**UNICEF OPSCEN Brief – Thursday, 28 August 2014**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| [GENERAL](#GENERAL) | **Across Regions** | Egypt, Ethiopia, Sudan tripartite talks end with agreements |
| [CEE/CIS](#CEECIS) | **Ukraine** | Russian forces back separatists with tanks in eastern Ukraine |
|  |  | Rebels seize key coastal town as they open new front near Russia |
| [ESA](#ESA) | **Kenya** | Police shoot dead three criminals near U.N., U.S. sites in Nairobi |
| [MENA](#MENA) | **Across MENA** | Syrian rebels capture sole border crossing between Israel and Syria in Golan Heights |
|  |  | UN aid convoy arrives in Gaza from Egypt |
|  | **Lebanon** | Lebanon plans law to stem growing child marriage trend - UNICEF mention |
|  |  | Lebanese army shells militant positions in Syria border zone |
|  | **Iraq** | UN scales up food supplies for Iraqis fleeing conflict |
|  | **Libya** | U.N. Security Council passes Libya resolution amid concern over secret airstrikes |
|  | **Saudi Arabia** | Saudi Arabia jails 23 more men for militancy in security crackdown |
|  | **State of Palestine/Israel** | Gaza ceasefire has no winners and leaves much unresolved |
|  | **Syria** | Assad appoints a new cabinet |
|  |  | Most victims of Syrian cluster bombs are civilian: Cluster Munition Coalition |
|  | **Yemen** | Yemen’s president warns rebels over mass rallies |
| [SA](#SA) | **Pakistan** | Pakistan set for 'decisive' day of protests |
|  | **Sri Lanka** | Sri Lanka election monitors alarm at escalating violence in run-up to voting |
| [WCA](#WCA) | **Across WCA** | US official says Ebola epidemic will worsen |
|  | **Cameroon** | Cameroon army kills 27 Boko Haram militants in border clashes |
|  | **Niger** | Niger parliament chief, facing probe in baby-trafficking case |

GENERAL

**Across Regions**

**Egypt, Ethiopia, Sudan tripartite talks end with agreements**

Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan agreed to conduct studies on the effects of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) under a six-month deadline, after two days of “honest consultations” in Sudan. The talks were headed by the water ministers of the three countries, who agreed to use one or more international consulting companies to conduct the two studies, recommended in an international report. Egypt’s Water and Irrigation Minister Hossam El-Din Moghazy was cited by state-run MENA as saying Egypt’s acceptance of the dam depends on the results of the studies and that the results are binding to all parties. The GERD, which is currently under construction, has been the cause for much tension between Egypt and Ethiopia because Egypt fears that the dam will have a detrimental effect on its share of Nile water.

**Daily News -** [**http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2014/08/27/egypt-ethiopia-sudan-tripartite-talks-end-agreements/**](http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2014/08/27/egypt-ethiopia-sudan-tripartite-talks-end-agreements/)

CEE/CIS

**Ukraine**

**Russian forces back separatists with tanks in eastern Ukraine**

Separatist forces in eastern Ukraine, backed by Russian tanks and armored personnel carriers, battled government forces on two fronts Thursday, a Ukrainian military official said. The fighting was taking place southeast of Donetsk, and along the nation's southern coast in the town of Novoazovsk, about 12 miles (20 km) from the Russian border, according to Mykhailo Lysenko, the deputy commander of the Ukrainian Donbas battalion.

**CNN -** [**http://edition.cnn.com/2014/08/28/world/europe/ukraine-crisis/index.html?hpt=hp\_t3**](http://edition.cnn.com/2014/08/28/world/europe/ukraine-crisis/index.html?hpt=hp_t3)

**Rebels seize key coastal town as they open new front near Russia**

Pro-Russian rebels in eastern Ukraine seized a key coastal town yesterday in a move which opened a dangerous new front against the Kiev government. Separatist forces flying the flag of the rebel Donetsk People's republic entered the coastal town of Novoazovsk, depriving Ukraine of control of its southernmost section of border with Russia and putting the insurgents within striking distance of the centre of regional government in Mariupol. The lightning advance took place in an area tens of miles from territory previously held by the rebels, suggesting that the troops originated at least in part from the Russian side of the border.

**Telegraph -** [**http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/ukraine/11060054/Ukraine-crisis-rebels-seize-key-coastal-town-as-they-open-new-front-near-Russia.html**](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/ukraine/11060054/Ukraine-crisis-rebels-seize-key-coastal-town-as-they-open-new-front-near-Russia.html)

ESA

**Kenya**

**Police shoot dead three criminals near U.N., U.S. sites in Nairobi**

Police killed three people trying to steal a truck near a United Nations complex and the nearby U.S. embassy in Nairobi on Wednesday, police said, but staff at both sites said they were continuing with normal business soon afterwards. Many Kenyans and foreigners in Nairobi have been vigilant since Islamist gunmen attacked the Westgate shopping mall in the capital in September last year, leaving at least 67 people dead. Other attacks have targeted Nairobi and other areas since then. Initial news of the incident provoked twitter traffic - a symptom of nervousness that still prevails. But it later proved to be an apparent criminal incident.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/08/27/us-kenya-security-idUSKBN0GR1F120140827**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/08/27/us-kenya-security-idUSKBN0GR1F120140827)

MENA

**Across MENA**

**Syrian planes bomb border post near Israel captured by rebels**

Syrian jets shelled rebel positions near a border crossing close to the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights that was seized by rebels in some of the heaviest clashes in the strategic area this year, rebels and residents said on Thursday. Al Qaeda's Syria wing Nusra alongside moderate rebel groups who had launched the attack early on Wednesday on the border post were "holding ground" despite the heavy bombardment, according to a source in the Islamist Beit al Maqdis brigade, whose fighters were involved in the fighting.Abu Iyas al Horani, a spokesman for another rebel group operating in the area, said at least six rebels were killed in the latest spillover of violence in the area that lies almost 20 kilometers west of the town of Quneitra, the main urban center, which is under state control.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/08/28/us-syria-crisis-border-fighting-idUSKBN0GS03J20140828**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/08/28/us-syria-crisis-border-fighting-idUSKBN0GS03J20140828)

**Washington Post -** [**http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle\_east/syrian-rebels-capture-sole-border-crossing-between-israel-and-syria-in-golan-heights/2014/08/27/529a3be5-2ac5-4656-bf8c-62dd7bfbc4d0\_story.html**](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/syrian-rebels-capture-sole-border-crossing-between-israel-and-syria-in-golan-heights/2014/08/27/529a3be5-2ac5-4656-bf8c-62dd7bfbc4d0_story.html)

**UN aid convoy arrives in Gaza from Egypt**

A UN humanitarian aid convoy crossed into Gaza from Egypt on Wednesday for the first time since a blockade was introduced on the territory in 2007. WFP said the convoy, which entered Gaza through the Rafah crossing, carried enough food to last 150 000 people for five days. The delivery follows 50 days of the deadliest violence in a decade between Hamas and Israel, which appears to have ended after a new long-term ceasefire was reached on Tuesday.

**AFP -** [**http://www.news24.com/World/News/UN-aid-convoy-arrives-in-Gaza-from-Egypt-20140827**](http://www.news24.com/World/News/UN-aid-convoy-arrives-in-Gaza-from-Egypt-20140827)

**Lebanon**

**Lebanon plans law to stem growing child marriage trend – UNICEF mentioned**

There are no official statistics on child marriage in Lebanon, but it takes place in several rural areas in the country and has risen with the influx of Syrian refugees, experts say. Now, Lebanon is trying to tackle the problem with legislation that would give civil authorities a role in an area that is usually the preserve of clerics. "It was a marginal phenomenon in both Lebanon and Syria, but since the war, marrying off a girl has come to mean one less mouth to feed," said Jihane Latrous, a child protection specialist at UNICEF.

**AFP -** [**https://now.mmedia.me/lb/en/lebanonnews/561719-lebanon-plans-law-to-stem-growing-child-marriage-trend**](https://now.mmedia.me/lb/en/lebanonnews/561719-lebanon-plans-law-to-stem-growing-child-marriage-trend)

**Lebanese army shells militant positions in Syria border zone**

The Lebanese army shelled militant positions in the border zone with Syria on Wednesday near a town that was seized by radical insurgents earlier this month, a security source said. It was the first such engagement since the radical militants including fighters affiliated to Islamic State withdrew from the town of Arsal three weeks ago following five days of deadly battles with the army. The army opened fire with artillery after observing suspicious movement by the militants, the source said. There was no immediate information on casualties. Earlier, Syrian warplanes had bombed the same area, the source said.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/08/27/us-lebanon-security-idUSKBN0GR29420140827**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/08/27/us-lebanon-security-idUSKBN0GR29420140827)

**Iraq**

**UN scales up food supplies for Iraqis fleeing conflict**

WFP said Wednesday that a convoy of supplies had reached 2,000 desperate families, crammed into the Iraqi city of Karbala after fleeing jihadist attacks. It said the delivery brings to 700,000 the total number of Iraqis receiving WFP assistance since June, when Sunni jihadists who already held part of Syria swept across swathes of Iraq.

**AFP -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/un-scales-food-supplies-iraqis-fleeing-conflict-195843477.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/un-scales-food-supplies-iraqis-fleeing-conflict-195843477.html)

**Libya**

**U.N. Security Council passes Libya resolution amid concern over secret airstrikes**

Libya warned the U.N. Security Council on Wednesday that the North African state could descend into full-scale civil war if heavily armed warring factions are not disarmed. The U.N. Security Council unanimously approved a resolution on Libya on Wednesday that calls for an immediate ceasefire and includes sanctions for those involved in violence there. The Security Council's move came amid worsening conflict in Libya -- and a day after the Pentagon said it believes Egypt and the United Arab Emirates have been conducting secret airstrikes in the North African nation.

**CNN -** [**http://edition.cnn.com/2014/08/27/world/africa/libya-unrest/**](http://edition.cnn.com/2014/08/27/world/africa/libya-unrest/)

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/08/27/us-libya-security-un-idUSKBN0GR1TT20140827**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/08/27/us-libya-security-un-idUSKBN0GR1TT20140827)

**Saudi Arabia**

**Saudi Arabia jails 23 more men for militancy in security crackdown**

A Saudi Arabian court sentenced 23 men to jail terms of up to 22 years for their role in militant attacks, state media said on Wednesday, part of a security crackdown in which scores of people have been imprisoned over the past week. On Tuesday state media reported that 17 men had been jailed for terms of up to 33 years. Last week, 48 men were sentenced to prison terms of up to 30 years and one was condemned to death for militant crimes. Those jailed have been convicted of crimes including "breaking allegiance to the ruler", espousing a militant ideology, traveling to fight in foreign conflicts, setting up cells to attack foreigners and manufacturing explosives.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/08/27/us-saudi-militants-idUSKBN0GR27J20140827**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/08/27/us-saudi-militants-idUSKBN0GR27J20140827)

**State of Palestine/Israel**

**Gaza ceasefire has no winners and leaves much unresolved**

Israel and Palestinians both boasted of victory in the Gaza war but analysts say Hamas received only promises while the conflict aggravated divisions in the Israeli leadership. "After 50 days of fighting, both sides were exhausted so that's why they reached a ceasefire," said Middle East analyst Eyal Zisser of the Israeli Moshe Dayan Institute. Seven weeks of fighting cost the lives of 2,143 Palestinians and ravaged the Gaza Strip, where the Islamist Hamas movement has de facto power. On the Israeli side 70 died -- their heaviest toll in a conflict since 2006.

**AFP -** [**http://www.ndtv.com/article/world/gaza-ceasefire-has-no-winners-and-leaves-much-unresolved-582897**](http://www.ndtv.com/article/world/gaza-ceasefire-has-no-winners-and-leaves-much-unresolved-582897)

**Syria**

**Assad appoints a new cabinet**

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad issued a decree to form a new government on Wednesday, keeping most key ministers in place. Assad was sworn in for a new seven-year term on July 16 after a presidential election that confirmed his grip on power, a process that required him to name a new government. He re-appointed Wael al-Halaqi as prime minister, having first given him the job 2012 after his predecessor, Riad Hijab, fled Syria to join the opposition. Halaqi, who wields little power in a system dominated by the president, survived a bomb attack on his convoy in Damascus last year.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/08/27/us-syria-crisis-government-idUSKBN0GR1R420140827**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/08/27/us-syria-crisis-government-idUSKBN0GR1R420140827)

**Most victims of Syrian cluster bombs are civilian**: **Cluster Munition Coalition**

Cluster bomb attacks and unexploded munitions killed or injured nearly 1,600 people in Syria in the past two years – 97 percent of them civilians – Cluster Munition Coalition (CMC) said on Wednesday. “Appallingly, last year in [Syria](http://www.reuters.com/places/syria?lc=int_mb_1001) there were more casualties and civilian suffering from cluster munitions than at any other time or place since Monitor reporting began,” said Megan Burke of the Survivor Network Project, editor of the casualties and victim assistance chapter of the report. Two U.N. General Assembly resolutions condemned the Syrian government’s use of cluster bombs in 2013, and a U.N. Security Council resolution in May 2014 expressed serious concern at their use by South Sudan.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/08/27/us-foundation-clusterbombs-report-idUSKBN0GR1CQ20140827**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/08/27/us-foundation-clusterbombs-report-idUSKBN0GR1CQ20140827)

**Yemen**

**Yemen’s president warns rebels over mass rallies**

Yemen’s president has warned Shiite rebels leading mass protests in the country’s capital that the United States and other world powers oppose the demonstrations. President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi’s remarks Wednesday, carried by Yemen’s official SABA news agency, came as Hawthi leader Abdel-Malek al-Hawthi vowed to continue the demonstrations until his demands are met. The protesters want Yemen’s government to step down and for fuel subsidies to be restored.

**AP -** [**http://www.salon.com/2014/08/27/yemens\_president\_warns\_rebels\_over\_mass\_rallies/**](http://www.salon.com/2014/08/27/yemens_president_warns_rebels_over_mass_rallies/)

SA

**Pakistan**

**Pakistan set for 'decisive' day of protests**

Tens of thousands of protesters are preparing to convene in the Pakistani capital Islamabad, in the "deciding day" of a bid to bring down Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, after discussions between opposition groups and the government ended without agreement. Anti-government cleric Tahir ul-Qadri, who has a huge following and runs a network of Islamic schools and hospitals, told his supporters on Thursday he had "shut the door" on further talks and urged them to prepare for a decisive day in their campaign against Sharif. "Thursday will be Revolution Day," he told a roaring crowd. "We will not go forward from tomorrow as it will be the deciding day."

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2014/08/pakistan-set-decisive-day-protests-2014828640256887.html**](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2014/08/pakistan-set-decisive-day-protests-2014828640256887.html)

**Sri Lanka**

**Sri Lanka election monitors alarm at escalating violence in run-up to voting**

Sri Lankan election monitors on Wednesday voiced alarm at escalating violence in the run up to provincial elections next month with over 20 opposition party offices attacked this week. Election monitors, including the People's Action for Free and Fair Elections (PAFFREL) and Campaign for Free and Fair Elections (CaFFE), have released statements calling on the Elections Commissioner and police chief to take action to stop the violence in the Uva province of the country.

**Xinhua -** [**http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/xinhua-news-agency/140827/sri-lanka-election-monitors-alarm-at-escalating-violence-run**](http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/xinhua-news-agency/140827/sri-lanka-election-monitors-alarm-at-escalating-violence-run)

WCA

**Across West Africa**

**US official says Ebola epidemic will worsen**

The Ebola outbreak in West Africa is going to get worse before it gets better, according to the top US public health official.  Tom Frieden, the director of the Centers for Disease Control, said the epidemic would need an "unprecedented" response to bring it under control.  Health ministers from across West Africa are due to meet in Ghana to discuss the growing crisis.  The World Health Organization says the outbreak has killed 1,427 people.  The health body says it is the largest ever Ebola epidemic and has infected an estimated 2,615 people.

**BBC -** [**http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-28961944**](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-28961944)

**Cameroon**

**Cameroon army kills 27 Boko Haram militants in border clashes**

Cameroon's army has killed 27 members of Boko Haram near a northern town, state radio said on Wednesday, in a sign of the growing cross-border threat the militants pose. The Boko Haram fighters crossed the border into Cameroon earlier this week, after attacking a military base and police station in Nigeria and apparently sending some 480 Nigerian troops retreating across the frontier.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/08/27/us-cameroon-nigeria-boko-haram-idUSKBN0GR1G520140827**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/08/27/us-cameroon-nigeria-boko-haram-idUSKBN0GR1G520140827)

**Niger**

**Niger parliament chief, facing probe in baby-trafficking case, 'discreetly' leaves country**

Niger's head of parliament, who faces questioning in a probe into international baby-trafficking, has "discreetly" left the country for Burkina Faso, an opposition official said. Hama Amadou is suspected of "complicity" in the trafficking of babies born in Nigeria and trafficked into Niger via Benin. But Amadou, who is considered the leading challenger to President Mahamadou Issoufou ahead of elections in 2016, has denounced the charges as politically motivated and said they would involve a breach of his parliamentary immunity.

**CentNews** - <http://www.centnews.com/World/Niger-parliament-chief-facing-probe-in-baby-trafficking-case-discreetly-leaves-country/S-2014-08-28/86500.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:

**UNICEF Operations Centre (OPSCEN)**  
*Providing assistance 24 hours a day*  
  
Tel:       +1 212 326 7222  
Fax:      +1 212 303 7924  
Bberry: +1 917 582 3620 (for SMS)  
Sat:      +870 761 112 299  
Email:   [opscen@unicef.org](mailto:opscen@unicef.org)

Skype:  opscen.unicef  
\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
  
UNITE FOR CHILDREN