

Regional News Roundup

ETHIOPIA

ICRC blocked in repatriation of Ethiopians from Eritrea

Eritrean authorities have stopped the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) from involvement in the repatriation of Ethiopians from the territory, ICRC said. More than 43,000 Ethiopians and Eritreans wanting to return home have been repatriated to their respective countries under ICRC auspices since 2000. The decision however, does not affect the right of Ethiopian nationals to leave Eritrea if they wish and does not relive Eritrea of its obligation to ensure that future repatriation is carried out satisfactorily.

Read more: <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=85580>

KENYA

Dadaab grappling with dramatic refugee situation

According to UNHCR, the three refugee camps in Dadaab, north-eastern Kenya, comprise the largest refugee site in the world. As of 5 July, they hosted an estimated 284,306 refugees, mainly from Somalia. This number is triple the designated capacity. During the recent months, 5000 Somalis arrived monthly, creating a dramatic situation, said the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Antonio Guterres. Guterres also presented UNHCR's programme of investment and support to the local community, especially in the areas of environment degradation and livelihood. He further announced that UNHCR is preparing a comprehensive strategy for decongestion, rehabilitation and security in Dadaab. 12,900 refugees from Dadaab are expected to be moved to Kakuma in the north-west before the rainy season.

Read more: <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=85605>

Food insecurity deepens in east and north-east

A prolonged drought is aggravating food insecurity and affecting children's education in eastern and north-eastern Kenya, say officials. The situation is particularly severe in Mandera where more than 100 children have been admitted to health facilities. Thousands of pastoralists are migrating to Ethiopia in search of pasture and water, states a report by the Marsabit District. Many schools are unable to provide food under the school-feeding programme, says a report from Isiolo District.

Read more: <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=85554>

SOUTHERN SUDAN

Hurdles on road to Sudan peace

Five months after Southern Sudanese forces clashed with fighters allied to the north in Malakal town of Upper Nile State, the city has remained under divided control. But many other major challenges remain on the road to peace in Sudan. Three weeks after a tribunal in The Hague redefined the borders of Sudan's Abyei region, both sides – the north and the south – have expressed claims over resources, including oil fields. The demarcation of the north-south border is still not completed and experts warn that if the two parties do not cooperate on the key provisions of the peace agreement Sudan is likely to go back to war. Both sides are already accused of re-arming and positioning forces at likely flashpoint areas.

Read more: <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=85578>
<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=85612>

Call for disarmament after massacre in Akobo

An inter-ethnic attack on August 2 near Akobo in Southern Sudan's Jonglei State which left at least 185 people dead demonstrated the urgent need to disarm communities in the region, an official said. Most of the victims were women and children. Those targeted had camped in the area for three weeks in search of food, dozens of children and women are still missing and are believed to be either killed or abducted, said the Akobo County Commissioner in a statement. Tensions remain high and aid workers have warned of retaliatory raids and the rising levels of malnutrition. Currently, WFP brings in food with extra helicopters and airplanes but the supplies

cannot meet the needs of the community.

Read more: <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=85556>
<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=85669>

UGANDA

Repatriation deadline extended, xenophobia increasing

Following the extension of an end-July repatriation deadline, Rwandan refugees in Uganda have until 31 August to leave the country, Ugandan officials said. After August 31 they will lose their status and become illegal immigrants. The Rwandan government said those who did not return by the end of the year would lose citizenship. Uganda has also deployed security forces following recent attacks on refugees. At least 70 Rwandans have been killed in xenophobic attacks by members of the host community who accuse them of illegally staying in the country.

According to UNHCR, at least 15,000 Rwandan refugees missed the original deadline and are reluctant to return home, citing lack of land and persecution, as well as persecution for genocide related crimes. Uganda remains keen to decongest its refugee camps and feels it is the right time to finalise repatriation and stop spending money for hosting refugees whose home country is stable and willing to take them back. However, human rights activists have cautioned the country against forceful repatriation and criticized a lack of alternatives.

Read more: <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=85645>
<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=85566>
<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=85456>

Leaders question Chissano's anti-LRA proposal

While the Ugandan government supports the recommendation by Joachim Chissano, the outgoing UN envoy for areas affected by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), to use military as well as peaceful means to deal with the rebels, several leaders in northern Uganda have opposed the proposal, saying the military option would destabilize the region further. "We do not have confidence that any military action will bring security to the region", said the Archbishop of Gulu, John Baptist Odama. Other leaders fear that military action would endanger the lives of children and women abducted by the LRA, suggesting dialogue instead. Chissano had suggested a two-pronged strategy – pursuing negotiations as well as military action – against the LRA which has terrorized northern Uganda for more than two decades.

Read more: <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=85421>