

What's Playing in Africa: Tuesday, October 20, 2009

Produced by the Regional Media Hub: Africa



**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://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFJJOE59I0V720091019>

**Sudan says new US policy has "positive points"**

The Khartoum government said on Monday that U.S. President Barack Obama's new policy on Sudan had positive points and was a strategy of engagement, not isolation. Unveiling the policy on Monday, Obama called for a "definitive end" to the conflict in the western Darfur region and implementation of a peace deal that ended more than two decades of a separate north-south civil war. The strategy offers incentives if Khartoum works toward peace but Sudan faces tougher steps if it fails to act. Obama also said he would renew sanctions on Sudan this week.

<http://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFJJOE59I0LZ20091019>

**US keeps Sudan sanctions but offers dialogue**

The Obama administration on Monday said it would renew economic sanctions on Sudan, but also offered Khartoum new incentives to end violence in Darfur and the semi-autonomous south ahead of crucial polls next year. President Barack Obama, who during last year's U.S. presidential campaign urged a tougher line on Khartoum, said the action was necessary to prevent the oil-rich African giant from falling further into chaos.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/8315613.stm>

**Obama opts for compromise on Sudan**

It has become a familiar refrain coming out of Washington - incentives for progress or threats of action if there is no movement towards peace, better human rights or de-nuclearisation. Whether on Burma, Iran or now Sudan, the US government is taking a similar approach to widely different countries and problems.

The "carrot and stick" approach is not a novel foreign policy strategy. But unlike the Bush administration - which in some cases used only sticks - Washington is now adopting this approach with varying degrees to tackle most foreign policy challenges, delivering on President Barack Obama's promise to engage with foes, if they unclench their fist.

<http://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFJJOE59I0OL20091019>

**Somali Shabaab rebels say they shot down US drone**

Insurgents of the Somali al Shabaab group shot down a U.S. drone aircraft flying over the southern port of Kismayu on Monday and were searching for the wreckage, an insurgent spokesman said. U.S. commandos killed a 'most wanted' al Qaeda suspect allied to al Shabaab last month in a helicopter raid in the rebel-held south of the failed state.

"We fired at an American plane spying for information over Kismayu. Our forces targeted the plane and shot it and we saw the plane burning. We think it fell into the sea," said Sheikh Hassan Yacqub, spokesman for al Shabaab in Kismayu.

[http://www.monitor.co.ug/artman/publish/news/Did\\_Obama\\_snub\\_Museveni\\_93263.shtml](http://www.monitor.co.ug/artman/publish/news/Did_Obama_snub_Museveni_93263.shtml)

**Did Obama snub Museveni?**

The government yesterday moved to deny a report in an international newsletter indicating that President Museveni was snubbed by US President Barack Obama on a recent trip to New York. The Indian Ocean Newsletter, popular for its usual controversial stories on African strongmen, also added in its October 3 report that it was the first time the Ugandan leader had suffered such a diplomatic slight, a report dismissed by Foreign Affairs Permanent Secretary Ambassador James Mugume.

Governance

<http://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFJ0E5910A120091019>

### **Zimbabwe's Tsvangirai seeks SADC pressure on Mugabe**

Zimbabwean Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai will meet regional leaders this week to put pressure on coalition partner President Robert Mugabe to settle disputes in the unity government, a senior aide said on Monday. Tsvangirai said on Friday his Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) party would disengage from Mugabe's "dishonest and unreliable" ZANU-PF party in the unity cabinet set up in February. Political analysts say the MDC's decision may not mean the end of the power-sharing government but it will put pressure on the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the regional body under whose auspices former South African President Thabo Mbeki brokered a settlement in Zimbabwe last year.

<http://www.afrol.com/articles/34451>

### **SADC responds to Tsvangirai's call**

The chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, Armando Emilio Guebuza, is scheduled to meet Zimbabwe's Prime Minister tomorrow following reports of a possible collapse of the unity government in Harare. The SADC secretariat confirmed in a statement today that the president of Mozambique has accepted a request to meet the Prime Minister of Zimbabwe, Morgan Tsvangirai, as he had requested an audience. The meeting will be held in Chimoio, in the Manica province of Mozambique, the statement said.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8315618.stm>

### **Niger to vote in contentious poll**

Voters in Niger are going to the polls in the first parliamentary elections since President Mamadou Tandja forced through changes to increase his power.

He has been criticized for introducing a new constitution earlier this year enabling him to stand for a third term. Mr. Tandja has also been attacked for dismissing the previous parliament and dissolving the country's highest court.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8313929.stm>

### **African leadership prize withheld**

A prize of \$5m (£3m) for African ex-leaders who have shown good governance is not being awarded this year, Sudanese magnate Mo Ibrahim has said.

He gave no reason for the decision and said he had always intended that there would be years when no prize was given. Now in its third year, the prize is given to a democratically elected leader from sub-Saharan Africa who has served their term and then left office.

## **Conflict**

<http://www.afrol.com/articles/34452>

### **Ethiopia rebels deny state media reports**

Ethiopia's rebels, Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) have refuted state media reports alleging that a weapons cache displayed by the government belonged to the group. The state television claimed that the security forces captured four tones of chemicals and 7000 rounds of ammunitions, following the voluntary surrender of an ONLF commander last weekend. "Ethiopia's claim that it has captured ammunition is an exercise in extreme chicanery by inventing tall stories intended to hide its war crimes in the Ogaden and confuse the international community," ONLF said in a statement.

<http://www.afrol.com/articles/34453>

### **Central Africa's peace process still a long way, Ban**

Continuing tensions between Chad and Sudan have stalled regional peace efforts, prolonging the humanitarian crisis in both nations, the UN Secretary-General said in a new report made public today.

"The perpetuation of the hostility between Chad and the Sudan continues to frustrate solutions to the conflicts in Darfur and eastern Chad, exacerbating the plight of civilians in both regions," Ban Ki-Moon wrote, calling for a reinvigoration of "meaningful peace efforts."

<http://www.afrol.com/articles/34454>

### **UN advance plan to probe Conakry massacre**

Plans moved ahead today for an international commission of inquiry into last month's violent crackdown on unarmed demonstrators in Guinea, in which at least 150 people were killed and many others raped, as a senior UN political official continued his talks in the region. Reports have also revealed that the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Haile Menkerios, left the Guinean capital, Conakry, for Ouagadougou in nearby Burkina Faso for talks with President Blaise Compaoré in his capacity as the mediator mandated by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to look into the issue. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announced last week that he would set up the commission to investigate the crackdown by security forces on 28 September in Conakry "with a view to determining the accountability of those involved," sending Mr. Menkerios to prepare the ground.

<http://www.businessdailyafrica.com/Opinion%20&%20Analysis/-/539548/674292/-/tx0rxaz/-/index.html>

#### **Eritrea fanning conflict in region**

One of the frustrations with which Africa's friends have had to repeatedly cope over the years has been the seemingly utter incapacity of the African leaders to deal with their more problematic peers: witness the annual African Union (AU) summit's literal embrace of Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe last year on the very morrow of a farcical "re-election" criticized the pan-African organization's own monitors or, with a few honorable exceptions, its circling of the wagons around Sudanese despot Umar Hassan al-Bashir earlier this year after the International Criminal Court indicted him for crimes against humanity and war crimes for his role in the humanitarian disaster in Darfur.

[http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia\\_27/Somalia\\_Kismayo\\_Islamists\\_hand\\_out\\_weapons\\_as\\_prizes.shtml](http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia_27/Somalia_Kismayo_Islamists_hand_out_weapons_as_prizes.shtml)

#### **Somalia: Kismayo Islamists hand out 'weapons as prizes'**

Islamist fighters in southern Somalia have handed out prizes including weapons to participants of a radio quiz show, Radio Garowe reports. Radio Andulus in the southern port of Kismayo hosted the quiz show featuring Islamic questions to mark the holy month of Ramadan. Sheikh Abdiwali Mohamed Aden, the finance officer for Al Shabaab rulers in Kismayo, told reporters on Friday that the prizes were handed out to "encourage people to fight."

<http://www.nation.co.ke/News/africa/-/1066/674372/-/135p1hvz/-/index.html>

#### **First Darfur rebel denies charges before Hague court**

International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutors said today Sudanese Darfur rebel leader Bahr Idriss Abu Garda deliberately ordered the killing of 12 African Union peacekeepers, leaving civilians unprotected. Mr. Abu Garda, 46, is the first Darfur rebel to appear before the ICC. He appeared voluntarily for a hearing to determine whether he should face trial on three war crimes charges over the attack on an AU peacekeeping base in September 2007. Two other rebels have also been accused of involvement in the attack. Mr. Abu Garda, chairman of the United Resistance Front, has denied the charges.

#### **Energy**

<http://af.reuters.com/article/investingNews/idAFJOE59I0VR20091019>

#### **Rwanda to cut power prices by a third by 2012**

Rwanda aims to slash electricity tariffs by a third and double power generation through gas and hydropower projects by 2012, the central African nation's Energy Minister Alfred Butare said. The land-locked country, whose power supply has begun to stabilize after five years of severe outages, will see the first 25 MW of a \$325 million methane gas project connect to the grid by October next year, Butare told Reuters. The Lake Kivu gas deal with Contour Global, a New York-based renewable power developer, will total 100 MW upon completion at the end of 2012 and is Rwanda's biggest foreign investment to date.

<http://www.businessdailyafrica.com/Company%20Industry/-/539550/674404/-/u5x2t2z/-/index.html>

#### **Electricity tariffs to remain high despite onset of rains**

Electricity distributor the Kenya Power and Lighting Company has increased the fuel cost segment of its billing, signaling that consumers are unlikely to get relief from the heavy cost burden they have been bearing in recent months despite the onset of heavy rains. The rains were expected to cause an immediate drop in the cost of electricity as the country consumed more of the less expensive hydro power and cut back on the more expensive thermal power. A steep drop in hydro power's contribution to the national grid has seen electricity bills surge by a margin of 60 per cent since March on the back

of rising fuel costs charges — a varying item on the bills that is linked to the amount of power on the national grid that is generated from thermal sources.

<http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/-/2558/673378/-/qxq7bjz/-/index.html>

#### **Pull the plug... and pay Umeme \$65m fine**

Moves to throw the switch on Uganda's current power distribution concession have come unplugged. Reason: the taxpayer could bleed as much as \$65 million in exit fees to the concessionaire. Sources familiar with recent plans by the Ugandan parliament to force an end to the four-year marriage with power distributor Umeme say the substantial exit penalty contained in the small print of the concession agreement, would see the consumer tariff almost double as the utility attempts to recover the loss. The cost is provided for in the agreement, which for example obliges the government to settle the unamortized investments and the unrecovered amounts among other costs if both parties fail to agree

#### **Economic**

<http://www.afrol.com/articles/34449>

#### **Nigeria plans to offer stake to Delta residents**

The Nigeria federal government is planning to offer a 10 percent stake of gas and oil ventures to communities of the Niger Delta to end the long dragging militancy in the oil rich region. Local reports said the proposal put forward by the government to legislators, could be a lasting solution to end rebellion in the Delta which has cost the Nigerian government millions and cut the country's oil output by almost a quarter. The proposal initiates that the Niger Delta communities would be given a 10 percent stake in the holdings of the national oil company, the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC). The stake is also expected reduce the level of poverty in the region and end militancy which has and continues to devastate the country's oil and gas sector.

<http://www.afrol.com/articles/34450>

#### **New partnership in Guinea's oil and gas concession**

Hyperdynamics Corporation has today announced it has signed a letter of intent with Aberdeen-based Dana Petroleum PLC under which the two companies will negotiate the assignment of a 23 percent participating interest in the oil and gas concession offshore the Republic of Guinea. According to the company, the letter of intent, which is non-binding and gives Dana exclusive negotiating rights for the 23 percent share, calls for Dana to take a participating interest in Hyperdynamics' concession in exchange for total consideration of \$20 million.

<http://www.businessdailyafrica.com/Company%20Industry/-/539550/674334/-/u5x3iuz/-/index.html>

#### **DRC moves to stem income losses in Comesa entry push**

Mineral-rich Democratic Republic of Congo plans to join a regional compensation fund by the end of the year to help it avoid revenue losses that threaten to deny it membership to Africa's largest market bloc. The vast nation, renowned for its huge reserves of gold, cobalt, diamond and copper, has since last year stepped up a campaign to be granted membership of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (Comesa) as part of an ongoing reconstruction exercise after decades of civil strife. The Comesa adjusting facility specifically helps member nations to cushion themselves against losses arising from market liberalization programmes as more nations integrate into larger economic communities.

#### **Food Crisis**

<http://af.reuters.com/article/investingNews/idAFJJOE5910K920091019>

#### **E.Africa drought cuts farm output, inflates prices**

A drawn out drought in east Africa has reduced output of key commodities and pushed up prices across the region, delighting farmers but also threatening many who rely on the maize staple with starvation. The onset of a rainy season, which may bring heavier than usual downpours, is expected to improve the performance of coffee, tea and sugar crops but may destroy maize harvests in a vital growing region of Kenya. Coffee output from Africa's top producers, Ethiopia and Uganda, has taken a beating due to the low rainfall levels, but both countries expect a bumper crop this year.

#### **Of Interest**

<http://www.nation.co.ke/News/africa/-/1066/674384/-/135p1gxz/-/index.html>

#### **Nkunda secret book unveiled**

A political manifesto allegedly written by former Congolese warlord Laurent Nkunda just days before he was arrested by the Rwandan Government surfaced for the first time last week. In the manifesto, Gen Nkunda details his political and military ambitions, past relations with Rwanda, and his determination to rearrange national borders in the region. Gen Nkunda, the former head of ethnic Tutsi rebel group National Congress for the People's Defence that threatened to topple the Congolese Government this time last year, was arrested in late January by Rwandan troops invited in the Congo, heralding a new peace between the two countries.