

What's Playing in Africa: Thursday, October 15, 2009

Produced by the Regional Media Hub: Africa



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The goal of the African Regional Media Hub is to increase official US voices and faces on African television, radio and other media, so that the US government message is visible, active and effective in advocating US policies, priorities, and actions with African audiences.

On the U.S.

<http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article32789>

Sudan's Kiir urges US Obama not to ease pressure on Khartoum

The First Vice President of Sudan and president of South Sudan Salva Kiir sent a letter to US president Barack Obama asking him to keep pressure on the ruling National Congress Party (NCP), the Washington Post reported. The letter seen by newspaper comes as US special envoy to Sudan Scott Gration is seeking a relaxation of some sanctions imposed on the East African nations and giving out some "cookies" to Khartoum as he described it. Furthermore, Gration's contacts with prospective lobbyists for Sudan has added to fury of Sudan advocacy groups who accused the US official of being "naive" in dealing with Khartoum.

It appears that special envoy's approach has also worried South Sudan's ex-rebels. The Washington Post said that Kiir wrote to Obama last month, saying that Bashir continues to foment violence in the region in an apparent reference to rising tribal violence in the South which he has accused Khartoum of standing behind it.

<http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article32790>

Oxfam America President visits North Darfur camps

The head of Oxfam America visited Internally Displaced Persons in North Darfur camps to view the increasing activities of the group in the restive region where are 2.7 million IDPs. Last March, Sudanese authorities expelled 13 international aid groups from the country accusing it of cooperating with the International Criminal Court which had just issued a an arrest warrant for the Sudanese President over Darfur war crimes and crimes against humanity.

<http://www.nation.co.ke/blogs/-/445642/672328/-/view/asBlogPost/-/108kskrz/-/index.html>

Obama and the 'eating' of the Nobel Peace Prize

Very many people, including US President Barack Obama, were surprised when it was announced last week that he had won the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize.

In the US, his extremist conservative critics and enemies went into hysterical overdrive, denouncing the Nobel Committee for awarding the Nobel to the US president, and beating down Obama for having won it! Never mind, as one columnist put it, that Obama did not nominate himself nor seek the Nobel. The Nobel Committee decided to give the Nobel to Obama for how much he has inspired the world, the promise he holds out for doing good things like nuclear disarmament, and embracing international diplomacy in ways American presidents haven't done for long.

Elections

<http://www.afrol.com/articles/34406>

Security Council appeals for reconciliation as elections draws near

The UN Security Council has appealed for concerted efforts towards the publication of the final voter's list ahead of the much delayed national polls scheduled for 29 November. The 15-member body has urged Ivorian parties to set aside their differences in the spirit of reconciliation and dialogue. Over 6.5 million Ivorians have been identified and registered by the electoral body for elections.

<http://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFJQE59DOP520091014>

Botswana to vote amid rising discontent

Botswana President Ian Khama is widely expected to win this week's election, but frustration over the state of the economy may erode some support for his party, in power since independence in 1966. His Botswana Democratic Party faces little pressure in Friday's presidential and parliamentary polls, although infighting may give ground to the divided opposition in the long term. "I do not see any change in power. The BDP, although divided as it is, will still win this election," said Lawrence Ookeditse, a political analyst at the University of Botswana.

<http://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFJQE59E03V20091015>

Ivory Coast presidential hopeful vows cocoa revamp

Ivory Coast opposition leader and presidential hopeful Alassane Ouattara said on Wednesday he plans to reverse the country's sliding cocoa output with a five-year \$2.5 billion revamp programme. Declining production in the world's No. 1 cocoa supplier has helped push world prices for the commodity near a 25-year high, with Ivorian farmers blaming high taxes and limited government support for their deteriorating plantations.

<http://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFJQE59E01Q20091015>

Sudan must act fast to ensure free vote: Britain

Sudan's former north-south foes must resolve their differences quickly to avoid derailing a peace deal ahead of the first multi-party elections in decades, Britain said on Wednesday. Tensions are high between the former southern rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and the National Congress Party (NCP) over key laws governing the powerful intelligence forces and the results of a census, key for next year's vote.

<http://www.afrol.com/articles/34402>

ICC prosecutor invited for talks in Kenya

Kenya's coalition government has invited the International Criminal Court Chief Prosecutor Luis Moreno O'campo for negotiations on trying the main suspects of the 2007 post-election violence. Kenya's Justice Minister Mutula Kilonzo said the government had formally written to the ICC chief prosecutor, inviting him to visit the country on 3 November for talks leading to the fate of the suspects of the 2008 killings.

<http://www.afrol.com/articles/34404>

ECOWAS holds an extra-ordinary summit to discuss Guinea and Niger

The West African Economic bloc, ECOWAS, is convening an extra-ordinary summit of Heads of State and Government to take place on Saturday, 17 October 2009 in Abuja to discuss the political and security situations in Guinea and Niger. According to a statement from the ECOWAS, the summit will specifically consider the recommendations of the International Contact Group on Guinea which ended its day-long meeting in Abuja on Monday this week.

Conflict

http://www.nguardiannews.com/africa/article01//indexn2_html?pdate=141009&ptitle=Activists%20seek%20UN's%20protection%20for%20Congolese%20civilians

Activists seek UN's protection for Congolese civilians

TOO many civilians are dying in a United Nations (UN)-backed government offensive in Congo and the world body must withdraw its involvement if they cannot be protected, rights groups have said. However, the UN mission said it must continue backing Congolese government forces in operations against Rwandan Hutu rebels, who have been central to 15 years of violence in Central Africa, to protect fragile progress made in the region so far.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8307678.stm>

Guinea ruler 'must face charges'

The leader of Guinea's new military government should be put on trial for crimes against humanity, the EU's development chief has told reporters. Karel de Gucht says the suppression of a opposition rally in the capital Conakry last month was "an act of brutality never seen before". He said that sooner or later leader Capt Moussa Dadis Camara would have to stand in court. More than 150 people were killed when troops opened fire on demonstrators.

<http://www.nation.co.ke/News/africa/-/1066/672406/-/135qeiuZ/-/index.html>

Rwanda genocide prime suspect taken to court

Idelphonse Nizeyimana, who earned the title of "Butcher of Butare" during the 1994 genocide in Rwanda today denied charges levelled against him at the UN Tribunal in Arusha, Tanzania. The captain of the former Rwandan Army pleaded "not guilty" to five counts of genocide and crimes against humanity during his first appearance in Court, only 10 days after he was arrested in Uganda. The clean-shaved captain, who was among the elite officers close to the former Rwanda leader Juvenal Habyarimana, sat composed as a barrage of charges were read against him at the packed court room.

<http://www.nation.co.ke/News/africa/-/1066/672332/-/135qf8rz/-/index.html>

Kabila on the spot over mass misery

Eastern Congo is proving once more to be a major problem to president Joseph Kabila as humanitarian organizations based in the region report 1,000 civilians killed, 7,000 raped and 6,000 homes burned down in a military offensive. The operation is aimed at driving former Rwandan rebels out of the region.

Code-named Kimia II, the operation's target is to neutralize Hutu rebels known as the FDLR (Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda) who operate in the region. The early phase of the operation was code-named Umoja Wetu and was preceded by a deal between President Kabila and his Rwanda counterpart Paul Kagame.

Corruption

<http://www.mg.co.za/article/2009-10-14-no-dinner-for-votes-says-selebi>

No dinner for votes, says Selebi

Graft-accused ex-top cop Jackie Selebi has denied ever taking R30 000 from convicted drug trafficker Glenn Agliotti to host a dinner to garner votes for election as Interpol head. Defence lawyer Jaap Cilliers told the South Gauteng High Court in Johannesburg on Wednesday that Selebi would rather have foregone the chance to be Interpol head than accept money. "The accused absolutely refused to have such a dinner and said he would rather not be elected than to have a dinner. He refused to lobby in any way." Agliotti has testified that in August/September 2004 he allegedly gave Selebi R30 000 to fund a dinner in Paris to "lobby" for election as Interpol head.

Health

<http://www.afrol.com/articles/34401>

UN calls for renewed efforts to save millions of children from diarrhoea

The United Nations agencies today called for a renewed push to save the lives of millions of children in poor countries who die each year from diarrhoea.

"It is a tragedy that diarrhoea, which is little more than an inconvenience in the developed world, kills an estimated 1.5 million children each year," said the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) Executive Director, Ann M. Veneman.

Economy

<http://www.afrol.com/articles/34405>

Senate endorses oil deregulation policy

The Nigerian Senate has endorsed the Federal Government's planned deregulation of the oil industry, saying that it had become crucial to redress the looming problems in the petroleum sector. The new Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB) which has been under serious scrutiny, proposes that the oil industry would be substantially free from government control and run strictly as a business in a deregulated environment.

<http://www.ngrguardiannews.com/news/article02//indexn2.html?pdate=141009&ptitle=Government%20justifies%20banking%20reforms>

Government justifies banking reforms

THE need to save the banks from collapse and shield the nation's financial system from the claws of the global meltdown prompted the Presidency to approve the move by Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Governor, Lamido Sanusi, to reform the banking industry, the Federal Government stressed yesterday.

Still on business and the economy, the Minister of State, Finance, Remi Babalola, raised the alarm that the government may not deliver 6,000 megawatts (mw) of electricity in December as promised.

Food Crisis

<http://www.mg.co.za/article/2009-10-15-report-reveals-drc-is-worst-affected-by-hunger-in-africa>

Report reveals DRC is worst affected by hunger in Africa

The Democratic Republic of Congo has extremely alarming levels of hunger, according to the 2009 Global Hunger Index report released on Wednesday.

The report, released ahead of World Food Day on October 16, said 13 countries had actually seen increases in their hunger levels since 1990. The Democratic Republic of Congo is the worst affected, followed by Burundi, Eritrea, Sierra Leone, Chad and Ethiopia. "New this year, the report also shows that high rates of hunger are strongly linked to gender inequalities, especially in terms of literacy and access to education, and highlights which countries are most vulnerable to the global economic downturn," the report said. Klaus von Grebmer, lead author of the report and communications director at the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), said in the report low-income countries are being hurt by the food and financial crises.

<http://www.nation.co.ke/News/-/1056/672082/-/uo06q9/-/index.html>

Kenya's 'alarming' hunger situation

Kenya is rated among the 30 highest food insecure countries in the world. According to a Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2009 report released on Wednesday, the trend is moving fast from serious to alarming. The report, which covers the food situation up to 2007, was officially released Wednesday. The GHI, a measure of world hunger rates, is calculated using a formula that takes into account the proportion of undernourished in a population, the prevalence of underweight children under the age five, and the proportion of children dying before the age of five. The result is a number out of 40.

Of Interest

<http://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFJOE59E02020091015>

Nigeria bans foreign drinks at all govt functions

Nigerian President Umaru Yar'Adua has banned all foreign sodas, beer and alcohol at official events and in federal offices as part of a campaign to promote Nigeria-made products, his spokesman said on Wednesday. The nationwide beverage ban is largely symbolic since most international brand name drinks, such as Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Guinness and Heineken, are produced and bottled by Nigerian-based subsidiaries.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8307283.stm>

Zimbabwe MDC man returned to jail

A ministerial nominee in Zimbabwe's unity government has been ordered back to prison until his trial on terrorism charges starts, a court official said.

Roy Bennett, MDC member and senior aide to Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai, is due to stand trial on 19 October. He was arrested in February on the day ministers in the coalition government were sworn in, but released in March. A BBC correspondent says the case is one of many unresolved obstacles threatening a power-sharing deal.