

Local News September 22nd, 2010

Human rights abuse on the rise in Kenya:Report

The Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC) has released a shocking report on the status of human rights record in the country. The report compiled between July 2005 and June this year details an increase in cases of police brutality, extra judicial killings and torture. The record attributes an increase in mob violence and mushrooming of vigilante groups to failed criminal justice system. Speaking during the release of the report, the Kenya Human Rights Commission deputy director Tom Kagwe called on the government to fully implement the new constitution to end human rights violation.

Kagwe said the bill of rights as captured in the new document will bring to an end the culture of impunity. According to the report, freedoms of association, assembly and movement suspended during the post election violence in early 2008 still stand. Violation of women's rights tops the list of violations of civil and political rights despite the passing of the new constitution. According to the report violation of women's rights was at the highest percentage of 24.5% whereas freedom of information was at the lowest by 0.02%.

Uasin Gishu county youth want the election of untainted leaders

Young people in Uasin Gishu County are up in arms against the old crop of leaders vying for various posts in the county. The more than a hundred youth under a group dubbed North Rift Theatre Ambassadors have vowed to elect youthful and professional leaders who will be able to win investor confidence apart from sustaining the available resources in the region. Led by the group project manager Ken Ruto, they say for development to be realized in the county, its leaders must have untainted past adding that they will introduce a panel that will vet aspirants to various posts without fear.

Rutoh said the group will be traversing the North Rift region offering civic education on the constitution and appealed to the government and Non governmental organizations to help with the same. Grace Chelagat, a group member called on women and the youth to support the new leadership entailing fresh ideas ready to bring changes.

End...Carolyn Koech

Teachers react to TSC's new move

The move by the teachers service commission (TSC) to make teachers obtain certificates with the commission after 3 years continues to elicit mixed views. In Elgeyo Marakwet County, the teachers led by the area Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) secretary general James Kasiga and the chairman Morris Barchok, termed the move as a way of threatening and infringing on the teachers rights. They claimed that the government is trying to bring in performance contracts through the back door. The leaders who were speaking at Elgeyo Marakwet KNUT headquarters in Iten said all issues affecting teachers have been adequately addressed in the new constitution.

Ends.....Caro Koech

Poor state of roads affects Farmers in Ndalat

The high amount of rainfall being experienced in most parts of the country has rendered many roads impassable. Ndalat residents are now in a desperate situation due to the poor state of roads which has affected transportation of their farm produce to town. Led by Joseph Lelei and Mike Kibor, the residents stated that it is difficult taking the sick to the hospital, adding that fare has doubled to 200 shillings up from 100 shilling for the public service vehicles that operate on the route. The residents now want the concerned authorities to look into the matter saying farming is their main source of income and more delays will make them unable to pay school fees for their children. Ndalat area is one of the main milk producers for the Eldoret New KCC depot.

Ends.....Caro Koech

The newly recruited teachers to begin teaching immediately,

The recently recruited teachers on a contract basis by the government in Eldoret North constituency will begin on their lessons with immediate effect. This follows a successful recruitment exercise done early this month. In an exclusive interview with 97.1 Fish FM, the executive Secretary National Union of Teachers Wareng district Jacob Arusei said the recruitment exercise in search of 66 teachers as proposed by the government to attend to the various schools with acute shortage of teachers successfully ended with the appointment of those teachers on Monday.

Some of the regions which received the teachers include Kiplombe zone which received 3 teachers, Sugwei zone Six teachers, Koisagat zone 9 teachers, Mois bridge and Sirikwa zones receiving 10 teachers and finally Turbo zone receiving 16 teachers. However, the executive secretary added that the district was still in need of more than 300 teachers in order to meet the teacher student ratio.

End.....James Gitaka.

UPU Strategy Conference opens in Kenya

Vice President Kalonzo Musyoka has called on players in the postal services sector to embrace the new technologies and the changed customer needs to refocus their business. Kalonzo said customers were aware of the wide range of alternatives available in the market and expected services that meet their varied needs. He said social communication through physical mail is on the decline with the bulk of mail that is being delivered through the postal network relating mainly to business correspondence. The Vice President was speaking Wednesday during the official opening of the Universal Postal Union's (UPU) Strategy Conference at the United Nations offices in Gigiri.

The three day conference brings together over 500 delegates from around the globe to come up with strategies of addressing the new challenges affecting postal services. He said even though the postal services remain a key player in the national economies, only those that embrace change to suit the evolving times will thrive and prosper.

Kenya to improve municipality services

The ministry of local government has embarked on a program to empower local authorities by devolving procurement of goods, consultants and works to the municipalities. The Kenya Municipal Program will enhance local governance and improve service delivery in 15 pilot municipalities. Speaking during the closing ceremony of a sensitization workshop for the municipalities on Wednesday, local government

Permanent Secretary Prof. Karega Mutahi said the program will introduce benchmarking and competition among municipalities by offering greater financial support to better performers.

The two-day workshop at Charter Hall Nairobi was aimed at preparing local authorities earmarked for implementation of the program funded by the World Bank and other development partners to a tune of 13.2 billion shillings. The Kenya Municipal Program aims at facilitating the decentralization of services centered to strengthen municipalities. It also seeks to improve on infrastructure and service delivery at the local level.

Kenyan man takes Ocampo to court

The battle to prosecute suspects of the bloody 2008 post-election violence has taken a new twist after a Nairobi businessman sued the International Criminal Court (ICC) accusing it of operating illegally in Kenya. Joseph Gathungu moved to the High Court in Mombasa seeking orders to stop the ICC's operations. Gathungu argues that the ICC's prosecutor Moreno Ocampo's activities of investigation and intended prosecution are not provided for in the new Constitution adding that the Constitution is the supreme law of the land and the new Constitution does not recognize the ICC as a competent court in Kenya.

He contends in his affidavit that allowing ICC to operate in Kenya violates the letter and spirit of the Constitution. The case comes on the heels of Ocampo's affirmation on Monday that he was coming to the country to investigate and prosecute four to six Kenyans who bear greatest responsibility for the bloody violence, at The Hague by December. Ocampo issued the renewed caution after Justice Minister Mutula Kilonzo announced that Kenya did not need the ICC's intervention in the Kenyan case because there was a new Constitution in place. Kilonzo was extensively quoted in Kenyan media on Monday saying that the country was able to handle the post election violence cases because of the new constitutional dispensation which came into force on August 27.

Judiciary vetting to fight graft, says PLO

The vetting of judges and other provisions in the new Constitution will be key in the fight against corruption. Kenya Anti Corruption Commission (KACC) Director Dr PLO Lumumba said that the vetting exercise was useful in cleaning up the Judiciary's image. Dr Lumumba said that the exercise is going to improve the administration of justice and ensure the country has the best judges and magistrates. Dr. Lumumba made the remarks during a workshop on challenges in the Investigations, Prosecution and Adjudication of Anti Corruption and Economic Crimes Offence in Nakuru.

The anti graft chief said that following the promulgation of the Constitution, the Judiciary will be reconstituted and the prosecution arm professionalized. Participants at the three-day workshop include state law officers, police prosecutors, magistrates, judges and KACC lawyers and investigators. Lumumba said that the forum will enable prosecutors to evaluate challenges hindering effective prosecution of cases.

UN secures 40 bln dlrs for global health drive

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon Wednesday announced a 40-billion-dollar drive to improve the health of women and children, which he said would save millions of lives around the world.

Governments, philanthropists and private groups pledged the cash, giving a spectacular end to the UN summit on eliminating poverty, a campaign that has been badly battered by the international financial

crisis. He estimated that his Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health could save 16 million lives by 2015. Cutting the unnecessary deaths of women during pregnancy and childbirth and stopping the premature deaths of children under five are the two most slowest moving goals of the eight key development targets set at a summit in 2000.

KWFT to set up its own cash machines

Just five months after the Kenya Women Finance Trust was granted a license to carry out nationwide deposit-taking, the microfinance institution says it is looking to install its own Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) across the country. KWFT Managing Director Mwangi Githaiga said on Wednesday that this was part of the solutions they are coming up with to increase access to financial services for their over 330,000 clients. He disclosed that they also plan to open up more countrywide branches in a bid to reach and empower women who are excluded from the formal financial system.

This, he added, would be a gradual process that would see them have many ATMs covering most of their 205 offices across the country in the next two to three years. The license issued by the Central Bank of Kenya in April made it possible for the institution - which mainly targets women in the low income bracket - to transform itself and diversify its products range savings and loan products. Since inception in 1981, KWFT has become a self-sufficient institution which in 2009 disbursed Sh146 billion and closed the year with a loan book of Sh11 billion.

Regional News

Eritrea may become failed state, warns think-tank

Eritrea may become a failed state if the world community fails to engage with the Horn of Africa nation, a think-tank has warned. The International Crisis Group says Eritrea is under severe stress, with the economy in free fall. This is a marked deterioration from the situation 10 years ago, when Eritrea was challenged but stable, it says. Eritrea gained independence in 1993 and faces UN sanctions for its alleged support of Islamist rebels in Somalia. It suspended its membership of the African Union in protest, and has become increasingly isolated. Eritrea has fought two conflicts since independence, including a border war with Ethiopia in which some 80,000 people were killed.

Global News

Kremlin bans sale of S-300 missile systems to Iran

The Kremlin has formally banned the sale of S-300 air defence missile systems to Iran three months after new UN sanctions. A decree was issued by President Dmitry Medvedev prohibiting the sale, which had been in the pipeline for years. Earlier, Gen Nikolai Makarov, head of Russia's general staff, confirmed that the missiles were "definitely" subject to the sanctions introduced in June. At that time, Russia's foreign minister said the S-300 deal was not affected. Possession of S-300 systems would enhance Iran's defence of its nuclear facilities against attack from the air.

Medvedev's decree, published on Kremlin website, lists the S-300 among military items which must not be exported to Iran under the fourth round of sanctions imposed by the UN Security Council on Iran over its nuclear programme.

Setbacks threaten Delhi Games as athletes pull out

Further doubts have been cast over next month's Delhi Commonwealth Games after two athletes

withdrew and others postponed travelling to the event. The Scottish team said they would not travel until the site was "secure", while an English and Australian athlete both pulled out over security concerns. Officials from several countries have heavily criticised the facilities, saying they are dirty and incomplete. But Indian authorities have insisted the site will be ready on time.

Michael Fennell, president of the Commonwealth Games Federation, is travelling to Delhi where he is hoping to meet Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who took charge of the city's reparations a month ago. On Tuesday, a footbridge under construction near the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, the main Games venue, collapsed, injuring 27 workers, five of them seriously. On Wednesday, a section of ceiling at the weight-lifting venue fell in, but Indian officials said it was a minor problem and "not something to be worried about".

UN asks for action on nature loss, citing poverty

Governments must protect nature better in order to safeguard their countries' wealth, says the UN, as ministers meet for a day of talks on biodiversity. The session at UN headquarters co-incides with the final day of talks on the Millennium Development Goals, and the UN says the two issues are linked. Delegates will discuss why they have failed to meet a 2010 target for curbing loss of biodiversity. Conservationists are calling for at least a 10-fold increase on spending. They will also be urging governments during the session on Wednesday to combine action on biodiversity loss and climate change, which they say are inextricably linked.

In a separate move, Palau and Honduras are requesting more countries to ramp up protection of marine life. But the main message - from the UN and activists alike - is that governments must urgently increase efforts to protect biodiversity and ecosystems.

Sports News

Kenyan clubs threaten to withdraw U-20 players

The National under-20 soccer team head coach Vince Ombiji is a worried man ahead of the African Youth Championships qualifier against Lesotho this Saturday at the Nyayo National Stadium. Local clubs have once again threatened to withdraw their players from camp to honor weekend Kenya Premier League (KPL) matches. The scenario is not new as the KPL clubs pulled the same move before the youngsters left for the CECAFA tournament last month in Eritrea.

The Clubs that have threatened to withdraw their players include Gor Mahia, Sony Sugar, Thika United, Mathare United and KCB. Ombiji is now in a dilemma because those affected are his most dependable players. Captain Innocent Mutiso and his Mathare United teammate Jacob Keli are among the players affected. Others include Gor Mahia's Abdulmalik Mohammed, Antony Akumu, Musa Mohammed and Duncan Awiti. The remaining clubs Thika United and KCB both have two players each in the team. Despite the pressure from the clubs however, the national team on Wednesday humbled Liberty Academy 7-3 in a one sided friendly match at the Nyayo National Stadium courtesy of goals from Paul Were, Edwin Mwaura, Victor Majid and Silas Shitote.

Newly appointed Harambee Stars tactician Jacob Ghost Mulee was present at the match following the proceedings keenly. The Finals of the African Youth Championships will held next year in Liby

Kenyan squad to face Uganda named

Newly appointed Harambee Stars coach Jacob 'Ghost' Mulee has called up six new players for the forthcoming African Cup of Nations qualifier match against Uganda set for October 9 in Nairobi. Wycliffe Kasaya, Havenar Maloba, Johanna Omollo, Ezekiel Odera, Chester Okoyo and James Orundu are the new faces in the provisional squad of 29 players. Reigning Kenya Premier League champions Sofapaka provide the bulk of the side with seven players in the squad, Gor Mahia has four while Mathare United and league leaders Ulinzi have three players each. The biggest casualties are the Europe based duo of Arnold Origi and Robert Mambo who have both been dropped while there is still no room for Patrick Oboya. Mulee also confirmed that Auxerre striker Dennis Oliech will captain the team against Uganda.

Kenyan boxers' sharpen their punches

The national boxing team to this year's Commonwealth Games is familiarizing itself with the computer scoring system in the run up to the games to be staged from the 3rd to 14th of October in New Delhi India. The squad of 10 coached by Patrick Waweru and managed by Albert Matito is training at the Moi International Sports Centre Kasarani. Among the Pugilists in the Kenyan team are 2006 Commonwealth Games bronze medalists Joshua Ndere of light heavy weight and Moses Mathenge of light welter weight. Others in camp include Nick Okoth in Bantam Weight, Benson Gicharu in the fly weight, Dick Ombaka in the middle weight and Elly Ajoy in the heavy weight category.

Kenya's graph on the world boxing scene has dipped since the 1988 Olympics when Robert Wangila won the continent's first gold medal. The team has already done two tours in preparation for the Commonwealth Games. The team took part in the World Championship in Milan, Italy late last year and was in New Delhi, India for the Commonwealth early this year, although they did not win any medals on both occasions. The team will travel to Delhi in three batches.

Togo coach 'sorry' over fake team

Former Togo coach Tchanile Bana has apologized for taking a fake national team to Bahrain earlier this month. The team of imposters masquerading as Togolese internationals played a friendly against the Gulf kingdom on 7 September and lost 3-0. Bana has been banned from all football activities for three years. Bana added that his motives were driven by the frustration of a group of young players who were finding it impossible to break into any of the national set-ups.

Namibia coach in Zimbabwe storm

The proposed appointment of Belgian Tom Saintfiet as national coach has caused a huge storm in Zimbabwe. The media and vast majority of fans would like the acting coach Norman Mapeza to be given the job on a permanent basis. For their part, Zimbabwe Football Association (Zifa) officials are hopelessly divided over the matter. A press conference to unveil Saintfiet as the new Warriors boss was abruptly cancelled last Saturday.

Saintfiet, who is midway through a four-year contract with the Namibia national team, is currently in Harare. A Zifa technical committee recommended that Saintfiet be employed although Zimbabwe would have to be buy out of his contract with the Namibia FA.

Business News

Kenyans abroad now able to send airtime back home

Kenyans living abroad can now send airtime to their relatives and friends back home using the Yu prepaid phones. This follows a partnership between TransferTo, a leading provider of international airtime transfer services, and Essar Telecom Kenya Limited. By joining the TransferTo Airtime Transfer Network, Yu allows any Kenyan residing in the United Kingdom, South Africa, the USA and many other countries to send instant prepaid top-ups to relatives or friends in Kenya provided the recipient is a Yu prepaid customer. The airtime transfers can be performed easily through TransferTo's multichannel distribution network, which includes mobile operators, point of sale retailers, as well as a number of partner Internet portals including its own online top-up service, www.transferto.com, where Yu top ups will soon be available. The companies say all transactions are secure and will be processed in real time.

KCB to improve customer care, output

After the successful 12.5 billion Shillings Rights Issue, the Kenya Commercial Bank (KCB) Group has disclosed that it will use part of its proceeds to improve customer service and productivity. Chairman Peter Muthoka however reiterated that a huge chunk of the funds would go towards the intended purpose of growing their mortgage book. Last year, the group merged the operations of its subsidiary S&L with those of the bank in a move that was designed to improve its competitiveness in the mortgage industry by giving the division access to KCB's wide branch-network across the region.

With the growth of its mortgage books, the group can now lend money for more than 25 years and also bring to the fold people who are excluded from the formal financial system as well as those in the Small and Medium Enterprises sector. The growing demand for housing, estimated at 150,000 units per year has seen many commercial banks seek additional funds to lend to potential home owners. On Monday, Housing Finance issued a Sh5 billion bond which will enable it offer affordable credit to their clients.

HP opens up Cloud to Kenyan SMEs

Kenyan Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are set to benefit from new plans by Hewlett Packard (HP) to upgrade its cloud computing infrastructure which will allow clients to access the clouds much faster and efficiently. The new solution is expected to deliver integrated, validated solutions for SMEs, enterprise and cloud environments and client virtualisation. Announcing the new plans at this year's VMworld 2010, HP said its agreement with VMware will deliver a new virtualisation solution, reference architectures and IT services to help customers accelerate cloud computing deployment and IT as a service.

According to Ken Mbwaya, the Managing Director Hewlett Packard (HP) East Africa, the new solution will help its customers to better control and manage the physical and virtual aspects of cloud infrastructure. VMware and HP are creating an integrated, comprehensive cloud infrastructure solution combining the new VMware vCloud™ Director with the HP BladeSystem Matrix and HP Cloud Maps. Mbwaya said the HP Cloud Map for VMware vCloud Director can be directly imported into customers'

Matrix environments to rapidly deploy new VMware vCloud infrastructure.

Barclays feted best foreign bank in Kenya

Barclays bank of Kenya has been named the best foreign bank in Kenya this year, according to a survey carried out by EMEA Finance, a global publication. The bank has been praised for its achievements in the publication that reports on financial events in the Europe, Middle East, and African markets. The publication's Publisher and Chief Executive Officer, Christopher Moore congratulated Barclays Kenya for their exemplary work in rolling out revolutionary products that fit within the local market. Barclays Managing Director for East and West Africa, Adan Mohamed, thanked colleagues for their individual and collective efforts, which culminated in the award.

The banking industry in Kenya has witnessed a revolution with players innovating products to attract potential clients. With it, traditional banking institutions have had to change their services to suit the needs of the locals who stayed away from banks for fear of high service charges

LG to launch file sharing platform

LG Electronics has announced plans to introduce an exclusive Digital Living Network Alliance (DLNA)-Based Technology that will enable mobile users to share multimedia files on the upcoming LG Optimus 7 and all DLNA compliant digital devices at the touch of a finger. The firm said its unique multimedia sharing technology on LG Optimus 7 will allow users to enjoy content on the phone across today's digital platforms with a simple finger flick. George Mudhune, LGE Regional marketing manager, East Africa said the unique media file-sharing technology will be embedded in upcoming LG Optimus 7 smartphones, which will go on sale early in the fourth quarter of this year.

At the same time, speaking at the IFA 2010 Consumer Electronic Show in Germany, where LG Electronics show cased the technology, Ki Wan Kim, CEO of LG Electronics Middle East and Africa said the DLNA-Based Technology and its unique feature is a direct response to the growing need for technologies that empower users to share multimedia content across electronic devices. LG was demonstrating this DLNA-based multimedia sharing feature at the LG booth at IFA in Berlin, Germany from September 3-7, 2010