

Regional News Roundup

AFRICA

Humanitarian action under siege

On the first ever World Humanitarian Day on 19 August, experts said a trend toward integrating aid goals into broader social and security agendas has contributed to an erosion of “humanitarian space”, which refers to physical locations from safe from attack in a conflict, respect for core humanitarian principles, independence, impartiality and neutrality. Observers say, humanitarian space is shrinking, with decreasing access to beneficiaries and increasing attacks on beneficiaries and aid staff. IRIN looked at why and how donors, UN agencies and NGOs might ensure that it does not shrink for good.

Read more: <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=85752>

ETHIOPIA

Southern Region gripped by food shortage

Because the rains came late and were below normal this year, southern Ethiopia is now facing an increasing food shortage. Farmers could only sow 50-70 percent of their land . According to the Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWS Net), the hunger season will be particularly severe and longer than normal this year. The UN Children’s Agency (UNICEF) estimated that 242,000 children under the age of five from 309 districts in Ethiopia will suffer from severe acute malnutrition. Shortage of medicine currently poses a threat to the fight against malaria. In the Somali region, a critical water shortage has been reported.

Read more: <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=85666>

SOUTHERN SUDAN

Food insecurity growing

Concern is growing at the likely humanitarian impact of poor rains and high levels of insecurity in Southern Sudan. A combination of late rains, high levels of insecurity and displacement, disruptions to trade and high food prices have led to a massive food deficit and a hunger gap which will last from June to October, said the UN Deputy Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, Lise Grande. Meanwhile, the UN has warned that WFP’s ability to deliver food aid is hampered by inter-tribal fighting. Other agencies have warned that no quick solution can be expected. Aid workers and the UN are stretched to the limits with 27 major operations under way in eight states targeting 190,000 people.

Read more: <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=85704>

LRA attacks displace 12,000 in DRC

At least 12,000 people have been displaced in northeast Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) after new attacks by the Ugandan rebel Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), says the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR). The Faradje and Dungu areas of Orientale Province, along the border with Southern Sudan, are worst affected, with about 55 attacks reported in July alone, against 57 in May and June. There are at least 21,000 DRC refugees in Southern Sudan, of whom 18,000 have been registered in Ezo, Yambio and Yei. The LRA is also active in Southern Sudan and the Central African Republic.

Read more: <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=85643>

UGANDA

Nodding disease affects hundreds of children

The rare and unexplained “nodding disease” has affected hundreds of children in northern Uganda, health workers said. The brain disease causes seizures, and affected children become physically and mentally stunted, which can lead to blindness and even death. Northern Uganda’s Kitgum District appears as a new epicenter of the disease. In the village of Okidi, 200 children alone had the illness, said local leaders. A likely cause of the disease is a neurological effect of the parasitic worm that causes river blindness. The disease is also described as a form of epilepsy. The best known concentration of cases has previously been reported from Southern

Sudan in 2003.

Read more: <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=85679>
<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=85646>

KENYA

Kenya sends emergency aid to drought hit north

Kenya's government released USD 38 million last week to kick-start a plan to deliver food, water and medicine to rural northern communities afflicted by drought. 36 trucks set off for 11 districts in the north, operations are conducted jointly with the UN World Food Programme (WFP). According to the prime minister, the challenge is so immense that it requires mobilisation of all arms of government as well as rapid and decisive action. About 5.8 million Kenyans need food aid, said the government.

Read more: <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/LE131306.htm>

SOMALIA

Drought fuelling rural exodus

In spite of some rainfall in northern Somalia, the exodus of drought-affected people from rural areas to urban centres in Somaliland has not stopped, according to local officials. 60 percent of the rural population are affected and hundreds of thousands have been displaced to all the cities in Somaliland, a Deputy Minister said. 60 percent of animals have also been lost. The government and local NGOs are trying to deal with the problem but their capacity is limited.

Read more: <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=85740>