

Regional News Roundup

KENYA

Testimonies from refugees living in Nairobi's Eastleigh suburb The stories of various refugees living in Eastleigh, a suburb east of Nairobi's central business district, give an idea of the challenges and difficulties they face every day. Abdul, a single mother of five, paid some young men KSh1,500 (USD20) to fix the road outside her house. "If we don't pay these young men to bring the stones, then the muddy water flows into our homes," she says. Since her arrival in Eastleigh she has not registered with any authority. "We live like animals (...)," said another resident. "Urban refugees live largely without material assistance or legal protection, leaving them vulnerable to police arrest at any time, and face high levels of xenophobia from the local population," a UN advocacy and outreach officer said.

Read more: <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=88770>

SOMALIA

Floods near Jowhar displace hundreds

Hundreds of people have been displaced and at least 7,000 hectares of newly sown crops destroyed by floods after a river burst its banks in Somalia's Middle Shabelle region, local officials said. The worst flooding occurred near the town of Jowhar, 90km north of Mogadishu. Residents had stemmed the flooding with sandbags thanks to help from the Islamist administration in Jowhar and a local NGO. "For now we are safe but cut off," said a member of the village council. According to him, the community was not getting any help.

Read more: <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=88791>

SUDAN

Sudan vote extended after delays and errors

Sudan on Monday extended voting in its first open elections in 24 years by two days because of delays in delivering ballots, but opposition parties not already boycotting the polls said they should be scrapped. Voting began on Sunday and now continued until Thursday. However, Sudanese politicians said on Tuesday poor logistics, such as missing ballot boxes, poorly trained staff and confusion over the location of voting centres were preventing hundreds of thousands of voters from taking part in the election, with some early turnout figures below 10 percent. Sudan's ruling party on Wednesday said it would invite opposition groups to join the government if it won the country's general elections, in an apparent bid to heal a rift over accusations of vote fraud. Contrary to these accusations, the head of the Carter Center observation mission in Sudan, former US president Jimmy Carter, said that there was no proof of fraud in the Sudanese national elections. Voters could not always find their names on electoral lists but those are administrative problems, he said in an interview with AFP.

Read more: <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/LDE63B1R4.htm>

<http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/LDE63C2F1.htm>

<http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/LDE63D107.htm>

<http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article34753>

UGANDA

Uganda enlists former rebels to end a war

The Ugandan Army is deploying special squads of experienced killers to track down the Ugandan rebel Lord's Resistance Army's leader, Joseph Kony, one of the most wanted men in Africa, who has been on the run for two decades. The deployed soldiers are former LRA fighters themselves; they have recently surrendered and are now searching three of the most troubled countries in the world: the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan. Although critics have expressed concerns over the strategy, the Ugandan government is desperate to finish the conflict, which ravaged northern Uganda for two decades and killed thousands. The government's policy is to grant amnesty to all LRA fighters except the top three, who have been indicted by the International Criminal Court: Mr Kony; Okot Odhiambo, his deputy; and Dominic Ongwen, another commander.

Read more:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/11/world/africa/11ira.html?scp=1&sq=Uganda%20Enlists%20Former%20Rebels%20To%20End%20A%20War&st=cse>

Victims of violence and rape denied justice in Uganda

Amnesty International has urged the Ugandan authorities to provide support for women seeking justice for sexual and domestic violence in a new report highlighting the barriers faced by the victims. *I Can't Afford Justice – Violence against women in Uganda* documents the economic and social obstacles to justice, including the costs of criminal investigations and discrimination by government officials. Victims are left facing inadequate responses by police, having to pay for the cost of police transportation to arrest the accused, forensic examination fees and other expenses related to the investigation. Violence against women and girls in Uganda remains widespread. Two thirds of women who have experienced domestic violence say it was perpetrated by an intimate partner, while one in four women report that their first sexual experience was forced.

Full report:

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/report/victims-rape-and-sexual-violence-denied-justice-uganda-2010-04-06>