

Ukraine clears Russian aid convoy

CNN ONLINE

The Ukrainian government has recognized the contents of 262 Russian vehicles as humanitarian aid for war-weary civilians in the eastern part of the country, according to a statement from the Ukrainian Cabinet office.

"Taking into account President Poroshenko's initiative to receive humanitarian aid from the international humanitarian mission under the supervision of ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross), we recognize the cargo listed below as humanitarian aid," a statement from Ukraine's government website reads.

Months of fighting has killed hundreds of people and, aid groups say, left thousands in eastern Ukraine without access to water, electricity and proper medical aid.

However, it may be awhile before the food, water and medicine reaches those who need it.

Pascal Cuttat, head of the International Committee of the Red Cross delegation in Moscow, says there are still "basic technical details" that need to be discussed.

The convoy's inspection will "not realistically" happen today, said Victoria Zotikova, a spokeswoman for the ICRC.

Moscow says the trucks contain grain, sugar, baby food, medical supplies and sleeping bags -- a claim that Kiev initially viewed as suspect. The aid has been a source of diplomatic tension between the two countries, as Ukraine worries that the aid convoy could be a "Trojan horse" carrying military equipment for pro-Russian rebels fighting the new government in Kiev.

NEWSINbrief

Australia to take refugees from Syria, Iraq

AFP, Sydney

Australia will offer to resettle some 4,400 people fleeing violence in Iraq and Syria, Immigration Minister Scott Morrison said yesterday, adding the places had been freed up by success in stopping asylum-seeker boats. Boat arrivals have all but dried up since Australia said it would refuse resettlement to any refugees arriving on unauthorised vessels, sending them instead to Papua New Guinea and Nauru in the Pacific.

Germany against independent Kurd state

AFP, Berlin

Germany is opposed to the formation of an independent state by Iraq's Kurds, who are currently battling Islamic State jihadists with Western help, Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier said yesterday. "An independent Kurdish state would further destabilise the region and trigger new tensions, maybe with the neighbouring Iraqi state as well," he told the Bild newspaper in an interview. The aim, he added, "was to manage to preserve Iraq's territorial integrity".

Saharanpur riots: BJP's role questioned

PTI, Lucknow

A five-member committee headed by UP minister Shihpal Yadav, which probed the communal violence in Saharanpur that left three people dead, has blamed administrative lapses for the incident and questioned the role of BJP. BJP has dismissed the report as an attempt by the Samajwadi Party to gain political mileage.



Hamad (R) and Mohammed (L) sit in a destroyed apartment building where they lived with their families in the neighborhood of Al-Shaas in the north of the Gaza Strip enclave on Saturday. The men's families live in a UN-run school where they had taken refuge, but the men remain and sleep overnight in the shell of a building to watch over what little is left. The UN estimates about 10,000 Palestinian homes were destroyed by fighting between Israel and Hamas displacing hundreds of thousands of people living in the Gaza Strip.

PHOTO: AFP

Iraq unites to fight militants

Kurds advance on to retake key dam; Sunni tribes hit jihadists

AFP, Baghdad

Kurdish fighters backed by US warplanes pushed back jihadists around Iraq's largest dam yesterday, as Sunni Arab tribesmen and security forces joined the fight against the militants making it a turning point in the fightback against the jihadists and their allies.

Two months of violence have brought Iraq to the brink of breakup, and world powers relieved by the exit of divisive premier Nuri al-Maliki were sending aid to the hundreds of thousands who have fled their homes as well as arms to the Kurds.

Kurdish fighters were advancing on Mosul dam, which the Islamic State (IS) fighters seized a week ago, but their progress was being hampered by roadside bombs, Kurdish officials said.

The dam on the Tigris river north of Iraq's second city provides electricity and irrigation water for farming to much of the region.

Kurd officials said they have recaptured half of the Mosul dam area and they are pushing for

recapturing the total facility.

It recapture would be the first major prize won back from the jihadists since they launched their shock offensive in early June, routing the security forces across much of northern and western Iraq.

An AFP journalist saw towers of smoke rising from the dam area yesterday.

The US military said it carried out nine air strikes on Saturday in support of Kurdish forces. US Central Command said warplanes and drones had destroyed or damaged four armoured personnel carriers, seven armed vehicles, two Humvees and an armoured vehicle.

Buoyed by the air strikes US President Barack Obama ordered last week, Kurdish forces have tried to claw back the ground they have lost since the start of this month, when the jihadists went back on the offensive north, east and west of Mosul.

In Anbar province, west of Baghdad, security forces backed by Sunni Arab tribal militia, who threw their weight behind a counter-offensive against the jihadists on Friday, made gains west of

the provincial capital Ramadi, police said.

Fighting was also taking place near the strategic Euphrates Valley town of Haditha, which hosts another important dam, Police Staff Major General Ahmed Sadag said.

The rallying of more than two dozen Sunni tribes to the government side marked a potential turning point in the fightback against the jihadists and their allies.

When the jihadists began their Iraq offensive on June 9, Kurdish forces initially fared better than federal government troops, many of whom simply fled.

Many in and outside Iraq say the Shia-led government was partly to blame by pushing sectarian policies that have marginalised and radicalised the Sunni Arab minority.

Maliki was seen as an obstacle to any progress, and his announcement on Thursday that he was abandoning his efforts to cling to power was welcomed with a sigh of relief at home and abroad.

Obama is making a mistake

Yazidis say massacre is far from over
INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A leading Yazidi politician said on Saturday that he was preparing to make a last stand in his home village in northern Iraq, as members of the religious minority warned that another massacre of civilians by the extremist militants of the Islamic State showed that the crisis was far from over.

The comment came a day after US President Barack Obama said it was no longer necessary to carry out a military evacuation of Mount Sinjar -- where tens of thousands of people had been trapped by militants earlier -- since many people had managed to escape following US air strikes.

But a leading Yazidi activist, Dr Mirza Dinnayi, who had spoken to Kocho's senior official before the massacre, claimed there were still 25,000 people in the area and described Obama's remarks as "a very big mistake".

When the US said that the siege of Sinjar was effectively over, "this encouraged Islamic State to attack 24 hours later", he told Jonathan Rugman, of Channel 4 News. "We had a massacre yesterday [and] could have another."

Citing sources from neighbouring villages, he said 350 people were killed in Kocho by the militants and 1,000 women taken captive. A Kurdish official said a total of about 400 people had been killed on Friday and yesterday.

A 42-year-old man who was wounded in the attack, but who escaped by playing dead, told the Associated Press that the militants had taken the men away in groups of a few dozen and shot them with assault rifles on the outskirts of the village. The



fighters then walked among the bodies, firing again at anyone who appeared to still be alive.

In the village of Ba'adra, 25km away from the front line, Mohma Khalil Hasan, a Yazidi who is an MP in the Kurdistan Democratic Party, was preparing for battle. Some people have fled Ba'adra, just north of Mosul, but his family and a number of others decided to stay. He said he was "going to die here" if it came to that.

Hasan said he had heard of children being sold by militants to be raised by Sunni Muslim families. "They are selling our daughters for two dollars. They bring the girls to the towns like Mosul under Arab control [to sell]."



Demonstrators protest against the August 9 police shooting of 18-year-old Michael Brown by holding their hands up while gathered on the streets of Ferguson, Missouri on late Saturday. Right, top, A protester holds a placard and a demonstrator stands near a cloud of tear gas during the protest.



Protesters defy curfew in US riot-hit town

One shot, seven arrested
REUTERS, Ferguson Mo

One person was shot and critically wounded and seven arrested early yesterday as police in Ferguson, Missouri, clashed with protesters when a curfew was imposed following days of unrest over a black teenager being shot dead by a white police officer.

Scores of demonstrators had remained in the streets after police fired canisters of smoke and later teargas and the curfew took effect at midnight.

Governor Jay Nixon declared a state of emergency and announced the five-hour curfew after a week of racially charged protests and looting over the shooting of 18-year-old Michael Brown by Ferguson police officer Darren Wilson, 28, in the suburban St Louis community in the Midwest US state on Aug 9.

Missouri State Highway Patrol Captain Ron Johnson said the person shot at a restaurant was in critical condition. Police were unable to identify the victim, who he said was not shot by police, and that the alleged shooter was still at large.

The police version of how Brown was shot differs from witness accounts.

Police say that after Wilson asked Brown to move out of the road onto a sidewalk, Brown reached into the patrol car and struggled with Wilson for the officer's service gun. Wilson, who sustained a facial injury, then shot Brown a number of times.

Witnesses have said the officer reached out through his car window to grab at Brown and the teenager was trying to get away from the officer when he was shot. Brown held up his hands in a sign of surrender but the officer got out of his patrol car and shot Brown several times, they said.

Pak court orders murder charges against Pak PM

Imran ready for 'final match'; Qadri issues 48-hour ultimatum

AGENCIES

A Pakistan court has ordered framing of murder charges against Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, his brother and Punjab Chief Minister Shahbaz and 19 others over the June violence near Canada-based cleric Tahirul Qadri's headquarters in Lahore that killed 14 of his supporters.

The Lahore Sessions Court hearing the case related to the Model Town clashes ordered police to register a case against 21 persons named by the Pakistan Awami Tahreek in its complaint.

Fourteen PAT supporters, including two women, were killed and over 100 were wounded in deadly clashes with police on June 17 after the authorities attempted to remove barricades near the PAT chief's headquarters.

The court's decision comes at the time when Qadri, also the chief of PAT, and Pakistan Tahreek-e-Insaaf chief Imran Khan are rallying in Islamabad with thousands of their supporters demanding the resignation of the Sharif-led PML-N government.

Imran Khan yesterday said he along with thousands of his supporters is ready for a "final match" against Nawaz Sharif who was involved in an "electoral match-fixing", after Qadri issued a 48-hour ultimatum to the embattled prime minister to resign.



Imran Khan



Nawaz Sharif



Tahirul Qadri

Khan, who led Pakistan to the World Cup victory in 1992, warned the PML-N government that his supporters could enter the high-security Red Zone in Islamabad if Sharif, who has been in power for over an year, refuses to quit.

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chairman said that a final match would be played yesterday which will be decisive day in the history of Pakistan as thousands of opposition demonstrators crowded the streets of the Pakistani capital for a second day.

Security in Islamabad has been ramped up, with some 30,000 police and other security forces on the streets.

The government has agreed to allow the two groups to hold rallies but many streets have been blocked off with shipping containers to protect sensitive areas.

Both leaders have vowed not to leave the capital until Nawaz Sharif resigns and fresh elections are called.

Cholera fears rise in Nepal; toll hits 89

Water released upstream floods Indian states

AFP, Kathmandu

Rescuers yesterday found four more bodies buried under mud as the death toll from landslides and flooding in Nepal climbed to 89, sparking fears of a cholera outbreak.

Torrential rain last week triggered multiple landslides and flooding, stranding thousands of villagers and leaving a trail of death and destruction in the Himalayan nation.

The rains have damaged roads across the country's western plains bordering India, forcing officials to use helicopters to rescue stranded people and deliver emergency supplies.

As the weather cleared Sunday, improving visibility after three days of incessant rain, army officials ran helicopter sorties to evacuate some 20,000 people stranded in badly-hit western districts.

"We are concerned about a possible outbreak of cholera because of all the dead bodies and livestock lying underwater," Dhakal told AFP.

As water levels slowly recede, rescuers have started moving people from their damaged homes into temporary shelters, but large areas remain submerged, preventing helicopters from landing to let workers search for those still missing, Koirala said.

Heavy rain in neighbouring India's Uttarakhand state has claimed at least 24 lives since Friday, reviving memories of a deluge last year that killed more than 5,000 people in the same region.

Media reports yesterday said several districts in the northern Indian states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh were also flooded after heavy rain near Himalayan rivers and the release of excess water from barrages in Nepal.

NEPAL-INDIA FLOODS