

Regional News Roundup

KENYA

ICC authorises investigations in post-poll violence Judges at the International Criminal Court at The Hague have authorised prosecutor Luis-Moreno Ocampo's request to investigate Kenya's post election violence. Addressing an international press conference at The Hague, the ICC prosecutor said that he will meet the victims of the violence and visit some of the crime scenes in May. Outlining his next moves, Mr Moreno-Ocampo said that he expects to identify at least two cases to put before the ICC and to start trials in 2012. Deputy Prime Minister Uhuru Kenyatta, Tourism minister Najib Balala and Agriculture's William Ruto, whose names have been mentioned in a report compiled by the Kenya National Human Rights Commission, said Mr Moreno-Ocampo is free to investigate their alleged involvement in the violence that claimed more than 1,300 lives and displaced an estimated 350,000 Kenyans.

Read more: <http://www.fcaea.org/aid=459.phtml>

<http://www.nation.co.ke/News/ICC%20authorises%20investigation%20into%20Kenya%20chaos/-/1056/890302/-/x7tpd2z/-/index.html>

SOMALIA

Somali refugees recruited to fight Islamist militia The government of Somalia and its Kenyan allies have recruited hundreds of Somali refugees, including children, to fight in a war against al-Shabab, an Islamist militia linked to al-Qaeda, according to former recruits, their relatives and community leaders. Many of the recruits were taken from the sprawling Dadaab refugee camps in northeastern Kenya, which borders Somalia. Somali government recruiters and Kenyan soldiers came to the camps late last year, promising refugees as much as USD600 a month to join a force advertised as supported by the United Nations or the United States, the former recruits and their families said. It is unclear whether recruiting by the governments of Kenya and Somalia is ongoing. But their military officers continue to train refugees at a heavily guarded base near the northern Kenyan town of Isiolo as the Somali government prepares for a long-planned offensive against the al-Shabab.

Read more: <http://www.fcaea.org/aid=457.phtml>

<http://www.fcaea.org/aid=453.phtml>

Puntland begins repatriating Ethiopian migrants Authorities in Somalia's self-declared autonomous region of Puntland have begun repatriating hundreds of Ethiopian migrants, officials said. "These are people who decided they wanted to return but could not afford to do so," said the director of the Migration Response Centre (MRC) in Bosasso, Puntland's capital. He said thousands of Ethiopians and Somalis were in Bosasso, with the intention of crossing into Yemen or to find work but find that they are unable to do so. So far, 490 migrants have been repatriated. They are provided with USD 30 for transport to their homes and one there, with a repatriation package. So far, MRC has registered 1,200 Ethiopians who want to return home.

Read more: <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=88694>

Human trafficking on the increase

Officials in Somalia's self-declared independent state of Somaliland are concerned over a rise in human trafficking in the region. Children are mainly trafficked from south-central Somalia, because of the lack of government there, says a senior government official. In January, the Somaliland immigration office in the area of Loyada, along the border with Djibouti, sent home more than 60 minors in the company of about 200 illegal immigrants who were hoping to proceed on to Europe via Eritrea, Sudan and Libya. Ethiopian Oromian children also travel to Somaliland without their parents in search of work, most end up in petty trade or as street children. Older people, claiming to be their parents, use them to beg.

Read more: <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=88668>

SUDAN

Southern Sudan party to boycott elections in north Southern Sudan's main party said on Tuesday it would boycott elections in most states in northern Sudan, in a further blow to the poll already hit by accusations of fraud less than a week ahead of voting. "We announce the SPLM (Sudan People's Liberation Movement) boycott of all the elections in the north on all levels in 13 states of the north," Party Secretary General Pagan Amum told reporters, saying the decision excluded the border states of South Kordofan and Blue Nile. Amum told reporters the party was taking the decision in protest against irregularities in the build-up to the vote. Last week, the SPLM took the surprise decision of withdrawing its presidential candidate Yasir Arman from the race and also announced its boycott of polls in Darfur. Sudan's presidential, legislative and local elections, due to start on Sunday, are the first multi-party election since 1986 and the centrepiece of a troubled 2005 peace deal signed between the SPLM and the northern National Congress Party (NCP) ending more than two decades of civil war.

Read more: <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/NLDE6351ZW.htm>

<http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article34669>

<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=88744>

Eastern Equatoria one of the most volatile states in south, says report Eastern Equatoria state (EES) is one of the most volatile and conflict-prone states in Southern Sudan. An epicentre of the civil war (1983–2005), EES saw intense fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), as well numerous armed groups supported by both sides, leaving behind a legacy of landmines and unexploded ordnance, high numbers of weapons in civilian hands, and shattered social and community relations. EES has also experienced chronic food insecurity, a lack of basic services, and few economic opportunities. To assess perceptions of development, governance, and security challenges in EES, the Small Arms Survey and Danish Demining Group undertook a household survey at the end of 2010. The survey gauged respondent views on pressing security and development issues, with a particular focus on armed violence; victims and perpetrators; motivations; weapons; disarmament; and security providers.

Full report:

<http://www.smallarmssurveysudan.org/pdfs/HSBA-SIB-16-symptoms-causes.pdf>