

NEWS IN  
brief

## Iraq blasts kill 25

AFP, Baghdad

Ten car bombs in central Iraq, including five in Baghdad, killed at least 25 people yesterday, officials said, after another series of blasts the day before.

Iraqi authorities have so far failed to curb a year-long surge in violence plaguing the country, despite carrying out wide-ranging operations against militants. Attacks and clashes have killed more than 480 people so far this month and over 1,450

## Musharraf at court for first 'treason' hearing

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan's ex-ruler Pervez Musharraf became the first former army chief to appear in a national court yesterday in a treason case seen as a test of civilian rule over the country's powerful army.

He faces treason charges, which can carry the death penalty, over his suspension of the constitution and imposition of a state of emergency in 2007 while

## Pussy Riot members 'arrested' in Sochi

AFP, Sochi

The two members of Russian punk group Pussy Riot who were released from prison colonies late last year said they had both been arrested yesterday in downtown Sochi during the Olympic Games.

Nadezhda Tolokonnikova and Maria Alyokhina and at least half a dozen others were arrested in the centre of the Winter Games host city over accusations of theft from a local hotel. They were released later.

## Indian police kill seven Maoist rebels

AFP, Mumbai

Indian police killed seven Maoists yesterday during an operation hailed as a victory for security forces in a rebel stronghold known as the "Red Corridor".

Police came under attack in a jungle area of Gadchiroli district in Maharashtra, sparking an exchange of fire between the two groups, said local police spokesman

## EU eases Zimbabwe sanctions

AFP, Brussels

The European Union on Monday lifted a visa ban and assets freeze against members of Zimbabwe's ruling elite with the exception of President Robert Mugabe and his wife, who remain blacklisted, EU diplomats said.

As the EU continues to ease sanctions against Harare as an encouragement to reform, the 28-nation bloc was expected to take a significant political step yesterday by agreeing to

## Saudi Arabia gets first female editor

CNN ONLINE

Like other Saudi women, she's not allowed to drive or move around freely. But Somaya Jabarti will soon be setting the news agenda for thousands of readers in the Middle Eastern kingdom. Jabarti has been appointed editor of a major newspaper, the English-language Saudi Gazette.

Jabarti's appointment has generated praise on social media. But it remains to be seen how it will be received by the larger public in the conservative kingdom. She will take over the newspaper amid significant challenges to press freedom in Saudi Arabia which ranks near the bottom of coun-

## SECOND PHASE OF NUKE TALKS

## Iran, world powers meet to push deal to next level

AFP, Vienna

Nuclear talks between Iran and world powers moved into new territory yesterday as negotiators embarked on what both sides predicted will be a long and difficult path towards a lasting deal.

In a nutshell this historic accord would let Iran retain its civilian nuclear programme, but on a modest scale and with enough oversight to make developing atomic weapons all but impossible.

Success could lead to Iran and Washington normalising relations after a 35-year chill and could even bear fruit in other areas, such as Syria. But failure might lead to conflict.

The scheduled three-day meeting in Vienna between Iran, the US, China, Russia, Britain, France and Germany follows an interim deal struck in Geneva in November that they now want to transform into a permanent agreement.

Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who yesterday took to Twitter to denounce nuclear weapons,



*I repeat it again that I am not optimistic about the negotiations and they will lead nowhere*

Ayatollah Khamenei

set a cautious tone Monday, saying this effort would "go nowhere", but that he was not against trying.

Abbas Araqchi, a senior Iranian negotiator, told Iranian media in Vienna that a deal was a "big task, and we have long and complicated negotiations ahead of us".

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif was more upbeat, saying: "We believe we can reach an agreement and we have come here with the political will to reach a final agreement."

A spokesman for the powers' lead negotiator, EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton, said the aim of this Vienna round was a "workable framework to facilitate these negotiations".

Iran has long been suspected of seeking atomic weapons, despite its denials, and the US and Israel -- assumed to have a large atomic arsenal itself -- have never ruled out military action.

Under the "comprehensive" solution that the parties aim to sew up by November, the six powers want Iran to scale back for a "long-term duration" its nuclear programme.

This might include closing the underground Fordo facility, slashing the number of uranium centrifuges, cutting the stockpile of fissile material, altering a new reactor being built at Arak and tougher UN inspections.

In exchange, all UN Security Council, US and EU sanctions on Iran -- which are costing it billions of dollars every week in lost oil revenues, wreaking havoc on the economy -- would be lifted.

## ROW OVER DETAINED MARINES

## Italy takes tough line, recalls envoy to India

AFP, Rome

Italy yesterday recalled its ambassador to India and summoned the Indian ambassador to express its concern over a delay in court proceedings against two Italian marines accused of killing two Indian fishermen.

Ambassador Basant Kumar Gupta was summoned "to express the bewilderment and profound disappointment of the Italian government", the foreign ministry said.

The move came just hours after Italy recalled its ambassador from India, Daniele Mancini, in protest over what it described as "a new and unacceptable delay by the Indian Supreme Court".

"The Indian judicial authorities' delaying tactics -- two years on from the incident -- are unacceptable and indicate an Indian desire to procrastinate beyond all limits," Italy's secretary general of the foreign ministry, Michele Valensise, said in a statement.

Italian authorities have lobbied the European Union and the United Nations on the case, saying Latorre and Girone should be tried in Italy because it says the incident took place in international waters. India denies this, saying it happened in Indian waters.

The two marines, Massimiliano Latorre and Salvatore Girone, who are staying at the Italian embassy in New Delhi, are accused of killing two Indian fishermen they mistook for pirates while guarding a cargo ship in 2012.



Daniele Mancini

## India LS okays Telangana bill

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Amidst din, Indian parliament yesterday passed a controversial bill to create Telangana, the country's 29th state, out of southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh.

The Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Bill, 2014 was adopted by voice vote along with several official amendments, with main opposition BJP coming on board.

Moving the bill for consideration and passage, Home Minister Sushilkumar Shinde said the federal government will give special financial package to Seemandhra, residual part of Andhra Pradesh, to address the grievances of the people of that region.

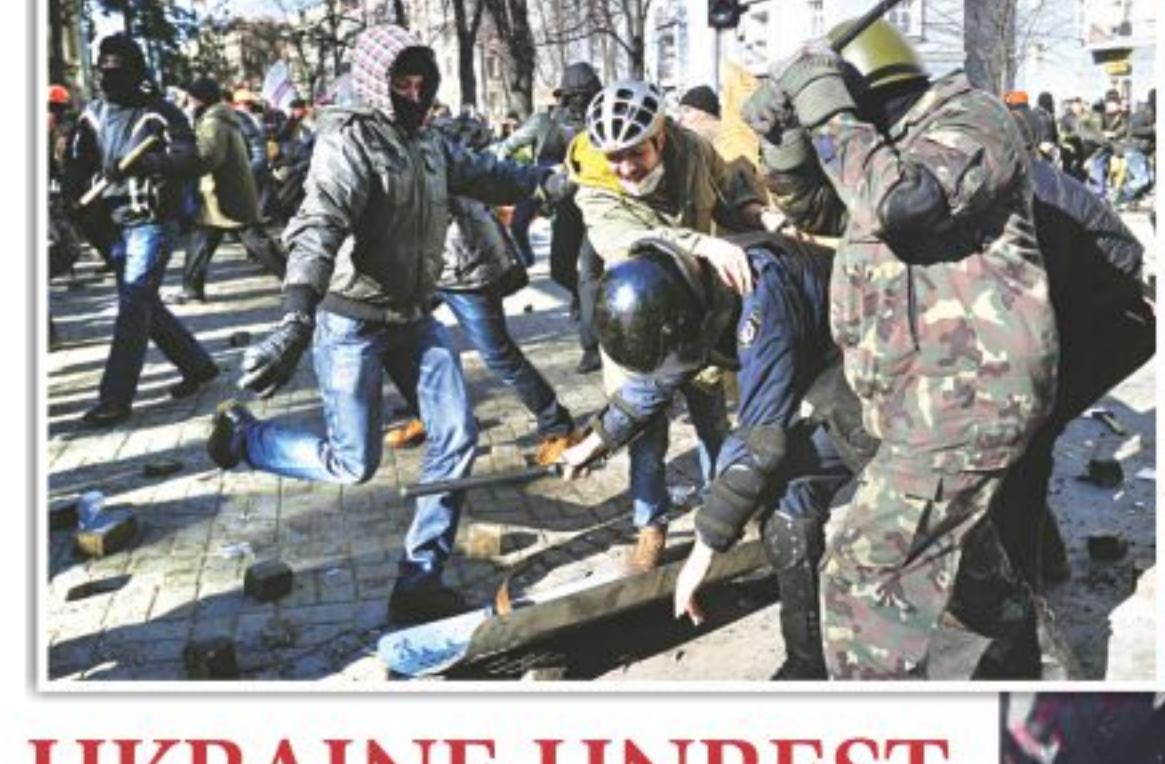
Creation of Telangana has been fiercely opposed by Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Kiran Reddy who is expected to quit Congress party tomorrow, one of his aides said today.

Y S Jaganmohan Reddy, a local lawmaker who also opposes the division and whose father is a former chief minister of Andhra Pradesh, described it as "black day in India's history".

"While the introduction of this bill itself was done undemocratically ... the way the bill has been passed has killed democracy in broad daylight," Jaganmohan Reddy told reporters after the vote had taken place.

Many lawmakers protested the way the bill was passed in the din, saying it was against the democratic norms and a "black day" in the country's democracy.

The Bill was passed after a very brief discussion in which only Leader of the Opposition Sushma Swaraj and federal minister S Jaipal Reddy, a pro-Telangana Congress leader from Andhra Pradesh, spoke.



## UKRAINE UNREST

Cops shield themselves during clashes with anti-government protesters in central Kiev, yesterday. Inset, Anti-government protesters beat a policeman during the clashes. At least 7 people died yesterday as police began an assault on the main anti-government protest camp in Kiev. Alarmed by the escalating violence, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon appealed for restraint and a "genuine dialogue" in strife-torn country.

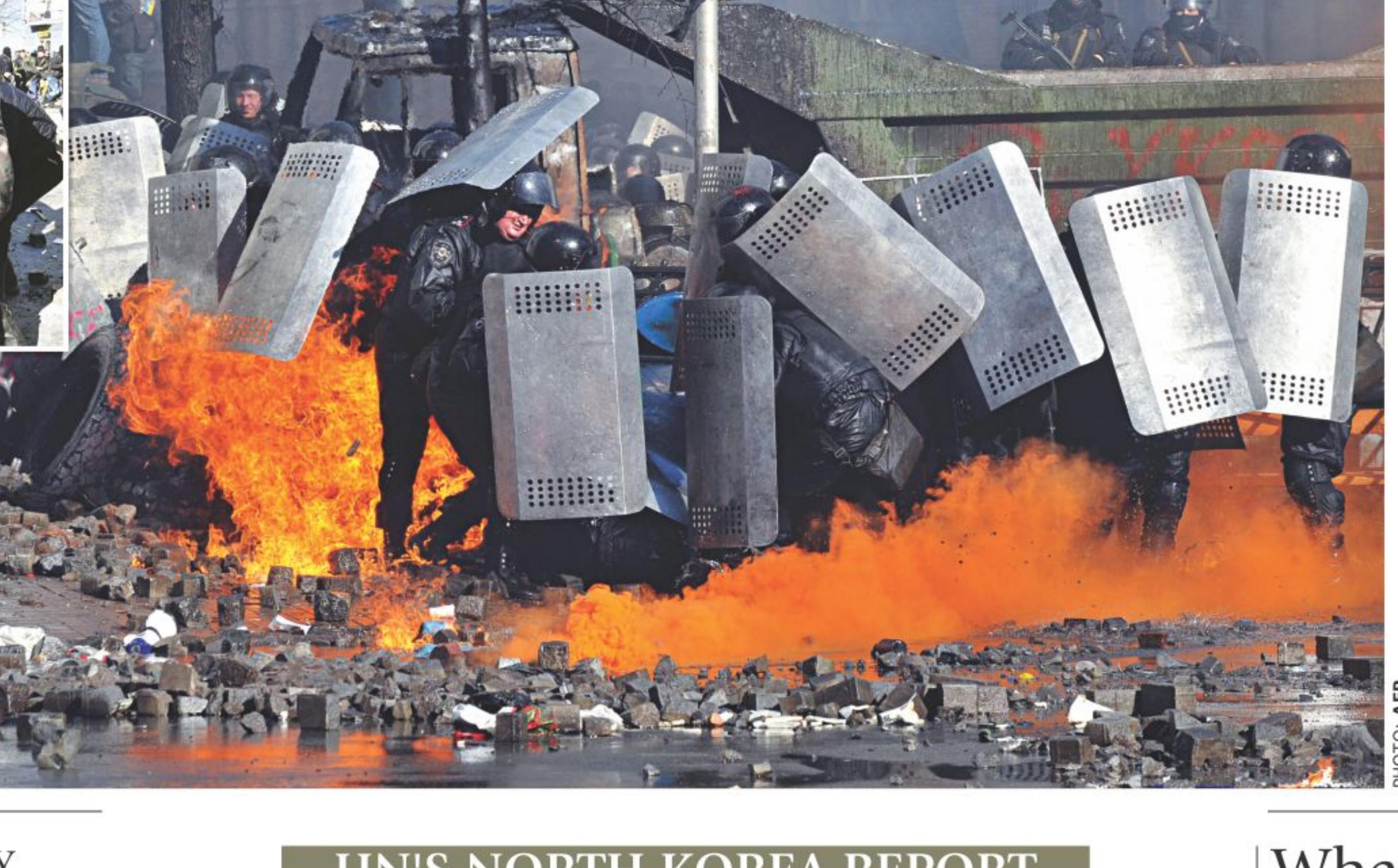


PHOTO: AFP

CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY  
Atrocities exposed, but what next?

AFP, Seoul

Defectors and activists yesterday welcomed a UN-mandated inquiry's searing indictment of gross human rights abuses in North Korea, but analysts questioned the international community's ability to act on its recommendations.

Pyongyang's grim rights record has already been well documented by specialist monitors. But the size, breadth and detail of the report compiled by the Commission of Inquiry (COI) on North Korea -- and the UN imprimatur it carries -- set it apart.

The COI report detailed murder, enslavement, torture, imprisonment, rape, forced abortions and other sexual violence in North Korea, which chairman Michael Kirby said carried echoes of the Nazi Holocaust.

Hong Soon-Kyung, a defector who now heads the Seoul-based Committee for the Democratization of North Korea, told AFP that no report could truly reflect the brutality of the regime in the North.

Although the COI's findings were nothing new to those working on North Korean rights issues, Hong said their publication was a "very meaningful step" with a UN mandate that would help pressure Pyongyang and its few backers.

The COI panel said its leaders should be brought before an international court for a litany of crimes against humanity -- a recommendation that many observers suggested was wishful thinking.

Any substantive action on the part of the world community would require the participation of the North's key ally China, which has made clear it opposes any move to refer the Pyongyang leadership to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Noted North Korea watcher Leonid Petrov said there was no simple solution in the current context of a diplomatically isolated, totalitarian state whose leadership is intent on survival at all costs.

The issue of rights abuses "cannot be resolved unilaterally, nor swiftly, without transforming the political climate of the whole region", said Petrov, a researcher at Australia National University.

This would require, he argued, formally ending the Korean War -- which concluded in 1953 with a ceasefire rather than a peace treaty -- as well as diplomatic recognition of North Korea and the lifting of sanctions imposed for its nuclear programme.

Otherwise the North would remain in a "perpetual and assiduously cultivated state of emergency" in which human rights were sacrificed on the altar of regime survival.

"Without the goodwill of regional policymakers to address the problem of the Korean War especially, the issue of human rights in Korea is unlikely to be resolved," Petrov added.

## Violations of freedom of expression and religion

A United Nations panel has accused North Korea of crimes against humanity, including systematic extermination, torture, rape, forced abortions and starvation. It is recommending prosecution of the country's top leaders by the International Criminal Court.

accommodation they had; what occupations they were assigned to; whether they were effectively able to attend school, in particular university; how much food they received; and even whom they might marry. However, the system is losing its grip day by day.

## Lack of the freedom of movement and residence

The systems of indoctrination and discrimination on the basis of social class are reinforced and safeguarded by a policy of isolating citizens from contact with each other and with the outside world, violating all aspects of the right to freedom of movement.

The state decides where citizens must live and work, violating their freedom of choice... This has created a socioeconomically and physically segregated society, where people considered politically loyal to the leadership can live and work in favourable locations, whereas families of persons who are considered politically suspect are relegated to marginalised areas. The state imposes a virtually absolute ban on ordinary citizens travelling abroad, thereby violating their human right to leave the country.

## Discrimination

It is a rigidly stratified society with entrenched patterns of discrimination... Discrimination is rooted in the songbun system, which classifies people on the basis of state-assigned social class and birth, and also includes consideration of political opinions and religion. Songbun intersects with gender-based discrimination, which is equally pervasive.

The songbun system used to be the most important factor in determining where individuals were allowed to live; what sort of

regime over those deemed expendable. The state has practised discrimination with regard to access to and distribution of food based on the songbun system. In addition, it privileges certain parts of the country, such as Pyongyang, over others. While conditions have changed since the 1990s, hunger and malnutrition continue to be widespread.

## Prison camps: Arbitrary detention, executions

The police and security forces of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea systematically employ violence and punishments that amount to gross human rights violations in order to create a climate of fear that pre-empts any challenge to the current system of government and to the ideology underpinning it.

Persons who are found to have engaged in major political crimes are "disappeared", without trial or judicial order, to political prison camps (kwanliso).

In the political prison camps of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the inmate population has been gradually eliminated through deliberate starvation, forced labour, executions, torture, rape and the denial of reproductive rights enforced through punishment, forced abortion and infanticide. The commission estimates that hundreds of thousands of politi-

## What's going on in Syria is an abomination

Stephen Hawking says he can't watch it anymore

THE GUARDIAN ONLINE

Today in Syria we see modern technology in the form of bombs, chemicals and other weapons being used to further so-called intelligent political ends. But it does not feel intelligent to watch as more than 100,000 people are killed or while children are targeted. It feels downright stupid, and worse, to prevent humanitarian supplies from reaching clinics where, as Save the Children will document in a forthcoming report, children are having limbs amputated for lack of basic facilities, and newborn babies are dying in incubators for lack of power.

What's happening in Syria is an abomination, one that the world is watching coldly from a distance. Where is our emotional intelligence, our sense of collective justice?

We must work together to end this war and to protect the children of Syria. The international community has watched from the sidelines for three years as this conflict rages, engulfing all hope. As a father and grandfather I watch the suffering of Syria's children and must now say: no more.

I often wonder what we must look like to other beings watching from deep space. As we look out at the universe, we are looking back in time, because light leaving distant objects reaches us much, much later. What does the light emitting from Earth today show? When people see our past, will we be proud of what they are shown -- how we, as brothers, treat each other? How we allow our brothers to treat our children?

## Truce agreed around Damascus

Syria's army and rebels have agreed local truces in key flashpoints around Damascus, despite regime and opposition representatives failing to make any progress in Geneva peace talks.

In the southern suburb of Babbila, AFP journalists on Monday saw rebels and soldiers -- all armed -- in conversation, which would have been unthinkable just days ago.

The local truces come 18 months into fierce fighting in and around the capital that has led rebels and regime forces to compromise, with neither side able to clinch victory. In addition to Babbila, deals have been struck for Qudsaya, Moadamiyat al-Sham, Barzeh, Beit Sahem, Yalda and Yarmuk Palestinian refugee camp. Negotiated by public figures, a siege was lifted and food allowed in to rebel-held areas, with opposition fighters handing over heavy weapons and the

## SONGUN POLICY

Songun is North Korean "military first" policy, prioritising the Korean People's Army in the affairs of state and allocation of resources. "Military first" as a principle guides political and economic life in North Korea, with "military-first politics" dominating the political system; "a line of military-first economic construction" acting as an economic system; and "military-first ideology" serving as the guiding ideology. Songun elevates the Korean People's Army within North Korea as an organization and as a state function, granting it the primary position in the North Korean government and society. It guides domestic policy and international interac-

tions. Songun is also the ideological concept behind a shift in policies since 1994 which emphasise the people's military over all other aspects of state and society.

