

MARSHALL-HALLMARK: For War News Radio at Swarthmore College, I'm Pendle Marshall-Hallmark.

BATTEN: And I'm Caroline Batten. Ukrainian security forces clashed with pro-Russian activists in the city of Mariupol in the eastern region of the country this week, killing three and wounding thirteen. Interim Ukrainian interior minister Arsen Avakov stated that the firefight was initiated by protesters who were attempting to storm a National Guard base in the city. Another military operation came to a halt when an entire force of 21 armored vehicles either turned back or surrendered to the pro-Russian militants. Meanwhile, Russian President Vladimir Putin indicated that the upper chamber of the Russian parliament had granted him the authority to use military force in eastern Ukraine. While he continued to insist that Russia was not involved in the current unrest, he repeatedly referred to the eastern region of Ukraine as, quote, "New Russia."

MARSHALL-HALLMARK: One hundred and nineteen supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood have been sentenced to 3 years in prison by an Egyptian court. They were charged with unlawfully protesting the overthrow of former Egyptian president Mohammed Morsi, during violent demonstrations in October 2013. In recent months, Egyptian military-backed authorities have been making increased efforts to quell the Muslim Brotherhood, banning former members from voting in the upcoming elections, and tightening control on mosques they believe to be in support of the Brotherhood. This week's ruling comes in the wake of a trial last month that sentenced 529 Morsi supporters to death, a decision that has drawn criticism from human rights organizations. According to Amnesty International, the crack-down on the Brotherhood has jailed an estimated 15,000 Islamists and claimed the lives of more than 1,400 Morsi supporters since last summer.

BATTEN: Armed gunmen stormed a United Nations peacekeeping base in South Sudan this week, killing at least 20 civilians and injuring dozens more. The mob entered the base by claiming to be nonviolent protesters delivering a petition to the U.N. mission. U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric condemned the incident, stating, quote, "This attack on a location where civilians are being protected by the United Nations is a serious escalation." At the time of the attack, approximately 5000 civilians were housed at the base in the city of Bor, located in the northern Jonglei state. Over one million individuals have been displaced since the conflict between the South Sudanese government and rebel groups began last year. Although the two parties agreed to a ceasefire in January, fighting has continued to intensify across the country.

MARSHALL-HALLMARK: Anti-government extremists staged a mass kidnapping in Nigeria, abducting over 100 schoolgirls in the town of Chibok. The gunmen, who pretended to be government soldiers conducting an evacuation, are suspected of belonging to the insurgent group Boko Haram, which strongly opposes the education of women. Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan has also blamed Boko Haram for a recent bombing outside the Nigerian capital of Abuja. The attack killed more than 70 people and left at least 124 injured. Although Jonathan called the terrorist organization, quote, "a temporary problem," the number of attacks by Boko Haram has increased dramatically this year, killing more than 1,500 people in 2014 alone.

BATTEN: Two of Muammar Gaddafi's sons and thirty-six former officials of his regime began trial for alleged war crimes this week. The defendants are accused of helping repress the 2011

uprising in Libya and additional charges including murder and theft of state funds. Last year, the International Criminal Court ruled that Libya could try former military intelligence chief Abdullah al-Senussi, but it demanded the transfer of Gaddafi's eldest son, Saif, to the Hague. Saif is still being held by militia forces in the city of Zintan, where he was captured in late 2011. A Libyan court has insisted that the defendants will be provided with legal counsel, but a recent courthouse video showed younger son Saadi Gaddafi confessing to, quote, "destabilizing" the country, apparently without the presence of an attorney.

MARSHALL-HALLMARK: Also in Libya this week, masked gunmen in the capital city of Tripoli have abducted Jordanian ambassador Fawaz al-Itan. The kidnapers opened fire on the ambassador's car, wounding his driver and taking the unharmed ambassador into captivity. In exchange for releasing al-Itan, they have demanded that Islamist militant leader Mohamed Dersi be set free. Dersi was jailed for life in 2007 for plotting to blow up an airport in Jordan. The attack on al-Itan is the latest in a string of high-profile kidnappings of diplomats and officials in Libya. Abductions have become common in the country, as the Libyan government struggles to control the armed military groups operating within its borders.

BATTEN: The Iraqi government has shut down the infamous Abu Ghraib prison, citing concerns that its location was vulnerable to attacks by insurgent groups. The Iraqi Justice Ministry stated that 2,400 prisoners had been moved from the facility, now known as Baghdad Central Prison, to other high-security prisons in the northern region of the country. While the prison was a common destination for political prisoners under Saddam Hussein, it gained international infamy in the wake of reports that American soldiers stationed at Abu Ghraib had used physical and sexual torture on Iraqi detainees. It is unclear whether the closing of the prison is intended to be a temporary measure or a permanent decision.

MARSHALL-HALLMARK: A South Korean ferry carrying 462 people, including 325 high school students, sank several miles off the southwest coast of South Korea. The student passengers were in their second year at Danwon High School, and were embarking on a class field trip to the island of Jeju. On the nearby island of Jindo, friends and relatives of the passengers awaiting news from authorities expressed their dissatisfaction with the rescue effort. Protesting the announcement from officials that turbulent waters prevented rescuers from entering the submerged vessel, Chung Hae-sook, mother of a student on the ferry, insisted, quote, "There is no tomorrow for this... My heart is turning to ashes." The cause of the disaster remains unclear, though nine passengers are confirmed dead, and government minister Kang Byung-kyu reports that 164 people were rescued, 55 were injured, and 292 passengers are still missing.

BATTEN: If you want to hear more from War News Radio, visit us online at War News Radio.o-r-g. This week's newscast was written and edited by Nora Bailin, Caroline Batten, Jay Clayton, Joelle Hageboutros, Allison Hrabar, Dylan Okabe-Jawdat, Jerry Qin, Tyler Welsh, Zoey Werbin, and Chloe Wittenberg. I'm Caroline Batten.

PENDLE MARSHALL-HALLMARK: And I'm Pendle Marshall-Hallmark. Until next time, thanks for listening.