**UNICEF OPSCEN Brief – Wednesday, 23 July 2014**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| GENERAL | **Across Regions** | Malala tells Girl Summit education is key to ending child marriage |
|  |  | 700 Million Women Were Child Brides, UNICEF Says |
|  |  | Iraq, Nigeria record most attacks, fatalities by extremists–report |
| CEE/CIS | **Ukraine** | Ukraine says pro-Russian rebels abandon positions on Donetsk outskirts |
|  |  | Residents flee Donetsk clashes |
|  |  | US says rebels downed MH17 plane 'by mistake' |
| EAP | **Across EAP** | Conditions not right in Myanmar for return – UNHCR |
|  | **China** | Storm death toll rises to 46, as Typhoon Matmo nears |
|  |  | City sealed off after bubonic plague death |
|  | **Indonesia** | Indonesian president-elect Jokowi calls for unity after bitter election |
|  | **Philippines** | Philippine army warned against "meddling" as coup rumours swirl |
|  | **Thailand** | King endorses junta's new constitution |
|  |  | Thai junta chief could remain PM under new government -adviser |
| ESA | **South Sudan** | Rebel team quits Uganda without meeting on mending ties |
| LAC | **Across LAC** | PAHO's Chikungunya count jumps 24%, to 442,000 |
|  |  | One in four HIV-positive women in Central America pressured to sterilise – study |
|  | **Dominican Republic** | Chikungunya virus claims a baby's life |
|  | **Mexico** | US-bound migrants face abuses in Mexico: rights groups |
|  | **Peru** | Peru's Humala lifts party activists in cabinet shake-up |
| MENA | **Across MENA** | Polio still threatens Middle East after Syria, Iraq cases: UN – UNICEF mention |
|  |  | UN rights chief condemns Israel and Hamas |
|  | **Egypt** | Death toll rises to 22 in Egypt border post attack |
|  | **Iraq** | Suicide car bombs kills 21 in Baghdad |
|  | **Libya** | Suicide bomb kills at least four at army base in Benghazi |
|  |  | Fuel tanks hit in clashes near Libyan airport |
|  | **State of Palestine/Israel** | UN rights chief condemns Israel and Hamas |
|  |  | UN school sheltering Gaza displaced hit by Israel shells: UNRWA |
|  |  | Palestinian PM says lift Gaza 'siege' as part of ceasefire |
|  |  | Humanitarians struggle for access to Gaza, where "no place safe for civilians" |
|  |  | PLO backs Hamas truce demands in Gaza |
|  |  | Israeli shoots Palestinian dead in W. Bank: security source |
|  | **Syria** | UN in Syria vaccination drive against polio – UNICEF mention |
|  |  | Rebel-held Damascus hit by fiercest clashes in months |
|  |  | 700 Syrians killed in two days of conflict |
|  | **Tunisia** | Tunisia faces dilemma in anti-Jihadist campaign |
|  | **Yemen** | President urges unity in visit to restive north |
| SA | **India** | Monsoon floods in the east kill three people, displace thousands |
|  | **Pakistan** | Struggle against polio needs global attention |
|  |  | Vaccinate displaced children, says WHO |
|  |  | Five girls wounded in acid attacks in Pakistan |
| WCA | **Across WCA** | UNHCR renews call on donors to support CAR refugees |
|  | **Benin** | Benin detains 10 people in child trafficking probe |
|  | **CAR** | Seleka rebels demand partition in Brazzaville talks |
|  | **DR Congo** | DR Congo 'repels' attack on Kinshasa barracks |
|  |  | NGOs against MONUSCO drones for humanitarian work |
|  | **Gambia** | EU pressure aids human rights in Gambia, but activists are wary |
|  | **Nigeria** | Boko Haram virtually controls town of Damboa |
|  |  | Schoolgirls held for 100 days |
|  | **Sierra Leone** | Sierra Leone's chief Ebola doctor contracts the virus |

GENERAL

**Across Regions**

**Malala tells Girl Summit education is key to ending child marriage**

Pakistani teenage rights activist Malala Yousafzai, who survived being shot in the head by the Taliban, told an international summit that getting girls into class is crucial for ending child marriage. Contrary to some perceptions, she said Islam positively encouraged girls to get an education and those who thought otherwise should study the Koran. The 17-year-old spoke on Tuesday at Girl Summit in London, a conference aimed at galvanising a worldwide movement to end child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM) in a generation.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140723034658-8zyt6/?source=search**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140723034658-8zyt6/?source=search)

**700 million women were child brides, UNICEF Says**

UNICEFreleased staggering new data Tuesday outlining the prevalence of child marriage and genital mutilation/cutting that continues to impact hundreds of millions of girls and women around the world. More than one in three women in 2014 (some 250 million) were married before they were 15, the data says. Some 700 million women alive today were married before they were 18. And while girls are one third less likely to experience female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) today than they were 30 years ago, more than 130 million girls and adult women have experienced FGM/C in the Middle East and Africa, according to information released as part of UNICEF’s first-ever Girl Summit with the UK Government.

**Time -** [**http://time.com/3018044/unicef-child-brides-genital-mutilation-unicef/**](http://time.com/3018044/unicef-child-brides-genital-mutilation-unicef/)

**Iraq, Nigeria record most attacks, fatalities by extremists–report**

Nigeria registered the most fatalities per attack by insurgent or extremist groups and Iraq posted the highest number of attacks by such groups in the last year, according to global risk analytics company Maplecroft. Maplecroft said global fatalities linked to militant extremists were up 30 percent compared to the previous five-year average. The firm used a new security monitoring service known as Terrorism and Security Dashboard (MTSD) which “logs, analyses and plots all reported incidents of terrorism, piracy, political violence and human rights abuses by security forces.”

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140722212735-ndykm/?source=search**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140722212735-ndykm/?source=search)

CEE/CIS

**Ukraine**

**Ukraine says pro-Russian rebels abandon positions on Donetsk outskirts**

Pro-Russian rebels are leaving their positions on the outskirts of the eastern Ukrainian city of Donetsk and retreating towards its centre, Ukrainian military officials said on Wednesday. Residents said the rebels, who want independence from Kiev for Ukraine's Donbass region, had dug trenches in downtown Donetsk outside the main university, where they have been living in student dormitories. Fighting was also reported in Luhansk overnight, officials in Kiev said.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140723082408-z2wqx**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140723082408-z2wqx)

**Residents flee Donetsk clashes**

The woman leading the evacuation out of the Kuybyshevskoye area of this eastern Ukrainian city waved her hands frantically in the air as she tried to get people to listen to her cries. In the distant background, the rumble of heavy artillery fire could be heard as it struck a residential area wedged in between the Donetsk airport and the main train station in this city held by pro-Russian rebel groups. The city’s Health Department reported that at least four people had been killed and two injured in the fighting by midday. Those who have been able to leave the city entirely already have. But there are still hundreds of thousands of Donetsk’s 1 million residents who have stayed behind - out of necessity, willingness to stick it out or a simple lack of resources to leave.

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/7/21/crash-investigatorsfightingnearby.html**](http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/7/21/crash-investigatorsfightingnearby.html)

**Ukraine to impose sanctions on Russian individuals, firms – PM**

Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseny Yatseniuk said on Wednesday Kiev would impose sanctions on Russian individuals and companies who directly or indirectly support "terrorists" fighting against government troops in the country's east. Yatseniuk told a meeting of his ministers that he had set up a special committee to work on the punitive measures. "I instruct the committee to propose for the government's consideration a list of individual and sector sanctions on Russian citizens and legal entities supporting and financing terrorism in Ukraine in 10 days," he said. He did not give any details of what form the sanctions could take.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140723093216-4ima4/?source=search**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140723093216-4ima4/?source=search)

**US says rebels downed MH17 plane 'by mistake'**

US intelligence officials have said they believe pro-Russian separatists most probably shot down the Malaysia Airlines plane MH17 "by mistake" last week, not realising it was a civilian passenger flight. Speaking on condition of anonymity in Washington, they said the "most plausible explanation" for the destruction of the plane was that the separatists fired a Russian-made SA-11 missile at it after mistaking it for another kind of aircraft. "Five days into it, [the crash] it does appear to be a mistake," one of the officials told reporters on Tuesday.

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2014/07/us-says-rebels-downed-mh17-plane-mistake-201472322122511421.html**](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2014/07/us-says-rebels-downed-mh17-plane-mistake-201472322122511421.html)

EAP

**Across EAP**

**Conditions not right in Myanmar for return – UNHCR**

Conditions in Myanmar are not yet right for refugees living in camps near the border to return home, the UN said on Wednesday as concerns mount after the Thai military government pledged to repatriate them. “There’s been a lot of positive developments (in Myanmar) in the last two and a half years or so but… we don’t feel that the conditions are fully in place for organised refugee return,” Vivian Tan, Bangkok-based spokesperson for UNHCR, told Thomson Reuters Foundation in an interview. Challenges include the absence of a permanent ceasefire in eastern Myanmar, land mines and unmarked minefields, and a lack of infrastructure, basic services and jobs, she said. “All of this affects the sustainability and safety of any refugee return.”

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140723095957-r3svy/?source=jtOtherNews1**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140723095957-r3svy/?source=jtOtherNews1)

**China**

**Storm death toll rises to 46, as Typhoon Matmo nears**

The death toll from the strongest storm to hit China for decades has reached 46 with another 25 missing, authorities said, as another typhoon approaches the country's eastern coastline. Typhoon Rammasun has left 19 people dead in the province of Hainan, 18 in southwestern Yunnan and nine in Guangxi, the Ministry of Civil Affairs said in a statement on its website. Over 620,000 people have been relocated and some 252,000 are in need of "emergency aid", the statement said. Meanwhile, Typhoon Matmo was expected to make a landfall on China's eastern coast on 23 July, the National Meteorological Centre (NMC) said.

**AFP -** [**https://au.news.yahoo.com/world/a/24524370/china-storm-death-toll-rises-to-46-as-typhoon-matmo-nears/**](https://au.news.yahoo.com/world/a/24524370/china-storm-death-toll-rises-to-46-as-typhoon-matmo-nears/)

**City sealed off after bubonic plague death**

China has sealed off parts of its north-western city of Yumen after a resident died of bubonic plague last week, state media said. A 38-year-old was infected by a marmot - a wild rodent - and died on July 16. Several districts of the city of about 100,000 people in Gansu province were subsequently turned into special quarantine zones, Xinhua said. It said 151 people who came into direct contact with the victim were also placed in quarantine. None have so far shown any signs of infection, the news agency said. The 30,000 people living in Yumen are not being allowed to leave, and police at roadblocks on its perimeter are telling motorists to find alternative routes, state broadcaster China Central Television (CCTV) said.

**Irish Examiner-** [**http://www.irishexaminer.com/world/city-sealed-off-after-bubonic-plague-death-276305.html**](http://www.irishexaminer.com/world/city-sealed-off-after-bubonic-plague-death-276305.html)

**Indonesia**

**Indonesian president-elect Jokowi calls for unity after bitter election**

Joko "Jokowi" Widodo was declared the winner of Indonesia's presidential election on Tuesday, bringing the promise of major reforms to the world's third largest democracy. The Elections Commission, known as KPU, said the Jakarta governor had won by just over six percentage points, with 53.15 percent of the nearly 130 million votes cast on July 9. It was the closest and most bitterly fought election in Indonesia's history, pitting Jokowi against former general Prabowo Subianto, whose promise of strong leadership brought echoes of decades under autocratic rule.

**Reuters -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/indonesian-president-elect-jokowi-calls-unity-bitter-election-035022561.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/indonesian-president-elect-jokowi-calls-unity-bitter-election-035022561.html)

**Philippines**

**Philippine army warned against "meddling" as coup rumours swirl**

Philippine soldiers should keep clear of politics, the military's new chief said on Wednesday, as rumours of a possible coup swirled in the capital after the Supreme Court declared President Benigno Aquino's economic stimulus fund illegal. The 120,000-member armed forces had a history of coups and attempted coups. Last month, rumours sprang up of a plot against the Aquino administration because of the fund scandal.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140723095321-80lxs**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140723095321-80lxs)

**Thailand**

**King endorses junta's new constitution**

Thailand's junta won approval from the king for an interim constitution mapping out year-long political reforms expected to curb the influence of fugitive ex-premier Thaksin Shinawatra. It was the first time the King Bhumibol Adulyadej, 86, has granted an audience to coup leader General Prayut Chan-O-Cha since the military seized power two months ago. "General Prayut met His Majesty the King, who has endorsed the interim constitution," said deputy army spokeswoman Colonel Sirichan Ngathong. Prayut has ruled out holding elections until around October 2015, despite appeals from the US and EU for a return to a democratic path.

**AFP -** [**http://www.straitstimes.com/news/asia/south-east-asia/story/thai-king-endorses-juntas-new-constitution-20140722**](http://www.straitstimes.com/news/asia/south-east-asia/story/thai-king-endorses-juntas-new-constitution-20140722)

**Thai junta chief could remain PM under new government –adviser**

Thailand's junta chief could stay in charge of the country as head of a provisional government until elections are held sometime next year, a legal adviser said on Wednesday, outlining details of an interim constitution. A member of the ruling council added that martial law, imposed two days before the army seized power on May 22, would remain in force for the foreseeable future. The military, under army chief General Prayuth Chan-ocha, said it acted to restore order after months of political turmoil as protesters tried to topple the government of former Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140723053527-4dzn8/?source=search**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140723053527-4dzn8/?source=search)

ESA

**South Sudan**

**Rebel team quits Uganda without meeting on mending ties**

South Sudanese rebels who want to mend ties with Uganda and press for the withdrawal of Ugandan troops from South Sudan left Kampala without meeting the president, blaming miscommunication between the two sides, a rebel official said. The Ugandan Junior Foreign Minister said a meeting with President Yoweri Museveni was scheduled for 22 July. But he said the rebels had not shared their travel plans and left hours after arriving on when nobody met them at the airport.

**Reuters -** [**http://af.reuters.com/article/ethiopiaNews/idAFL6N0PX2IX20140722**](http://af.reuters.com/article/ethiopiaNews/idAFL6N0PX2IX20140722)

LAC

**Across Region**

**PAHO's Chikungunya count jumps 24%, to 442,000**

Chikungunya cases in the Americas increased by 24%, to 442,310, with the Dominican Republic accounting for most of the new illnesses, according to PAHO. Guadaloupe, Haiti, and Martinique each contributed thousands of new cases to the total as well, PAHO said in its latest update on the epidemic, which began on St. Martin last December. The total reported by the agency included 436,586 suspected and 5,724 confirmed cases, versus 350,580 suspected and 5,037 confirmed cases (a total of 355,617) a week earlier. The Dominican Republic's case total climbed by 58,538 to reach 251,951, a 30% increase from the previous week. Haiti, the Dominican Republic's next-door neighbor, logged 10,592 new cases, pushing its total to 62,422. The report also shows that Venezuela has reported its first two locally acquired Chikungunya cases, Bolivia (3 cases), Trinidad and Tobago (3), and Jamaica (1).

**PAHO -** [**http://www.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com\_topics&view=article&id=343&Itemid=40931**](http://www.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com_topics&view=article&id=343&Itemid=40931)

**One in four HIV-positive women in Central America pressured to sterilise – study**

HIV-positive women in Central America are being pressured to undergo sterilisation by prejudiced health workers and misled about the risk of the virus being transmitted to their unborn children, a study showed. A survey of 285 women living with HIV in El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico and Nicaragua found that 23 percent of them had faced pressure from doctors and nurses to be sterilised. The rate ranged from 20 percent in Nicaragua to 28 percent in Mexico, according to research by the Mesoamerican Coalition for the Reproductive Rights of Women with HIV and the Women and Health Initiative of Harvard School of Public Health.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140723072311-o8d2f/?source=jtOtherNews1**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140723072311-o8d2f/?source=jtOtherNews1)

**Dominican Republic**

**Chikungunya virus claims a baby's life**

A baby just one-and a-half months old died after being kept 11 days in a pediatric hospital in the northern Dominican city of Santiago with symptoms of the mosquito-borne Chikungunya virus, his family said. The child had been taken to the medical center with a high fever and signs of allergy all over his body. They had been told he showed symptoms of Chikungunya. Though the baby's parents say his death was supposedly due to the virus that causes that disease, neither the Arturo Grullon Hospital nor local authorities have yet confirmed it. In the city of Santiago and others in the north, cases of the disease are on the rise and the Public Health Ministry has carried out several preventive operations in districts where Chikungunya is affecting the population.

**EFE -** [**http://latino.foxnews.com/latino/health/2014/07/20/chikungunya-virus-claims-baby-life-in-dominican-republic/**](http://latino.foxnews.com/latino/health/2014/07/20/chikungunya-virus-claims-baby-life-in-dominican-republic/)

**Mexico**

**US-bound migrants face abuses in Mexico: rights groups**

Human rights groups on Tuesday said that US-bound migrants passing through Mexico routinely face abuses, discrimination and even torture. With the US gearing efforts to curb a surge of unaccompanied minors mostly from Central America, human rights groups here aired concerns about bad treatment migrants young and old alike face in Mexico. US-bound "migrants may face jailing, accused of crimes they never committed" and legal rights, such as the right to consular assistance, "essentially almost do not exist where they are concerned," said Denise Gonzalez of the Miguel Agustin Pro Juarez Human Rights Center.

**AFP -** [**http://www.businessinsider.com/immigrants-face-torture-mexico-2014-7**](http://www.businessinsider.com/immigrants-face-torture-mexico-2014-7)

**Peru**

**Peru's Humala lifts party activists in cabinet shake-up**

Peru's President Ollanta Humala named his sixth prime minister in three years on Tuesday in a surprise cabinet reshuffle that elevated two core members of his ruling party after a political scandal. The cabinet change comes just a week ahead of Peru's Independence Day, when presidents traditionally reshuffle. It follows revelations that an adviser to outgoing PM Rene Cornejo allegedly used public funds to try to orchestrate a campaign to discredit a political opponent.Cornejo, whose five months as prime minister were dogged by accusations of impropriety by opposition lawmakers, has denied involvement in the alleged plan and any other wrongdoing.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140723012814-aah4k/?source=search**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140723012814-aah4k/?source=search)

MENA

**Across MENA**

**Polio still threatens Middle East after Syria, Iraq cases: UN – UNICEF mention**

Thirty-six children in Syria and two in Iraq have been paralyzed by polio since October, and the risk of the virus spreading further in the Middle East remains high, UN aid agencies said on Tuesday. A crippling and incurable disease, polio erupted in October in the northeast province of Deir al-Zor, marking Syria's first outbreak since 1999. The two cases recorded in Iraq this year were in Iraqi children living in the Baghdad area. A polio vaccination campaign reached a record 25 million children in seven countries of the Middle East between December and June, but aid agencies need to go back to them again for follow-up shots in a second phase planned from August, the WHO and UNICEF said.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/22/us-health-polio-mideast-idUSKBN0FR1PU20140722**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/22/us-health-polio-mideast-idUSKBN0FR1PU20140722)

**Food insecurity a new threat for Lebanon’s Syrian refugees**

A declining economy and a severe drought have raised concerns in Lebanon over food security as the country faces one of its worst refugee crises, resulting from the nearby Syria war, and it is these refugees and impoverished Lebanese border populations that are most vulnerable to this new threat. According to the UNHCR, there are just over one million Syrian refugees in Lebanon. While the food situation is still manageable thanks to efforts of international donors who maintain food supplies to the population, “these rations are nonetheless always threatened by the lack of donor funding,” World Bank said. In addition, refugee populations are largely dependent on food aid, because they are essentially comprised of women and children, with little or no access to the job market.

**IPS -** [**http://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/food-insecurity-new-threat-lebanon-s-syrian-refugees**](http://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/food-insecurity-new-threat-lebanon-s-syrian-refugees)

**Egypt**

**Death toll rises to 22 in Egypt border post attack**

The death toll from a brazen attack on a border post in Egypt's western desert along the border with Libya has risen to 22 troops, including three officers, the military said Sunday. The attack on Saturday was deadliest suffered by Egypt's military in recent history. President Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi called the assault a terrorist attack and said it would not go unpunished. He also declared a three-day mourning period. The military spokesman, Brig. Gen. Mohammed Samir, posted the names of the dead on his official Facebook page. A military funeral is expected later Sunday.

**AP -** [**http://www.foxnews.com/world/2014/07/20/military-official-says-death-toll-up-to-22-troops-in-egypt-border-post-attack/**](http://www.foxnews.com/world/2014/07/20/military-official-says-death-toll-up-to-22-troops-in-egypt-border-post-attack/)

**Iraq**

**Suicide car bombs kills 21 in Baghdad**

A suicide bomb has killed at least 21 people in Baghdad, police and medical officials have said. At least 13 civilians were killed in the attack, which took place at a police checkpoint at the entrance to the Kadhimiya district. Many of those killed were reportedly on their way to a Shia shrine in the area. Iraq is experiencing an upsurge in instability. The government is battling Islamist militants, who have seized cities in the country's north-west. At least five of those killed in the bombing were policemen, security sources said. The area is home to the Musa al-Khadim shrine, a site of pilgrimage for many Muslims.

**BBC -** [**http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-28431941**](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-28431941)

**Libya**

**Suicide bomb kills at least four at army base in Benghazi**

At least four people were killed in a suicide bombing at an army base in Benghazi on Tuesday, a security source said. Islamist militants and army forces have been clashing regularly in the city, but suicide attacks have been rare during the turmoil that has followed the 2011 overthrow over veteran ruler Muammar Gaddafi.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/22/us-libya-security-blast-idUSKBN0FR24V20140722**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/22/us-libya-security-blast-idUSKBN0FR24V20140722)

**Fuel tanks hit in clashes near Libyan airport**

Fuel storage tanks that supply Tripoli were hit on Wednesday in clashes between rival Libyan militias, igniting a huge blaze near the international airport. More than 40 people have been killed in some of the worst violence in the capital since the 2011 war that ousted Muammar Gaddafi, as rival brigades of former fighters battle with rockets and mortars for control of the airport. Firefighters used foam spray to douse the flames at the fuel storage facility, bringing the blaze under control. Officials said only a semi-full tank had been hit by a shell.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140723114629-11kwv**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140723114629-11kwv)

**State of Palestine/Israel**

**UN rights chief condemns Israel and Hamas**

Israel´s military actions in the Gaza Strip could amount to war crimes, UN rights chief Navi Pillay said Wednesday while also condemning indiscriminate rocket attacks by Palestinian militants Hamas. "There seems to be a strong possibility that international law has been violated, in a manner that could amount to war crimes," Pillay told an emergency session on Israel´s Gaza offensive at the UN Human Rights Council, citing attacks that have killed Palestinian civilians, including children. She said Israeli children and other civilians also had a right to live without constant fear of rocket attacks. "Once again, the principles of distinction and precaution are clearly not being observed during such indiscriminate attacks on civilian areas by Hamas and other armed Palestinian groups," she said.

**AFP -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/un-rights-chief-condemns-israel-hamas-090626754.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/un-rights-chief-condemns-israel-hamas-090626754.html)

**UN school sheltering Gaza displaced hit by Israel shells: UNRWA**

A UN school sheltering displaced Palestinians in central Gaza came under Israeli fire on Tuesday as a team was inspecting damage from a day earlier, a UN official said. The official said a team, with Israeli clearance, was at the school run by UNRWA in Al-Maghazi when Israeli tank shelling resumed, hitting the building on Tuesday afternoon. The school has been evacuated and UNRWA has submitted a formal letter about the shelling to Israel, he added. UNRWA is sheltering more than 100,000 people at more than 60 of its schools throughout the Gaza Strip. Many Palestinians living in border areas of Gaza have been warned by Israel to flee their homes, but they say they feel nowhere in the coastal enclave is safe for them.

**UNRWA -** [**http://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/press-releases/unrwa-strongly-condemns-shelling-school-gaza-sheltering-civilians-and-calls**](http://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/press-releases/unrwa-strongly-condemns-shelling-school-gaza-sheltering-civilians-and-calls)

**AFP -** [**http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/Jul-22/264762-un-school-sheltering-gaza-displaced-hit-by-israel-shells-unrwa.ashx**](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/Jul-22/264762-un-school-sheltering-gaza-displaced-hit-by-israel-shells-unrwa.ashx)

**Palestinian PM says lift Gaza 'siege' as part of ceasefire**

The lifting of the economic blockade of the Gaza Strip must form part of any ceasefire deal, the Palestinian prime minister has said. Speaking during a visit by the UN SG, Rami Hamdallah said it was time for the "siege to stop". More than 630 Palestinians and 30 Israelis have been killed in the past 15 days of fighting, officials say. The Israeli bombardment of Gaza is aimed at stopping rockets being fired into Israel by Palestinian militants. Both Ban Ki-moon and US Secretary of State John Kerry are in the region to try to put an end to the fighting.

**BBC -** [**http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-28431945**](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-28431945)

**Humanitarians struggle for access to Gaza, where "no place safe for civilians"**

More than 600 people have died as fighting in the Gaza Strip enters its third week, and aid agencies expressed concern at the growing number of civilian casualties in a conflict with no near end in sight. "There is literally no safe place for civilians," Jens Laerke, spokesman of OCHA, told Reuters. Nearly 500 homes have been destroyed by Israeli air strikes, and 100,000 people have sought shelter in schools of the UNRWA, where they need food, water and mattresses, Laerke said.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140723053444-014ka/?source=search**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140723053444-014ka/?source=search)

**PLO backs Hamas truce demands in Gaza**

The Palestinian decision-making body led by President Mahmoud Abbas on Wednesday endorsed demands by Hamas for halting Gaza hostilities with Israel, a closing of ranks that may help Egyptian-mediated truce efforts. In a move that could effectively turn Abbas into the main interlocutor for a Gaza truce, his umbrella Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) on Wednesday formally supported core conditions set by the Hamas-led fighters. With Israeli and US encouragement, Egypt has tried to get both sides to hold fire and then negotiate terms for protracted calm in Gaza.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140723012916-26muo/?source=search**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140723012916-26muo/?source=search)

**Israeli shoots Palestinian dead in W. Bank: security source**

An Israeli shot dead a Palestinian who had been throwing stones at his car north of Jerusalem in the West Bank, a Palestinian security source told AFP late Monday. The security source named the fatality as Mahmud Shawamreh, 21. He said the incident took place between Ar-Ram and the Hizma checkpoint, and the body was taken to Israel. Asked for comment, a spokeswoman for the Israeli army said: "The incident in which the Palestinian was killed during a violent riot near Ramallah is being investigated by the military police."

**AFP -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/israeli-shoots-palestinian-dead-w-bank-security-source-215216397.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/israeli-shoots-palestinian-dead-w-bank-security-source-215216397.html)

**Syria**

**UN in Syria vaccination drive against polio – UNICEF mention**

The UN called for help Tuesday to vaccinate 765,000 Syrian toddlers against polio, in a bid to prevent a resurgence of the childhood killer across the restive Middle East. "Inside Syria, 765,000 children under the age of five live in hard-to-reach areas where conflict and restriction make it extremely difficult to reach them with humanitarian assistance including regular access to vaccines," UN agencies said. The UN agencies said they had completed the first phase of the biggest polio vaccination campaign they had ever undertaken in the Middle East, reaching 25 million children under the age of five. More than 6.5 million children are now in need of assistance, according to the UN agencies, which urged access for aid workers to children trapped in war zones inside Syria.

**AFP -** [**http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/140722/un-syria-vaccination-drive-against-childhood-killer**](http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/140722/un-syria-vaccination-drive-against-childhood-killer)

**Rebel-held Damascus hit by fiercest clashes in months**

Rebel-held eastern Damascus was hit by its fiercest fighting in months on 22 July, as the sacking of a Syrian opposition chief deepened divisions among those bidding to oust the Syrian President. More than 40 months on, the regime is estimated to still control 40% of inhabited territory, compared with 25% both for the rebels and the IS, and 10% for Kurds. In eastern Damascus, the fiercest fighting in months raged between opposition and regime fighters at the entrance to the rebel-held district of Jobar, said the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

**AFP -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/east-damascus-hit-fiercest-clashes-months-162307871.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/east-damascus-hit-fiercest-clashes-months-162307871.html)

**700 Syrians killed in two days of conflict**

In what would mark the bloodiest two days of fighting in the Syrian civil war, more than 700 people were reported killed in fighting between government and rebel forces loyal to the radical Islamic State (IS) - more than have been killed during the 15-day-old Gaza conflict that has dominated media attention in recent days. The two-day death toll occurred last Thursday and Friday, with brutal fighting between forces loyal to President Bashar al-Assad and the IS that centered around a gas field, according to reports released this week from the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a British-based anti-Syrian government group that keeps tabs on the war’s dead.

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/7/22/syrian-fighting-violence.html**](http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/7/22/syrian-fighting-violence.html)

**Tunisia**

**Tunisia faces dilemma in anti-Jihadist campaign**

Tunisia has hit back at a deadly jihadist attack on troops by closing mosques and media outlets seen as sympathetic to extremists, raising fears of a return to the censorship of the old regime. In the wake of a July 16 attack which left 15 soldiers dead in Mount Chaambi near the Algerian border, the authorities have laid down a "red line" against criticism of the army and police. Rights groups are warning against curbs on liberties that were hard-won after years of Ben Ali's dictatorship, urging a balance between anti-terror measures and freedom of information.

**AFP -** [**http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/140157-tunisia-faces-dilemma-in-anti-jihadist-campaign**](http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/140157-tunisia-faces-dilemma-in-anti-jihadist-campaign)

**Yemen**

**President urges unity in visit to restive north**

Yemeni President Abdrabuh Mansur Hadi called Wednesday for unity during a visit to the northern city of Amran, briefly seized by Shiite rebels in clashes with government forces and loyal tribes. The capture on July 2 of Amran, just 50 km north of Sanaa, by Huthi rebels threatened a federalization plan that was agreed in February following national talks as part of a political transition. The Huthis, also known as Ansarullah, pulled out few days later after reaching an agreement with the authorities, allowing government forces into the city. "We have to turn a new page and realize that the age of conflicts and wars is over. Our homeland has suffered enough trouble over the past five decades," Hadi said, addressing officials at the government complex in the city.

**AFP -** [**http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/140159-yemen-president-urges-unity-in-visit-to-restive-north**](http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/140159-yemen-president-urges-unity-in-visit-to-restive-north)

SA

**India**

**Monsoon floods in the east kill three people, displace thousands**

Monsoon rains over the past week have caused floods in eastern India, killing three people and forcing thousands of families from their homes, officials and witnesses said. Around 10,000 people have been evacuated to cyclone shelters in Odisha state's worst-hit district of Jajpur after a major river burst its banks, flooding 30 villages. The deluge has also washed away roads, disrupted public transport, and inundated low-lying crop fields. Officials expressed concern the floods could spread to other areas, with more rains expected over the next two days. Rescue and relief teams have been deployed to vulnerable areas.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140722142838-urf7k/?source=hpbreaking**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140722142838-urf7k/?source=hpbreaking)

**Pakistan**

**Struggle against polio needs global attention**

The campaign in Pakistan to contain an uncontrolled outbreak of polio hit an alarming point last week when the nation's tally of new cases exceeded last year's total of 93, with months to go in the emergency effort to vaccinate children over fierce opposition from the Taliban. Fifty-five of the 94 cases reported thus far have occurred in North Waziristan, a Taliban stronghold along the Afghanistan border where hundreds of thousands of people have become refugees since the Pakistani government began a crackdown last month to root out militants. Reports suggest that the refugees are compounding the problem by avoiding special government camps where vaccination is offered, preferring sanctuary with scattered relatives.

**Times Union (NYT) -** [**http://www.timesunion.com/opinion/article/Pakistan-s-struggle-against-polio-needs-global-5636248.php**](http://www.timesunion.com/opinion/article/Pakistan-s-struggle-against-polio-needs-global-5636248.php)

**Vaccinate displaced children, says WHO**

The Adviser to the Chief Minister on Health in Pakistan on Monday ordered that every child displaced from North Waziristan must be vaccinated against polio. The adviser chaired a meeting to review anti-polio arrangements in the Punjab. He asked health officials to vaccinate children in Attock, Mianwali, Bhakkar and Dera Ghazi Khan on priority. Earlier, WHO representative Ubaidul Islam presented a report on the polio situation. He said a special polio drive should be launched in the cities where IDPs were staying. He said a one-day polio campaign on 17 July in 23 “high risk” union councils of Lahore had been a huge success. He said 90% of the designated areas were covered in the campaign.

**Tribune -** [**http://tribune.com.pk/story/739053/fighting-polio-vaccinate-displaced-children-says-who/**](http://tribune.com.pk/story/739053/fighting-polio-vaccinate-displaced-children-says-who/)

**Five girls wounded in acid attacks in Pakistan**

At least five Pakistani girls were wounded in two separate acid attacks by motorcycle riders in the southwestern province of Baluchistan, police said Tuesday. In the latest incident, two unidentified assailants on a motorcycle squirted acid on two girls, aged 14 and 15 in the town of Mastung, some 40 km east of Quetta, the provincial capital of Baluchistan. "One girl's face was wounded and the other's neck got acid burns," local police official Wazir Lango told AFP. The girls were returning from the local market when the attack occurred on Tuesday, Lango said, adding that doctors have not yet specified how severe the wounds were. Lango said that the girls were admitted to hospital, while the police had begun to investigate, but so far the motive behind the attack was unclear.

**Alarabiya-** [**http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/asia/2014/07/22/Five-girls-wounded-in-acid-attacks-in-Pakistan.html**](http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/asia/2014/07/22/Five-girls-wounded-in-acid-attacks-in-Pakistan.html)

WCA

**Across WCA**

**UNHCR renews call on donors to support CAR refugees**

As the outflow of mostly Muslim refugees continues from CAR, many severely weakened, UNHCR and 16 other agencies providing life-saving relief are calling on donors to increase their funding support for programmes in neighbouring host countries. The appeal is a revision of a Regional Refugee Response Plan covering the four asylum countries – Chad, Cameroon, DRC and the Congo – initially launched in April 2014. Over 357,000 CAR refugees are in Cameroon, Chad, DRC and the Congo since the beginning of the crisis in December 2012. Some 160,000 of them have fled since December 2013 after clashes intensified between the Seleka alliance and anti-Balaka militia.

**UNHCR -** [**http://www.unhcr.org/53ce2d906.html**](http://www.unhcr.org/53ce2d906.html)

**Benin**

**Benin detains 10 people in child trafficking probe**

Benin has detained 10 people on suspicions of child-trafficking just weeks after a group in neighbouring Niger was held for links to a "baby factory" ring, police sources said on Tuesday. While it was not immediately clear if there was a connection between the two cases, the latest detentions point to the persistence of human trafficking across West Africa. "There have been around 10 people detained in the civil prison since last week," said Ghislaine Bokovo, director of the Benin police force's central office for child protection. Bokovo did not give further details of this case, such as the age of the children, citing judicial secrecy for an ongoing investigation.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140722213255-vd5gf/?source=search**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140722213255-vd5gf/?source=search)

**CAR**

**Seleka rebels demand partition in Brazzaville talks**

Seleka rebels have demanded that CAR be partitioned, a surprise move at talks aimed at halting religious violence, sources at the meeting said on Tuesday. Seleka's head of delegation to the three-day forum in Brazzaville, General Mohamed Moussa Dhaffane, told a session it was time to formalize the split after tens of thousands of Muslims had fled the south. The talks, bringing together 169 delegates from the transitional government, civil society and armed groups, are aimed at reaching a ceasefire and disarmament of the Seleka rebels and 'anti-balaka' militia.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/sns-rt-us-centralafrica-talks-partition-20140722,0,7320657.story**](http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/sns-rt-us-centralafrica-talks-partition-20140722,0,7320657.story)

**DR Congo**

**DR Congo 'repels' attack on Kinshasa barracks**

An attack on the military barracks of the presidential guards in Kinshasa has been repulsed, the Democratic Republic of Congo government has said. The situation is now under control and a small group of "infiltrators" defeated, the government said. Heavy gunfire earlier rang out from Camp Tshatshi for about 30 minutes. The authorities have not said who was behind the attack. Residents were evacuated from the area around Camp Tshatshi and the international airport was reportedly closed. An unnamed presidential guard officer told the AFP news agency that about 20 people wearing civilian clothes had been overpowered. Another soldier told Reuters that four of the attackers had been killed. An attack on Camp Tshatshi was also repulsed in December 2013.

**BBC -** [**http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-28424549**](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-28424549)

**NGOs against MONUSCO drones for humanitarian work**

International NGOs have rebuffed a recent offer by MONUSCO to use drones for humanitarian information gathering, saying this could represent a dangerous "blurring of the lines" between military and humanitarian actors in the conflict. Drones, or Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), are seen by some within the DRC humanitarian community as potentially providing a "useful technology" for relief operations, Frances Charles, World Vision's advocacy officer in eastern DRC, told IRIN. But to accept MONUSCO's offer would be akin "to handing out food aid from the back of a tank".

IRIN - <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportID=100391>

**Gambia**

**EU pressure aids human rights in Gambia, but activists are wary**

Gambia has taken steps to improve its poor human-rights record after the EU suspended 150 million euros in development aid this year, activists said on Tuesday, urging tougher action by the international community. Gambia received 75 million euros of aid over the past six years from the European Development Fund, but in the spring northern European member states blocked disbursement of further aid, citing grave human rights violations. Gambia President Yahya Jammeh has drawn international condemnation by subjecting political opponents to torture, forcing them to confess to sedition on television and executing prisoners in 2012. At the UN General Assembly in September, he stirred outrage by attacking gay rights as a threat to humanity.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140722194601-qnof3/?source=search**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140722194601-qnof3/?source=search)

**Nigeria**

**Boko Haram virtually controls town of Damboa**

An attack on a Nigerian army base in the northeastern town of Damboa and a massacres against civilians in surrounding villages over the weekend have left Boko Haram in effective control of a swath of territory, witnesses and security sources said. While the insurgents have yet to establish bases in the small garrison town and nearby villages, a power vacuum has existed since Nigerian troops stationed there were pushed out two weeks ago. Raids on Damboa and six surrounding villages on the weekend also drove out 15,000 civilians, leaving the area largely in the hands of the Boko Haram. That might represent Boko Haram's biggest strategic success since a military offensive dislodged it from several cities and towns in Borno last year.

**Reuters -** [**http://in.reuters.com/article/2014/07/22/nigeria-violence-idINKBN0FR20720140722**](http://in.reuters.com/article/2014/07/22/nigeria-violence-idINKBN0FR20720140722)

**Schoolgirls held for 100 days**

More than 200 schoolgirls were kidnapped in northeastern Nigeria on 14 April by the Boko Haram. A total of 276 girls were kidnapped, attracting worldwide condemnation and prompting an international rescue effort. Of that number, 219 are nonetheless still held captive after others managed to escape. The army has been criticised for failing to quell the insurgency, which has killed more than 10,000 people since 2009. A first meeting between the president and the schoolgirls' relatives occurred on 22 July.

**AFP -** [**http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/140722/nigerian-schoolgirls-held-100-days**](http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/140722/nigerian-schoolgirls-held-100-days)

**Sierra Leone**

**Sierra Leone's chief Ebola doctor contracts the virus**

The head doctor fighting the deadly tropical virus Ebola in Sierra Leone has himself caught the disease, the government said. The 39-year-old Sheik Umar Khan, hailed as a "national hero" by the health ministry, was leading the fight to control an outbreak that has killed 206 people in the West African country. Ebola kills up to 90 percent of those infected and there is no cure or vaccine. Across Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, more than 600 people have died from the illness, according to the WHO, placing great strain on the health systems of some of Africa's poorest countries.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140723104654-u3a3p/?source=jtTheWire**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140723104654-u3a3p/?source=jtTheWire)

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: