significantly increased," the disease does not yet constitute a global public health emergency.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/nationworld/chi-mers-virus-outbreak-20140514,0,6909045.story**](http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/nationworld/chi-mers-virus-outbreak-20140514,0,6909045.story)

CEE/CIS

**Across CEE/CIS**

**US releases satellite images of Russian forces near Ukraine**

The US government released new satellite pictures on 13 May which it said showed Russian forces were still near the Ukrainian border in recent days, contradicting Russian assertions they had been withdrawn. NATO officials have previously estimated Russia has around 40,000 soldiers close to Ukraine's border.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/13/ukraine-crisis-photographs-idUSL6N0NZ67D20140513**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/13/ukraine-crisis-photographs-idUSL6N0NZ67D20140513)

**Hungarian ambassador summoned to Ukraine foreign ministry**

Kiev has summoned the Hungarian ambassador over remarks made by the Hungarian Prime Minister about autonomy for Hungarians living in Ukraine. Ukraine’s Foreign Ministry expressed concern about the Hungarian premier’s call for autonomy and dual citizenship of ethnic Hungarians living in the western Ukrainian province of Transcarpathia. The ministry said that the Hungarian Prime Minister’s comments contradict Ukrainian laws. The Hungarian Foreign Ministry, meanwhile, said that the Hungarian Prime Minister’s remarks have been misinterpreted, adding that the country has always supported Ukraine’s policies.

**Press TV -** [**http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2014/05/13/362513/ukraine-summons-hungarian-ambassador/**](http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2014/05/13/362513/ukraine-summons-hungarian-ambassador/)

**MTI -** [**http://www.politics.hu/20140513/hungarian-ambassador-summoned-to-ukraine-foreign-ministry/**](http://www.politics.hu/20140513/hungarian-ambassador-summoned-to-ukraine-foreign-ministry/)

**Moldova**

**Moldova to sign Association Agreement with EU on 27 June**

Visiting European Council (EC) President announced on 13 May that Moldova will sign the Association Agreement with the European Union in Brussels on 27 June. "I'm eager to meet Prime Minister Iurie Leanca in Brussels on 27 June, when we will sign the Association Agreement by common consent," the EC official told a press conference after meeting with Iurie Leanca, stressing that "the moment will be really important both for Moldova and the EU." The EC president invited Moldovan Prime Minister Iurie Leanca to sign the Association Agreement, including the Free Trade Agreement, at an extraordinary Moldova-EU summit in Brussels, according to a government release from Chisinau.

**Xinhua -** [**http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2014-05/14/c\_133331481.htm**](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2014-05/14/c_133331481.htm)

**Turkey**

**Desperate search at Soma pit**

Rescuers are hunting desperately for scores of Turkish coal miners still missing after an explosion caused a pit to collapse, killing at least 238.Dozens escaped the pit in the western town of Soma, but officials say about 120 are still unaccounted for. On a visit to Soma, PM Recep Tayyip Erdogan offered his condolences, and said a thorough investigation into the tragedy had begun. Frantic relatives have gathered at the mine, waiting for news of loved ones. Meanwhile, protesters angry at the disaster took to the streets of Istanbul and Ankara on Wednesday.

**BBC -** [**http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-27408394**](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-27408394)

**Ukraine**

**Separatists kill seven soldiers in heaviest loss for Kiev forces**

Pro-Russian separatists ambushed Ukrainian troops on 13 May, killing seven in the heaviest loss of life for government forces in a single clash since Kiev sent soldiers to put down a rebellion in the country's east. In Kiev, Ukraine's defense ministry and state security service said the troops were killed and seven others wounded when their armored column was ambushed near the town of Kramatorsk, one of several hot spots in the largely Russian-speaking east where the army has had scant success against the rebels.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/13/us-ukraine-crisis-idUSBREA4C0PV20140513**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/13/us-ukraine-crisis-idUSBREA4C0PV20140513)

**Despite recent escalation, full-blown conflict can be averted**

There is still time to avert a full-blown conflict in Ukraine, where the crisis continues to escalate, particularly in the east and south of the country, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said on 13 May. “Over the past weeks, there has been much violence and little dialogue,” Mr. Ban told reporters at UN Headquarters. “I call on all those who have sought to undermine Ukraine’s unity, territorial integrity and stability to immediately cease such actions. “The authorities in Kyiv must also continue to respond to such acts with maximum restraint and within the parameters of Ukrainian law and international human rights principles,” he added.

**UN News Centre -** [**http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=47777#.U3L1iGjD\_ct**](http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=47777#.U3L1iGjD_ct)

EAPR

**Across EAPR**

**China 'building airstrip' on disputed reef**

The Philippine foreign ministry has accused China of reclaiming land on a disputed reef in the South China Sea and said it appeared to be building an airstrip. Foreign ministry spokesman Charles Jose told Reuters news agency on Wednesday that China had been moving earth and materials to Johnson Reef in the Spratly Islands over recent weeks. It also said China was reclaiming land in violation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, an informal code of conduct for the region.  The ministry had already lodged a protest with the Chinese and raised the issue behind closed doors at last weekend's summit of the Association of South East Asian Nations in Myanmar, Jose said.

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2014/05/china-building-airstrip-disputed-reef-201451405013162771.html**](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2014/05/china-building-airstrip-disputed-reef-201451405013162771.html)

**Factories burnt in Vietnam anti-China protest**

Several factories have been set on fire amid anti-China protests at an industrial park in southern Vietnam, amid tensions over the South China Sea. The park's management said three factories were set on fire on Tuesday, but other reports put the figure as high as 15. No casualties have been reported but officials said many arrests were made. The protests came after China moved a drilling rig into waters claimed by Vietnam earlier this month.

**BBC -** [**http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-27403851**](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-27403851)

**China**

**China trains Xinjiang police to use guns against attacks**

China has sent weapons specialists to Xinjiang to train police as part of its crackdown on violent attacks, blamed by Beijing on militants and separatists, in the troubled far western region, state media reported on 14 May. A group of training officers were sent to Xinjiang to "improve the anti-terrorism and emergency management ability of front-line police officers, and resolutely strike against violent terrorists who are swollen with arrogance," the People's Daily, said. More than 100 people have been killed in unrest in Xinjiang in the past year, prompting a crackdown by Chinese authorities.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140514053743-n64vv/?source=jtTheWire**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140514053743-n64vv/?source=jtTheWire)

**Group claims station bombing**

A militant group called the Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP) claimed responsibility for an attack at a train station in China's western city of Urumqi in late April that killed one and injured 79 people, the SITE Monitoring service said. China had said the attack in its restive Xinjiang region, home to the Uighur ethnic group, was carried out by two religious extremists who were also killed in the blast. SITE, which tracks militant statements, said TIP had released a 10-minute video in the Uighur language showing the construction of a briefcase bomb it said was used in the station attack.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/14/us-china-xinjiang-idUSBREA4D07H20140514**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/14/us-china-xinjiang-idUSBREA4D07H20140514)

**Philippines**

**Eight people dead, hundreds ill from 'tainted water'**

Health officials are testing for cholera and other diseases after eight people died and hundreds more fell ill in a remote area in the Philippines, possibly from contaminated water, authorities said on 14 May. Most of the victims are children from the southern town of Alamada who suffered from diarrhoea, the head of the government agency's infectious disease unit reported. "It looks like it came from their water. Their water comes from a stream," he said, adding that results from the tests - which are trying to determine if the deaths were caused by cholera or other diseases - should be available by the weekend. He said eight residents of the farming town had died and 496 others fell ill, including 144 who remained in its small hospital for further treatment.

**AFP -** [**http://www.straitstimes.com/news/asia/south-east-asia/story/eight-dead-hundreds-ill-tainted-water-philippines-20140514**](http://www.straitstimes.com/news/asia/south-east-asia/story/eight-dead-hundreds-ill-tainted-water-philippines-20140514)

**Thailand**

**Government, election agency postpone talks over security worry**

A meeting between Thailand's interim prime minister and the Election Commission to fix a date for polls that the government hopes will break a stalemate was postponed on 14 May due to security concern over the venue, a commission official said. "The government has asked to delay the meeting due to security concerns over the venue location," said the Election Commissioner. "We will meet with the government tomorrow at a different venue."

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/14/us-thailand-protest-idUSBREA4D03R20140514**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/14/us-thailand-protest-idUSBREA4D03R20140514)

**Separatists launch series of attacks**

Suspected separatists in southern Thailand have launched a wave of more than 30 attacks including shootings, bombings and arson, police said, killing one person and injuring more than 10. A security adviser to the prime minister, said that the targets included a shopping centre, which was set on fire, and electricity pylons. "One woman has died and more than ten others were injured," he reported. "We believe the perpetrators are rebel groups trying to recruit more people for their cause," Police in Narathiwat province, close to Thailand's border with Malaysia, said bomb attacks were carried out at more than 10 locations and a woman was killed in one blast.

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia-pacific/2014/05/separatists-launch-series-attacks-201451291754228995.html**](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia-pacific/2014/05/separatists-launch-series-attacks-201451291754228995.html)

ESAR

**South Africa  
Hundreds block roads in South African platinum belt as strike breaks**Hundreds of stick-wielding miners barricaded roads and torched roadside vegetable stalls near Lonmin's South African platinum mine on Tuesday, in an attempt to block fellow strikers from breaking rank and going back to work. One protester said the march was aimed at keeping striking workers united in their pursuit for higher wages. South Africa sent more police to the platinum belt on Tuesday to protect miners who have decided to ditch a 16-week strike that has halted 40% of normal global output and dented already sluggish growth in South Africa.  
**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/13/us-safrica-strike-idUSBREA4C0O120140513?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/13/us-safrica-strike-idUSBREA4C0O120140513?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews)

LAC

**Colombia**

**Police arrest paramilitary leader 'Movil 5'**

Police in Colombia have arrested a senior paramilitary known as Movil 5. The man, whose real name is Manuel Salvador Ospina Cifuentes, was on the run after being found guilty of the massacre in 1990 of dozens of villagers in Pueblo Bello village. He is also suspected of killing Carlos Castano, the leader of Colombia's largest paramilitary group, the AUC. The AUC demobilised in 2005 but many of their members went on to join new criminal groups.

**BBC -** [**http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-27389851#**](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-27389851)

**Haiti**

**Mosquito-borne virus spreads rapidly**

A spokesperson for Haiti's health ministry says that a mosquito-borne virus has spread throughout the country. He reported that 1,529 cases of the chikungunya virus have been confirmed. About 900 of those cases were found in the west department, where Port-au-Prince is located. Health officials said last week there had been only 14 confirmed cases. The arrival of the virus in Haiti was expected. In Dominican Republic, authorities have confirmed at least 150 to 200 cases. The often-painful illness most commonly found in Asia and Africa was first detected in the Caribbean in December 2013 on St. Martin.

**AP -** [**http://www.10tv.com/content/stories/apexchange/2014/05/13/cb--haiti-chikungunya.html**](http://www.10tv.com/content/stories/apexchange/2014/05/13/cb--haiti-chikungunya.html)

**Venezuela**

**Opposition suspends government talks over arrests**

Venezuela’s opposition has suspended talks to end nationwide demonstrations that have left 42 dead after a government crackdown on protest camps in Caracas. “We will return to meetings with the government if they show interest,” Ramon Guillermo Aveledo, general secretary of the opposition alliance Democratic Unity Roundtable, known as MUD, said at a news conference in Caracas on 13 May. “The government is only increasing the repression. They have to decide whether they want to win war or peace.” The National Guard clashed with rioters last night in the eastern Los Palos Grandes neighborhood of Caracas and shot tear gas into residential buildings.

**Bloomberg –** [**http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-05-13/venezuelan-opposition-says-talks-with-government-in-crisis-.html**](http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-05-13/venezuelan-opposition-says-talks-with-government-in-crisis-.html)

**AP -** [**http://www.chron.com/news/world/article/Venezuela-opposition-threatens-to-end-crisis-talks-5474121.php**](http://www.chron.com/news/world/article/Venezuela-opposition-threatens-to-end-crisis-talks-5474121.php)

MENA

**Algeria**

**Army ambushes militants, two killed east of Algiers**

Algeria's military ambushed militants on Tuesday, killing two fighters in an eastern region near where al Qaeda's north Africa branch claimed an attack on an army patrol last month, the defense ministry said. Troops attacked the militants in Kaddara in Boumerdes province about 50 km east of Algiers early on 13 May morning, according to the ministry statement on APS state news agency. The eastern mountains were once the stronghold for militants. Abdelmalek Droukdel, the Algerian university student turned leader of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, is believed to be hiding in the region.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/13/us-algeria-security-idUSBREA4C0S520140513?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/13/us-algeria-security-idUSBREA4C0S520140513?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews)

**Iraq  
Anbar IDPs in Baghdad fear for their safety**  
Displaced families who have fled the ongoing violence in Iraq's troubled Anbar Province say anti-Anbar hostility is leaving many too scared to register with the authorities, pushing them into the shadows and cutting them off from aid and public services. IDPs say men are singled out for harassment, but families also report being too afraid to access healthcare services, send children to school, and sign up at the Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD). Aid agencies have also raised the alarm about growing protection concerns for the IDPs from Anbar, who now number close to 435,000, according to the latest MoMD figures. "The problem seems to be particularly serious in Baghdad where IDPs from Anbar are reported to be harassed or being labelled as 'terrorists'," a UNAMI report noted.   
**IRIN -** [**http://www.irinnews.org/report/100083/anbar-idps-in-baghdad-fear-for-their-safety**](http://www.irinnews.org/report/100083/anbar-idps-in-baghdad-fear-for-their-safety)

**Car-bomb blasts kill 34 people as Iraqis await vote count**

Militants unleashed a wave of car bombings in Iraq on 13 May, killing at least 34 people in a show of force meant to intimidate the majority Shiites as they celebrated what is meant to be a joyous holiday for their sect. The attacks occurred nearly two weeks after Iraqis voted in their country’s first parliamentary election since the US military withdrawal in late 2011. No results have been released, deepening a sense of uncertainty in a country strained by a resurgence of violence. It was the deadliest day in Iraq since 28 April, when militant strikes on targets including polling stations where security forces were voting killed 46 people. No group asserted responsibility for the 13 May’s attacks, most of which hit Baghdad during the morning rush hour.

[**http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle\_east/car-bomb-blasts-kill-34-as-iraqis-await-vote-count/2014/05/13/cb4c11e4-dac8-11e3-8009-71de85b9c527\_story.html?wprss=rss\_middle-east**](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/car-bomb-blasts-kill-34-as-iraqis-await-vote-count/2014/05/13/cb4c11e4-dac8-11e3-8009-71de85b9c527_story.html?wprss=rss_middle-east)

**Saudi Arabia**

**Saudi Arabia announces 5 new MERS deaths**

Saudi health authorities announced on 13 May five new deaths from Mers, raising the total death toll in the country worst-hit by the mysterious coronavirus to 152 since it appeared in 2012. Meanwhile, four new infections by the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome have been registered, raising the total of cases to 495, the health ministry said. The ministry added that six patients who had been infected by the Sars-like virus have been cured. The new deaths occurred on Monday, with one patient dying in Riyadh and the remaining four in the commercial capital Jeddah.

**AFP -** [**http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/saudi-arabia/saudi-arabia-announces-5-new-mers-deaths-1.1332200**](http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/saudi-arabia/saudi-arabia-announces-5-new-mers-deaths-1.1332200)

**Sudan**

**'Deep concern' over apostasy case in Islamist Sudan**

Western embassies in Sudan on Tuesday expressed "deep concern" over the case of a woman who activists say risks a death sentence for apostasy. Meriam Yahia Ibrahim Ishag, who says she is Christian, was convicted last Sunday in the Khartoum-area district of Haj Yousef. "We call upon the government of Sudan to respect the right to freedom of religion, including one's right to change one's faith or beliefs," a the embassies of the United States, Canada, United Kingdom and the Netherlands said in a joint statement. That right is included in Sudan's 2005 interim constitution as well as in international human rights law, they said.

**AFP -** [**http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/140513/deep-concern-over-apostasy-case-islamist-sudan**](http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/140513/deep-concern-over-apostasy-case-islamist-sudan)

**Yemen**

**Kidnapped German man freed**

Yemeni tribesmen have released a German man they kidnapped in February to press the government to free jailed relatives, tribal sources and state media said on 13 May. At the time, the tribesmen telephoned journalists to say they kidnapped the man from the capital Sanaa and took him to Maarib, a tribal stronghold in the center of Yemen. The state news agency Saba confirmed news of the German's release in a text message and said he was being transported to Sanaa. There was no immediate comment from the German foreign ministry.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/sns-rt-us-yemen-kidnapping-release-20140513,0,980849.story**](http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/sns-rt-us-yemen-kidnapping-release-20140513,0,980849.story)

ROSA

**Afghanistan**

**Afghan election results face possible delay**

Afghanistan may delay announcing presidential election results as fraud complaints have yet to be processed, officials said Tuesday, though a run-off vote is expected to be held next month. Full results from the April 5 election were released late last month, and the final declaration that was due out on Wednesday will factor in the outcome of weeks of deliberation over fraud allegations. The preliminary results showed former foreign minister Abdullah Abdullah in the lead on 44.9 percent of the first-round vote, with ex-World Bank economist Ashraf Ghani on 31.5 percent. None of the eight candidates appeared to have gained more than 50 percent, triggering a run-off between the two top names as Afghanistan undergoes its first democratic transfer of power.

**AFP -** [**http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/130407-afghan-election-results-face-possible-delay**](http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/130407-afghan-election-results-face-possible-delay)

WCAR  
  
**Across WCAR  
Chad border closure will cut off lifeline for CAR refugees**The Chadian government’s decision to close the country’s lengthy southern border will have a disastrous impact on men, women and children fleeing months of worsening ethnically-motivated violence in the CAR, Amnesty International said today. “President Déby has slammed the door in the face of refugees arriving from CAR, condemning them to continued suffering. He must reverse this decision and the international community must do more to support the tens of thousands of refugees from CAR who have fled to Chad,” said Christian Mukosa, Amnesty International’s Researcher on Central Africa.

**Amnesty -** [**http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/chad-border-closure-will-cut-lifeline-car-refugees-2014-05-13**](http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/chad-border-closure-will-cut-lifeline-car-refugees-2014-05-13)

**Nigeria**

**Vigilantes 'repel Boko Haram attack'**

Residents of three villages in northern Nigeria have repelled an attack by suspected Boko Haram Islamist fighters, an eyewitness has told the BBC. About 200 of the militants were killed during the fighting in the Kala-Balge district of Borno state, he said. The witness said the residents had formed a vigilante group. The area which came under attack is not far from the site of a market massacre last week in which more than 300 people were killed. The suspected Boko Haram militants overran the town of Gamboru Ngala 10 days ago on its busy market day in a killing and looting raid which lasted about five hours.

**BBC -** [**http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-27412057**](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-27412057)

**Govt willing to talk with Boko Haram on hostages: minister**

The government is willing to talk to Boko Haram about securing the release of 223 schoolgirls still held hostage by the Islamists, Special Duties Minister Taminu Turaki told AFP on Tuesday. Turaki, who last year headed a committee tasked with pursuing an amnesty pact with some Boko Haram fighters, said: " Nigeria has always been willing to dialogue with the insurgents. "We are willing to carry that dialogue on any issue, including the girls kidnapped in Chibok, because certainly we are not going to say that (the abduction) is not an issue."

**AFP -** [**http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/International/2014/May-13/256305-nigeria-willing-to-talk-with-boko-haram-on-hostages-minister.ashx#axzz31ccLicvE**](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/International/2014/May-13/256305-nigeria-willing-to-talk-with-boko-haram-on-hostages-minister.ashx#axzz31ccLicvE)

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.

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