

What's Playing in Africa: Thursday, October 22, 2009

Produced by the Regional Media Hub: Africa



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#### On the U.S.

<http://af.reuters.com/article/investingNews/idAFJOE59L06S20091022>

#### Rand weaker vs dollar, eyes on rate verdict

South Africa's rand weakened against the dollar in choppy trade on Thursday ahead of the central bank's interest rate decision later in the day while stock futures indicated a lower start on the bourse. Central bank Governor Tito Mboweni will start reading the monetary policy committee (MPC) statement around 1300 GMT after its two-day meeting. The MPC is seen leaving the repo rate steady at 7.0 percent on concerns about expected big increases in electricity prices.

<http://www.businessdailyafrica.com/-/539552/675330/-/59cup1/-/index.html>

#### US child labor claims threaten Kenya's exports

Kenya faces more hostile tea and coffee export markets following a US report that names it among 58 countries which use children in the production of goods meant for sale overseas. The report says Kenya exploits children to produce its world-renowned tea and coffee in violation of international labor laws that prohibit use of child labor or forced manual work. *Miraa* (a stimulant plant), rice, sisal, sugar cane and tobacco are also produced through children's toil, says the survey by the US labor office, which does not mention the multinationals that profit from the products, only saying its intention is to inform Americans that the items are produced through the exploitation and abuse of children. But the Kenya government and multinationals involved in the sectors rejected the claims with Labor permanent secretary, Beatrice Kituyi, saying the State had reduced instances of children working for profit or family gain in farms.

#### Conflict

<http://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFJOE59L03R20091022>

#### EU to impose arms embargo on Guinea: diplomats

The European Union will impose an arms embargo on Guinea following the killing of protesters in anti-government protests, EU diplomats said on Wednesday. They said EU member states had also agreed to restrict the travel and freeze the assets of individuals involved in the crackdown in a stadium on September 28, in which a local rights group said more than 150 people were killed. The decision is expected to be adopted by EU foreign ministers at a meeting in Luxembourg on Monday and Tuesday. It will increase international pressure on Guinea's military leader, Captain Moussa Dadis Camara, to step down.

<http://www.nation.co.ke/News/africa/-/1066/675264/-/135od00z/-/index.html>

#### Somalia militant groups in fierce clash

Somalia militants groups Hizbu Islam and al-Shabaab clashed today engaged in fierce clash west Kismayu, the capital of Lower region. Most of the fighting took place between Afmadow and Janay Abdalla villages, 90km west of Kismayu. Sheikh Hassan Yakoub Ali, the spokesman of al-Shabaab in the Juba region, said that his fighters were attacked by militias loyal to Sheikh Ahmed Mohamed Islam, a leader of Hizbu Islam militants. Speaking to Al-Andalus radio in Kismayu, 500km south of Mogadishu, Sheikh Yakoub reiterated that al-Shabaab fighters repelled an aggression. "Our fighters responded to an assault and remain in their positions," said Sheikh Yakoub. "The attackers left behind dead bodies," he added. Ever since al-Shabaab appointed an authority in Kismayu in late last month, the relationship between the two Islamic hardliners has been worsening. Hizbu Islam officials vehemently rejected al-Shabaab's unilateral decision to nominate an administration for Kismayu and the largely agricultural Juba regions.

<http://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFJOE59L03B20091022>

### **Somali young pirate suspect to face trial after test**

A suspected Somali pirate captured after the hijacking of a Spanish fishing boat will face trial in the high court because a second medical test has confirmed he is older than 18, court sources said on Wednesday. The Spanish navy captured the two Somalis in the Indian Ocean shortly after pirates overran the tuna boat Alakrana on October 2 and took hostage its multinational crew of 36. The pirates are still in control of the boat from the Basque Country in northern Spain, and have said they will not discuss the crew's release until their two comrades are freed.

### **Governance**

<http://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFJOE59L03Y20091022>

### **Guinea leader says will cooperate with inquiry: UN**

Guinea's military government has promised to cooperate with a U.N. inquiry into a bloody crackdown against protesters in the West African country last month, a senior U.N. official said on Wednesday. Haile Menkerios, the top Africa official in the U.N. political affairs department, also told reporters that the United Nations would deploy human rights observers in Guinea, which he visited last weekend. "We met with the president, (Captain Moussa) Dadis Camara, who said himself he is eager to have this commission come and his government will fully cooperate with it," Menkerios said after briefing the Security Council. "We have it in writing."

<http://www.afrol.com/articles/34478>

### **Niger lashes out at ECOWAS decision**

Nigerien government has lashed out on the West African economic bloc, ECOWAS, after the group suspended its membership for defiantly holding the highly controversial elections. ECOWAS suspended Niger yesterday after President Mamadou Tandja refused to postpone the legislative elections despite a call by the bloc to delay elections and resolve the country's outstanding political issues. The election came almost five months after President Mamadou Tandja dissolved parliament just a day after the Constitutional Court rejected a call for a referendum on 25 May to allow him to seek a third term when his mandate expires on 22 December.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8319549.stm>

### **Zuma plea for Zimbabwe stability**

South African President Jacob Zuma has warned that Zimbabwe, with its shaky unity government, should not be allowed to fall back into instability. He spoke after meeting Zimbabwean Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai, who has led his Movement for Democratic Change out of President Robert Mugabe's cabinet.

The MDC accuses Mr. Mugabe of oppressing political opponents and failing to implement last year's unity deal. Mr. Tsvangirai has appealed to southern African countries to mediate for him.

<http://www.zimeye.org/?p=10005>

### **Mugabe's cabinet meeting is a 'caucus' – MDC**

The Movement for Democratic Change (MDC-T) has described the Tuesday meeting between president Robert Mugabe and cabinet ministers belonging to his party as a 'Zanu PF caucus' and not a cabinet meeting in terms of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) upon which the transitional coalition government is founded. Zanu PF, through its mouthpieces, The Herald and ZTV had claimed that Mugabe chaired a 'cabinet meeting' in the absence of Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai and all MDC ministers who boycotted the meeting to protest Mugabe's continued violation of the GPA.

<http://www.nation.co.ke/News/africa/-/1066/675064/-/135oejwz/-/index.html>

### **Botswana elects first female Speaker**

The Botswana parliament made history of Wednesday when it elected Dr Margaret Nnananyana Nasha as its first female Speaker. The former cabinet minister was elected unopposed. She was nominated by the ruling Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) which won 45 of the 57 seats in parliament. Dr Nasha is a former civil servant who first entered parliament in 1994 through nomination by then president Sir Ketumile Masire who appointed her to the cabinet. In the 1999 elections, she contested the Gaborone Central seat where she ousted then presidential candidate, Michael Dingake of the Botswana Congress Party (BCP). She was appointed to the cabinet again by former president Mr. Festus Mogae but come the 2004 general elections, she lost the Gaborone Central seat narrowly to the youthful Mr. Dumelang Saleshando of the BCP. She retired from active politics this year.

<http://www.nation.co.ke/News/africa/-/1066/675256/-/135od0tz/-/index.html>

### **South Sudan disowns referendum vote limit**

The Southern Sudan Government has rejected a deal announced at the weekend on a referendum on the fate of the region. Under the deal agreed by Southern Sudan's Vice-President Riek Machar and the North's VP, Mr. Ali Osman Taha, a two thirds turnout of all registered voters and a 50 per cent plus one vote would be necessary for the South to become a separate state. Says John Andruga Duku, the head of mission at the Government of Southern Sudan Liaison Office in Nairobi: "This is not acceptable to the SPLM and the Government of Southern Sudan. "It is difficult to guarantee 66 per cent turnout, people go to vote voluntarily and there is no legal binding that one must vote." The South instead wants the 66 per cent cap placed on the number that turns out to vote and not the voter list.

### **Economic**

<http://www.businessdailyafrica.com/-/539552/675356/-/59cuqy/-/index.html>

### **Africa population outpaces economic gains**

One day this year, in all probability, the "billionth African" will have been born, a milestone that will only benefit the poorest continent if it can get its act together and unify its piecemeal markets. Nobody knows, of course, when or where in its 53 countries the child arrived to push Africa's population into ten figures. The UN merely estimates that in mid-2008 there were 987 million people, and in mid-2009, 1,010 million. Given the difficulties of obtaining accurate data from the likes of Nigeria, where provincial population figures are often hostage to the ambitions of local politicians, or any data at all from the likes of Somalia, experts are reluctant to hazard any greater degree of accuracy. There is less doubt, however, about the underlying trend — that Africa's population is set to grow faster than in any other part of the world in the coming decades, and to double by 2050.

### **Food Crisis**

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8319741.stm>

### **Ethiopia to seek urgent food aid**

The Ethiopian government is expected to confirm later that it needs emergency food aid for 6.2 million people. This is because of the effects of prolonged drought and erratic rains on crops and grazing for livestock. The UN's World Food Programme (WFP) is already facing a shortfall of more than \$85m (£50m) worth of food for Ethiopia to the end of this year. Aid agency Oxfam has called for a new approach to tackling the risk of disaster in the country.

<http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article32862>

### **Sudan warns of serious food gap in 2010**

Sudan may be facing a serious food gap starting later this year and intensifying in 2010, a senior official said. The Sudanese agricultural minister Abdel-Haleem Ismail Al-Mutaa'fi made the remarks before lawmakers where some have complained that their constituencies are on the verge of a famine. This week, Mansour Al-Agab, a Sudanese lawmaker burst in tears saying that Al-Dandar region in Southeast Sudan is confronted with a sharp food deficit and on the borderline of a famine. Al-Agab urged the government to provide aid to Al-Dandar residents or declare emergency in the area. He warned that thousands of heads of livestock could perish due to lack of water. Al-Mutaa'fi, according to the independent Al-Sahafa newspaper, assured the legislators that his ministry would dispatch teams to the states to evaluate the food production in relation to the population needs in the respective areas.

<http://www.zimeye.org/?p=10008>

### **12 000 killed by hunger in Zimbabwe every month**

Some 12 000 people are dying of hunger every month in Zimbabwe as president Robert Mugabe tells the world that the country needs no food assistance from outside, it has emerged. Prominent economic analyst and newspaper columnist Eric Bloch made the revelation during the public taping of a television discussion series known as 'The Transition', sponsored by the MDC, on Tuesday night.

### **Health**

<http://www.afrol.com/articles/34479>

### **\$1 billion required annually to reach children with life-saving vaccines**

Reversing a downward trend, immunization rates are now at their highest ever and vaccine development worldwide is booming, according to a new assessment released today by the World

Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF and the World Bank. The State of the World's Vaccines and Immunization reports that more infants are being immunized today than ever before - a record 106 million in 2008 - according to new data. At the same time, its authors are calling on donor nations to address a funding gap that leaves millions of children still at risk, particularly in the poorest nations and communities, where preventable diseases take their deadliest toll.

#### **Press Freedom**

<http://www.afrol.com/articles/34481>

#### **Eritrea is the bottom last in Press Freedom Index 2009**

Eritrea is the world's worst country for press freedom, Reporters Without Borders said in the Press Freedom Index 2009 issued Tuesday. According to RSF, in Eritrea which appears at the bottom of the index at position number 175, a little information is in the public domain, stating that journalists in the country fear repression and persecution by the government. RSF also said young democracies in Africa like Mali, South Africa and Ghana have witnessed dramatic improvement in democracy and respect of media freedom. Ghana dropped to 29 in the global index from 32, Mali 31 from 34 while South Africa dropped to 38 from 33 from the global index last year.

#### **Climate**

<http://www.nation.co.ke/News/africa/-/1066/675478/-/135obe3z/-/index.html>

#### **Africa team pessimistic over climate talks**

Africa's climate change negotiators have expressed their frustration in reaching a deal with their Western counterparts for the upcoming United Nations climate summit in Copenhagen, Denmark. After a failure of recent pre-conference negotiations in Bangkok, Thailand, African negotiators expressed their worry about the outcome of the main conference scheduled for December. During their final preparation meeting for the Copenhagen summit, African negotiators told reporters in Addis Ababa it was too late to make a difference in the current climate change negotiation scenario.