

## Regional News Roundup

### SOMALIA

Somalia funds dry up after aid diversion report A UN report that found aid for Somalia had been diverted to militants has caused funds to dry up even though the allegations are unsubstantiated, the UN humanitarian coordinator for Somalia, Mark Bowden, said. Washington is withholding millions of dollars fearing it benefits al Shabaab rebels loyal to al Qaeda who control much of central and southern Somalia and want to impose a harsh version of sharia law in the country. "The UN Country Team is concerned that these estimates of diversion are not apparently based on any documentation but rather on hearsay and commonly held perceptions," Bowden said. Read more: <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=88605>

Situation of IDPs "at its worst" as aid runs out As more aid groups pull out of camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and more people flee Mogadishu to escape the violence, the plight of IDPs is at its most extreme, a relief worker in the Somali capital said. Hundreds of thousands of displaced families living in IDP camps on the outskirts of the city were facing an uncertain future as food begins to run out because they were no longer getting the necessary support from aid groups, she said. Many aid agencies had withdrawn without empowering local Somali aid workers to do the job, she said. Despite the worsening conditions in IDP camps, more people were arriving daily. According to the UN refugee agency (UNHCR), the rate of displacement in 2010 has been among the highest in the past few years. So far, 169,000 have been displaced across the country.

Read more: <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/LDE62O0UE.htm>

Civilians in Somalia face ongoing rights violations According to a document by Amnesty International (AI) published last week, clear patterns of human rights abuse have emerged during the latest cycle of violence in Somalia, which began when armed opposition groups launched a major offensive against the government in Mogadishu in May 2009. In "No end in sight: The ongoing suffering of Somalia's civilians", AI reviews violations of international human rights and humanitarian law committed over the past six months. The document also lists allegations of indiscriminate fire by government and AU forces that need to be investigated.

Read more: <https://www.amnesty.org/fr/node/16009>

### SUDAN

Violence fears as election approaches

Tension is mounting as elections approach in Sudan, with analysts, candidates and voters concerned about political violence in flashpoint areas in the South, such as oil rich Unity state. The election, the first multi-party ballot for 24 years, will begin on 11 April, with the results due a week later and it will pitch the ex-rebel turned ruling party in the South, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) against former enemies in the North, the National Congress Party (NCP). "Security is a real issue, and a major concern," said an independent candidate for the governorship of Unity. "We have called on all our supporters not to react if they are provoked," she adds. Loyalties are often based along ethnic or clan lines, while rivalries from the civil war run deep. "People are not used to choosing a leader peacefully or giving up power without a fight," said a teacher in Bentiu. Twenty-six political parties, including the NCP and the SPLM have taken positive steps by signing an electoral code of conduct. But concern remains how far documents signed by leaders will control supporters on the ground. In Warrap state, the governor doubts the viability of complex elections. "The population was not prepared and every house has a gun," he said. The logistics alone of delivering ballot papers and 5,000 boxes to remote rural areas are daunting.

Read more: <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=88608>  
<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=88542>

Overcome "business as usual" attitude, says report by Refugees International (RI) In a report released on 25 March, Refugees International (RI) says the complacent "business as usual" attitude among some humanitarian agencies and donors that has been created during decades of

responding to crises in Sudan must be overcome. RI drew attention to the fact that the next two years will be critical in determining Sudan's future and called on governments, the UN, agencies and donors to do everything possible to ensure that the governments in north and south Sudan reach agreement on outstanding issues before the referendum. The humanitarian community must simultaneously prepare to respond if conflict erupts around the upcoming political events.

Read more:

<http://www.refugeesinternational.org/policy/field-report/sudan-no-time-business-usual>

#### UGANDA

Regional strategy needed to end LRA atrocities According to a recent CISA report, the Ugandan rebel Lord's Resistance Army have split into at least five groups that rage among the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Central African Republic (CAR), and Southern Sudan; they have become a regional problem. In a report published by Human Rights Watch (HRW) on March 28, the organisation documents the Makombo massacre in northeastern DRC in December 2009.

The four-day rampage was one of the worst ever committed by the LRA, yet it has gone unreported for months. It demonstrates that the LRA remains a serious threat. HRW called on the US and other concerned governments to work with the UN and regional parties in order to carry out a comprehensive strategy to protect civilians and apprehend abusive LRA leaders.

Meanwhile, the rebel group has denied the mass killings in DRC: "These claims of massacres coming almost four months late are yet another fabrication by NGOs, which are advocating war," Justine Labeja, LRA's Nairobi-based spokesman, told Reuters.

Read more:

<http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2010/03/28/dr-congo-lord-s-resistance-army-rampage-kills-321>

<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=88603>

<http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/LDE62S158.htm>