

Regional News Roundup

AFRICA

UN refugee agency urges EAC states to consider local integration of refugees

The UN refugee agency (UNHCR) has urged the East African Community (EAC) member states to consider local integration of refugees as a solution to the refugee plight. A senior protection officer of UNHCR Uganda said at a conference, not much progress has been attained in locally integrating refugees and having some of them resettled. He urged the countries of Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi to expedite their protocols on the freedom of movement of not just only goods but persons and reintegration in the region.

Read more: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-10/07/content_12188966.htm

AU pushes the envelope on climate migrants

An African international agreement has opened the door to a debate on the rights and protection of people displaced by natural disasters, with a nod to migration as a result of climate change. The Kampala Convention, the ground-breaking treaty on the protection of IDPs adopted by the African Union (AU) recently, recognises natural disasters as a key factor in uprooting people. The treaty calls on governments to set up laws and find solutions to prevent displacement caused by natural disasters, with compensation for those who were displaced. A migration expert described the reference to people displaced by natural disasters as an interesting attempt to find adequate answers to the new concern about migration linked to environmental degradation.

Read more: <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=86805>

Empower women to stem global hunger

Countries where women's literacy rates and access to education are significantly worse than men's tend to have higher levels of hunger, according to the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). The institute's 2009 Global Hunger Index (GHI) calls for policy action on gender empowerment, social protection and governance to improve food security. A senior research fellow said, gender equality is a key factor in solving the problem of hunger. Twenty-nine countries in Africa and South Asia have alarming or extremely alarming levels of hunger; nine out of 10 of the worst are in sub-Saharan Africa.

Read more: <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=86602>

KENYA

Floods displace hundreds of families

After days of heavy rain, flash floods in Kenya's coastal Magarini district have displaced at least 500 families, sweeping away houses and livestock, officials said. Most of the coastal region has been dry, having not had rains since early 2009 and local leaders therefore assumed that they would not experience any flooding. In the neighbouring Tana River district roads connecting the towns of Mombasa, Garissa and Lamu have been cut off due to rains and at least 100 trucks and passenger vehicles have become stuck or left their cars at the roadside.

Read more: <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=86793>

SOMALIA

Heavy rains displace 15,000 and wash away IDP shelters

Flash floods caused by four days of torrential rains have displaced more than 15,000 people and submerged most homes and businesses in the southwestern town of El-Waq, near the Kenyan border. A lot of livestock have reportedly died due to the ongoing rains. The local administration and civil society groups have been able to move many people to safer ground, a resident said. But there is still danger of more flooding as the rain persists. In Mogadishu, flash floods have rendered homeless thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) living in camps in and around the Somali capital, locals said.

Read more: <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=86791>
<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=86640>

Record high of African arrivals in Yemen

The past 10 months saw the highest number of Africans reaching Yemeni shores since 2007, when large numbers began travelling to Yemen by boat, according to the UN refugee agency (UNHCR). So far, more than 56,600 people arrived on 1,100 boats to Yemen from the Horn of Africa this year, which is a 40 percent increase compared to the same period last year, a UNHCR external relations officer said.

Read more: <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=86830>

UGANDA

Residual IDPs need help to go home

Most Ugandans displaced by two decades of conflict in the north have returned to their villages but a significant number are still stuck in camps and should be helped to leave, observers say. Some cannot return due to land disputes while IDPs with special needs and vulnerabilities are unable to support themselves in the return areas, according to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC). The fate of particularly vulnerable IDPs left behind in camps and a lack of coordination between phasing out of humanitarian assistance and the increase of development activities is a source of concern, the UN Secretary-General on the Human Rights for IDPs said on 26 October.

Read more: <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=86841>