

Regional News Roundup

AFRICA

New African Union chairman says “never again” to conflict in Africa “We must say ‘never again’ to conflict and war in Africa,” said Malawian President Bingu wa Mutharika, newly elected chairman of the African Union at the conclusion of its 14th summit in Addis Ababa. Mutharika hailed the AU initiative for launching 2010 as the year of peace in Africa, hoping that concrete steps would be taken to restore peace and stability in conflict areas in the near future. Wrapping up the three day summit, African leaders also called for action on coups and increasing pressure on Madagascar’s political foes to honour deals meant to end a prolonged crisis. The African leaders also discussed the situation in Sudan, where tension has been escalating in the run-up to a 2011 referendum in which the south is widely expected to choose independence from Khartoum.

Read more:

http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5ine8_tjEK60wiMrl40EVu_R148iw
<http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/index/index.htm>**KENYA**

KENYA

Kenyan police arrest Somali immigrants

Between 1,200 and 2,000 people, including Somali members of parliament in Nairobi for a meeting, were rounded up by Kenyan police in a week of raids and arrests following a 15 January protest against the detention and subsequent deportation of a radical Islamist cleric by the Kenyan government. Muslim human rights activists claimed five people were killed in the demonstration while the government has limited the official death toll to one. According to a spokeswoman for the Internal Security Ministry the raids were a direct result of the “threat posed by the foreigners”. Among those arrested as illegal immigrants were Somalis holding identification papers issued by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR).

Many of those arrested were ethnic Somali citizens of Kenya. There is a growing sense that the government is fomenting hostility against the comparatively well-to-do migrants to deflect attention from its own failings in the run-up to 2012 elections.

Read more: <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=87891>
<http://www.nation.co.ke/News/-/1056/847340/-/vpekdf/-/>

Kenya accused of transferring weapons to Southern Sudan Kenya has been named in a report by a Swiss research institute as the conduit for many of the weapons transferred to Southern Sudan government forces in violation of a peace agreement strongly backed by the United States. The Sudan Human Security Baseline Assessment, which is a multi-year research project administered by the Small Arms Survey reported that satellite imagery has confirmed the presence at Southern Sudan military headquarters of tanks that arrived at the port of Mombasa in 2008. These T-72 tanks were part of three weapons shipments from Ukraine “ostensibly consigned to the Kenyan Ministry of Defence” but that were in fact under contract to the Government of Southern Sudan, according to the Small Arms Survey. In addition to tanks, the three shipments in 2007 and 2008 are said to include 122 mm vehicle-mounted rocket launchers, 14.5 mm machine guns, 23 mm anti-aircraft cannon, RPG-7 rocket launchers and AKM assault rifles.

Read more:

<http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/-/2558/852982/-/pvtd8ez/-/index.html>

Thousands of flood-affected still need aid Thousands of flood-affected households still require assistance as ongoing rains in parts of Kenya continue to cause population displacement and destroy property and crops, according to humanitarian sources. According to a recent update by the Kenya Red Cross Society over 40,000 people have been displaced and 40 have been killed by floods countrywide. Livelihoods have been greatly interrupted and thousands are in dire need of relief aid, said the update.

Read more: <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=87863>

SOMALIA

Explosions raise fears over Somaliland stability The latest bomb explosion in Somalia's self-declared independent republic of Somaliland raises concerns over the lack of government presence in the Las-anod area, says an analyst.

According to EJ Hogendoorn, the International Crisis Group's Horn of Africa Project Director, the area remains largely unadministered by both, Puntland and Somaliland. The blast on 28 January killed one person and injured five, among them the governor of the Sool region. The incident brings to five the number of bombings that have hit the region since October 2009 in Las-anod, capital of a region in contention between Somaliland and Puntland.

Read more: <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=87918>

Escalating violence displaces thousands of Somalis Violence in Somalia sharply escalated in January resulting in hundreds of civilian deaths and widespread destruction. According to local sources, intense clashes between government forces and militia groups fighting for control of the conflict-torn central regions have left at least 258 civilians dead and another 253 wounded, which makes January the deadliest month since last August. More than 80,000 Somalis have been displaced since the beginning of the year, UNHCR spokesperson Andrej Mahecic said at a press briefing on 2 February.

Read more: <http://www.unhcr.org/4b6819bc9.html>

Plan to integrate ex-militias into security forces Mogadishu residents have welcomed plans by the interim government to step up the integration of an earlier, ousted, regime's security forces into its own army. "People are fed up and are tired of the daily attacks and miserable living conditions in the camps. The population will support any plan that may get them back into their homes," a local journalist said. According to the Minister of Interior the government is now trying to make sure there is only one command structure. The forces' integration is part of an all-out mobilisation to get a grip on the security situation in the city and the country at large.

"By the time we finish, there will be an effective force that will deal with and defeat the anti-peace elements," the minister said.

Read more: <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=87862>

SUDAN

Immediate steps necessary to salvage peace accord diplomats warn Five years after the peace accord was signed between North and Southern Sudan, there is a real threat of an all-out war returning to Sudan, two diplomats have warned in an article published in Kenya's East African newspaper. Crucial provisions have not been implemented and conditions across the country had deteriorated, they wrote. International support needs to be dramatically increased in order to avoid a return to massive war in the country. During a visit to Southern Sudan last week, UN ambassador to the UN Susan Rice was also concerned about the flow of arms, including heavy weapons, into southern Sudan.

Read more: <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=87945>

<http://www.theeastafrikan.co.ke/opOrEd/comment/-/434750/852818/-/bs8lre/-/index.html>

Half the population of Southern Sudan short of food A total of 4.3 million people, almost half the population of Southern Sudan, is facing food shortages because of conflict and drought, a fourfold rise in the numbers needing aid since last year, officials said on Tuesday. Internal conflict, incursions from the Ugandan rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and drought are the main reasons for the rise, according to a statement by southern Agriculture and Forestry Minister Samson Kwaje. The UN World Food Programme (WFP) said violence had forced 350,000 to flee their homes in 2009, leaving them dependent on food aid. With the rainy season starting soon, roads are likely to become blocked and communities might be cut off completely from food assistance, WFP said in a statement.

Read more: <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/LDE6111HV.htm>

Chad's Deby to visit Sudan after years of tension Chad's President Idriss Deby said on Wednesday he would travel to Sudan next week for talks, his first visit there in six years of rocky relations between the two oil-producing rivals. Chad and Sudan have repeatedly traded

accusations of supporting each other's rebels, which are mostly based along their remote shared border. Analysts say they have waged a proxy war through these forces since 2005. "Chad wants to live in perfect harmony with all its neighbours. I will travel on Feb. 8 to Khartoum for talks with (Sudanese President Omar Hassan) al-Bashir," Deby told a group of parliamentarians from Francophone countries, in comments broadcast on Chadian radio.

Read more: <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/LDE6122RU.htm>

TANZANIA

Floods affect 28,000 in central regions

At least 28,000 people are dependent on emergency food and other relief supplies in the central Tanzanian regions of Dodoma and Morogoro following floods, which also damaged transport infrastructure, according to officials. Regional authorities set up 24 camps to accommodate over 10,500 of the homeless. Some 1,146 houses were also extensively damaged by the floods. Earlier in January Tanzanian president Jakaya Kikwete had warned that the El-Nino-related rains were set to become a major destructive force to the country's infrastructure.

Read more: <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=87824>