

Regional News Roundup

AFRICA

ICRC report on IDPs calls for more action

In a special report on internally displaced persons (IDPs), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) drew attention to the fact that most displaced people do not end up in camps but are taken in by host communities and families. Launching the report, ICRC president Jakob Kellenberger described internal displacement as one of the most serious humanitarian consequences of armed conflict and other violence worldwide. More action is needed to assist and protect people displaced within their own countries, ICRC said.

Full report: <http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/p1014>

KENYA

Floods could threaten up to 750,000 people

After a five-year drought, up to 750,000 people in Kenya, nearly half of them Somali refugees, could be caught up in flooding and landslides from heavy rains expected to peak in November, the UN has warned. The extreme weather is being blamed on the El Nino climatic effect which caused abnormally heavy rainfall in 1997/98. Although meteorologists predict the rains will quench Kenya's parched farm lands and replenish its hydroelectric dams, aid agencies have been activating contingency plans, bringing food, water, treatment chemicals and mosquito nets to flood-prone areas.

Read more: <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/L640656.htm>

SOMALIA

Life getting harder for Mogadishu displaced

Heavy rain, lack of medical services, few latrines and reduced aid have worsened the plight of the growing number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) camping on the outskirts of Mogadishu, sources said. At the moment there are two clinics covering over 30 camps, with an average population of 3,300 people per camp, according to a doctor with a UK-based charity. The UN refugee agency (UNHCR) estimates that there are some 900,000 IDPs in the Mogadishu-Afgoye corridor.

Read more: <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=86941>

UN warns of mass displacement without Somalia aid

Hundreds of thousands more Somalis are on the brink of leaving their country, where floods have aggravated already desperate humanitarian conditions, UN agencies have warned. This month, flooding has driven 16,000 more people from the homes in Somalia, according to Elisabeth Byrs of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Some 3.6 million Somalis now need international assistance, compared to 1.8 last year. Without a quick influx of foreign aid, people would try to escape abroad, the Ms Byrs warned.

Read more: <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/LA655537.htm>

SUDAN

Southern Sudan faces famine danger after poor rains

At least 1.2 million people in Southern Sudan are at risk of famine following poor rains, two poor harvests and a surge in tribal conflicts, the UN children's agency (UNICEF) has warned. Hunger in south Sudan has reached critical levels, and nearly 17 percent of the population is acutely malnourished. The worst-affected states are Jonglei and Warrab. Local leaders have also warned that conflicts between communities over grazing lands might increase. Tribal fighting, attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army and other forms of fighting have intensified, displacing more than 350,000 people in 2009 alone, says the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

Read more: <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/HEA869500.htm>
<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=87057>

Poor start to Southern voter registration

Sudan has started registering voters for presidential, legislative and regional elections, but officials in the south and international observers say the process has begun on a flawed note. The month-long process began on 1 November. "If things go the way they are going now, believe less than 10 percent of the total population will be registered", the secretary-general of the SPLM said. It is a key step towards the April 2010 polls that are seen as a landmark of the 2005 peace agreement. The US-based Carter Center whose international observers are monitoring the electoral process also said more needs to be done countrywide to ensure registration.

Read more: <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=86894>

UGANDA

Government halts forced IDP repatriation

Forced repatriation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Uganda to their original homes in the north is "inhuman and against the government policy of voluntary return", local officials have said. Hundreds of IDPs who fled clashes between the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and government forces in the 1990s, and sought refuge further south, were recently sent back to the north on trucks. A coordinator for the Office of the Prime Minister in Amuru said, the government had intervened and the exercise was stopped because it violated IDP rights.

Read more: <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=86958>