

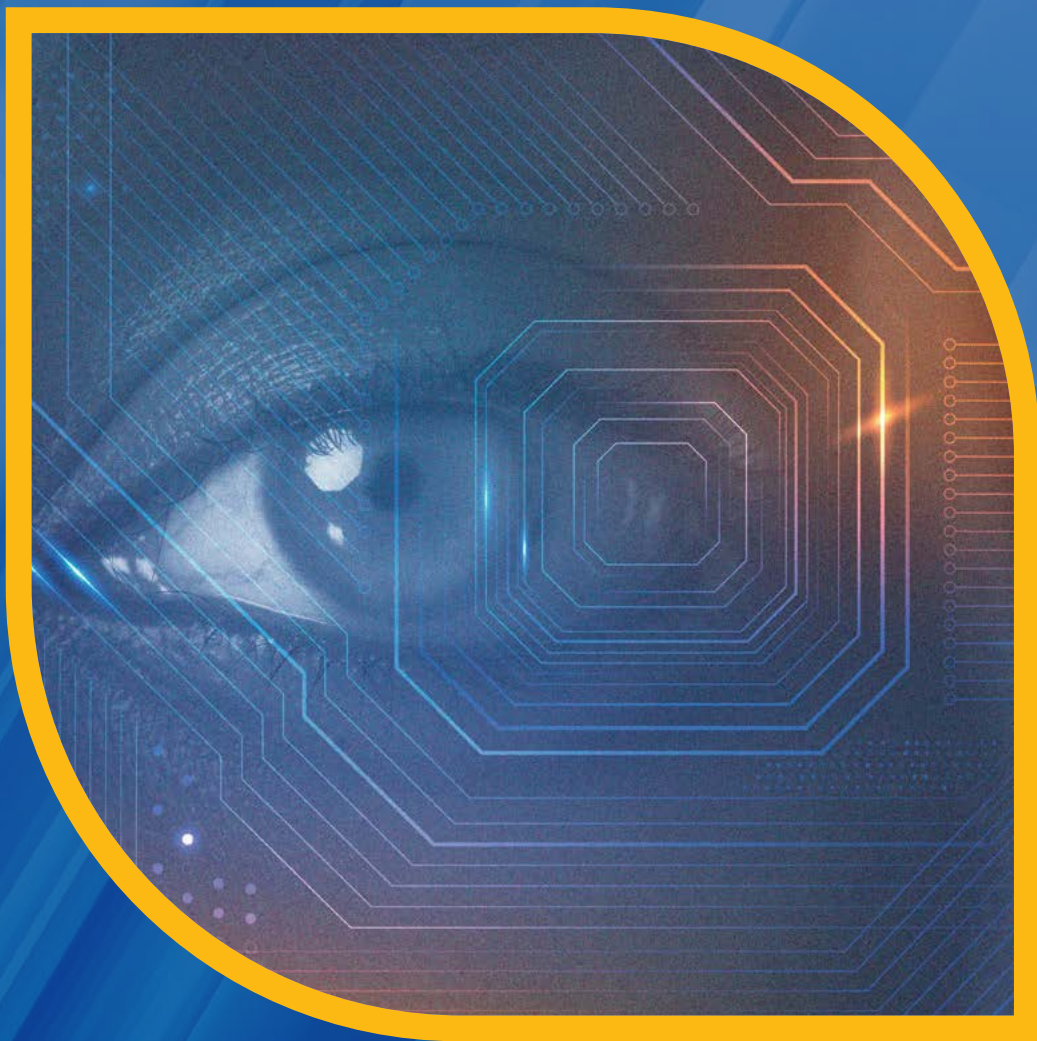


CENTER FOR STRATEGIC
AND POLICY STUDIES

Living the future today

CSPS

MONITOR



MAY 2024

SUDAN

MORE THAN 100 KILLED IN TWO WEEKS OF FIGHTING IN SUDAN'S EL-FASHER: MSF

CHARITY SAYS MORE THAN 900 WOUNDED IN THE CAPITAL OF NORTH DARFUR PROVINCE IN FIGHTING BETWEEN SUDAN'S ARMY AND THE RSF.

26 MAY 2024

More than 100 people have been killed in just over two weeks in a major city in Sudan's Darfur region, an aid group has said, as the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and allied armed groups are locked in fierce fighting against the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF).

At least 134 people have been killed and more than 900 wounded since May 10 in el-Fasher, the capital of North Darfur, Doctors Without Borders, known by its French initials MSF, said on Sunday.

One of the victims, a staff watchman at MSF's pharmacy in el-Fasher, died of his wounds in a hospital after shelling hit his house on Saturday.

"The numbers of people killed and wounded are increasing each day as intense fighting continues," the group said in a statement. "We urge warring parties to do more to protect civilians".

El-Fasher has witnessed renewed fierce fighting as the RSF is pressing deeper seeking to take control. The city is the last remaining capital in the Darfur region not to have fallen to the paramilitary group. It is also hosting the region's last garrison of the SAF. Earlier this month, the RSF besieged the city and launched a major attack on its southern and eastern parts.

To repel the paramilitary group's advance towards el-Fasher, two ex-Darfur rebel leaders, Minni Minnawi and Jibril Ibrahim, broke months of neutrality by siding with the SAF last November.

The RSF emerged out of what rebel groups call the Janjaweed, an Arab force that killed thousands of non-Arabs in Darfur during the war in the region, which began in 2003 and ended with a peace deal in 2020.

"The world is watching silently what is going on in Fasher ... as if it was a scene from a fictional action movie scene," Minnawi said in a Facebook message on Sunday. "The operation is being carried out by the hands of the same characters that carried out ethnic cleansing and genocide in 2003."

Sudan has been engulfed in a brutal conflict since April last year when a simmering rivalry between SAF's General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and RSF chief Mohamed Hamdan "Hemedti" broke into an open war.

While much of the early fighting took place around the capital Khartoum, it quickly spread to other parts of the country, including the southwestern state of Darfur. There, it quickly took an interethnic dimension as old rivalries linked to the previous war that began in 2003 resurfaced.

More than a year of war has killed 14,000 people, according to United Nations estimates. The conflict has forced about nine million people to flee their homes and pushed pockets of the population to starve. Nearly five million people are on the verge of famine, according to the World Food Programme.

Observers have long warned that the fall of el-Fasher would further deteriorate an already dire humanitarian situation in Darfur.

"Sudan is the biggest famine [in the world] and the epicenter of that famine is the Darfur region, which is being ravaged by the Rapid Support Forces as they've rampaged across it," Alex de Waal, executive director of the World Peace Foundation, told Al Jazeera.

Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/5/26/more-than-100-killed-in-two-weeks-of-fighting-in-sudans-el-fasher-msf>

IN DARFUR, JUSTICE WILL BE KEY TO SUSTAINABLE PEACE

IT IS TIME FOR AFRICA'S LEADERS TO SEE THE ONLY WAY TO BREAK THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE IN SUDAN IS TO END IMPUNITY.

23 MAY 2024

On May 6, 2004, Human Rights Watch (HRW) published a report alleging that the Sudanese government and its allied "Janjaweed" militias had committed systemic attacks on the civilian populations of the African Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa ethnic groups that amounted to "ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity".

The government and its Janjaweed allies, the report said, deliberately slaughtered thousands of Furs, Masalit and Zaghawa; raped women; and demolished villages, food stockpiles and other critical supplies.

On May 9, 2024, almost 20 years to the day it had exposed genocide in Darfur, the HRW released another report titled "The Massalit Will Not Come Home": Ethnic Cleansing and Crimes Against Humanity in El Geneina, West Darfur, Sudan.

In it, the HRW alleged the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) – the formalized version of the Janjaweed militia – and allied paramilitaries have committed a new genocide in el-Geneina, the capital city of Sudan’s West Darfur state, from April to November last year, killing thousands of people and leaving hundreds of thousands as refugees.

And the carnage in Darfur is far from over. The HRW’s Belkis Wille decried the RSF’s ongoing siege of North Darfur’s capital, el-Fasher, and called for an end to “the new cycle of atrocities in Darfur” just last week on this very page.

The RSF and its allies are still able to systematically kill, maim and displace Darfuris with near complete impunity because Africa’s leaders have repeatedly missed opportunities to deliver justice to the region over the years.

Indeed, the atrocities we are witnessing in Darfur and across Sudan today could well have been avoided if the architects and perpetrators of the genocidal atrocities of the 2000s were brought to book in the first place.

Countless opportunities for justice have been missed in the past 20 years.

In 2004, then-United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan established the International Commission of Inquiry on violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law in Darfur.

The commission’s damning report, published in January 2005, led to the UN Security Council referring Sudan to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

In 2009, the court issued an arrest warrant for then-Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed under his watch in Darfur. Later, it added genocide to the charges.

The president’s arrest and prosecution then would have undoubtedly changed the trajectory of the country and curtailed the powers and reach of the genocidal militias it armed and supported.

Claiming the pursuit of justice and accountability would be an obstacle to the realization of peace in Sudan, the leaders of the African Union (AU) refused to cooperate with the ICC and arrest al-Bashir. As such, they helped al-Bashir evade international justice.

Regrettably, while undermining the ICC’s efforts to deliver justice in the international arena, African leaders also failed to heed the advice of the AU’s own officials and experts, missing opportunity after opportunity to deliver justice to long suffering Darfuris within the region.

In 2004, acknowledging its responsibility to deliver justice to the people of Sudan, the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR) undertook steps to investigate human rights violations and chart a path forward for the country.

To this end, the Mission of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights to Sudan took place July 8-18, 2004.

The fact-finding mission visited camps for displaced people and met officials from the Sudanese government, senior civil servants, and representatives of national and international humanitarian organizations in Khartoum.

After the visit, the mission recommended the establishment of an International Commission of Enquiry, comprising the UN, AU, Arab states, and international humanitarian and human rights organization, to probe human rights violations in Sudan and to ensure perpetrators of atrocities were brought to justice.

Specifically, the mission wanted the commission to investigate the role of the military, police and other security forces in the Darfur conflict as well as the involvement of rebel movements and armed militias, in particular the Janjaweed, the Pashtun, the Pashmerga and the Torabora.

The commission, it further explained, would identify those responsible for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in the country and ensure that they were held accountable for their actions.

The mission's recommendations included the disarmament and demobilization of all irregular armed groups operating illegally within the Darfur region. And it urged the government of Sudan to abide by its obligations under international human rights and humanitarian law and in particular under the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights to guarantee the basic human rights of the Sudanese people.

Al-Bashir, as expected, ignored an overwhelming majority of the mission's recommendations.

However, African leaders, surprisingly, also failed to follow through on the well-meaning advice from their top human rights experts.

So, the International Commission of Enquiry, as envisioned by the ACHPR, failed to materialize, and al-Bashir continued his reign with impunity.

Any talk of regional accountability and justice mechanisms for Sudan was practically abandoned until the ICC took action in the international arena.

In July 2008, just a week after the ICC prosecutors announced their request for an arrest warrant for al-Bashir, the AU's Peace and Security Council voiced its demand for a homegrown judicial process for Sudan.

It called for the creation of an African Union High-Level Panel on Darfur to submit recommendations on "accountability and combating impunity, on the one hand, and reconciliation and healing on the other".

Led by former South African President Thabo Mbeki, the panel consulted widely in Sudan and finally recommended a hybrid court for Darfur with Sudanese and non-Sudanese legal experts, a truth and reconciliation panel, and wide-ranging reforms of the country's criminal justice system.

Al-Bashir balked at the idea of launching a comprehensive judicial process, especially one that involved foreign experts, and mostly disregarded this panel's advice as well.

In the following years, African leaders refused to push for any other transitional justice instrument, international or regional, seemingly due to fears that the pursuit of justice would derail efforts for peace. As a result, al-Bashir never faced any accountability for the crimes he facilitated in Darfur and the RSF remained able to continue its abuse of Darfuris with impunity.

Today, as Darfur suffers a devastating new wave of atrocities, the AU must change course. It must acknowledge sustainable peace requires accountability and an end to impunity. It must make a strong and explicit commitment to achieving justice for all in Darfur, be it through Sudanese, African or global legal instruments.

Of course, Africa's leaders have every right to criticize the methods and approaches of the ICC. They also have every right to demand justice is delivered through local and regional instruments in Africa.

In their approach to the conflict in Sudan, however, they missed a crucial opportunity to make this point and lay the foundations for a strong, independent and responsive human rights culture in Africa.

Had they agreed to implement the proposals advanced by the ACHPR and the African Union High-Level Panel on Darfur, they would have not only helped Darfuris find justice but also showed the ICC that it is indeed not needed in the region.

Regrettably, they chose to ignore the advice of their own experts and allowed the perpetrators of egregious human rights violations to get away scot-free. As a result, we are where we are today. The culture of impunity is still strong in Sudan, and the Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa communities are still facing slaughter.

All who have facilitated genocide in Darfur must be subjected to transitional justice processes and mechanisms and other accountability processes, irrespective of their positions. This is the only way to achieve peace. Africa's leaders can no longer afford to deny justice to Africans.

Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2024/5/23/in-darfur-justice-will-be-key-to-sustainable-peace>

US SANCTIONS TWO RSF COMMANDERS AS FIGHTING ESCALATES IN SUDAN'S DARFUR

UN OFFICIALS AND RIGHTS GROUPS WARN HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF CIVILIANS ARE AT RISK AMID HEAVY FIGHTING IN EL-FASHER.

15 MAY 2024

The United States has imposed sanctions against two commanders of Sudan's paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), as rights groups and the United Nations warn that deadly violence in the North Darfur region is escalating.

The US Department of the Treasury said on Wednesday that the sanctions targeted the RSF's Central Darfur commander, Ali Yagoub Gibril, and Osman Mohamed Hamid Mohamed, a major-general who heads the group's operational planning.

"While the Sudanese people continue to demand an end to this conflict, these commanders have been focused on expanding to new fronts and battling for control of more territory," Treasury official Brian Nelson said in a statement.

The RSF has encircled el-Fasher, the capital of North Darfur, in recent weeks and fighting between the paramilitary group and the Sudanese Armed Forces has surged.

Earlier this week, a spokesperson for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned that the violence in el-Fasher put more than 800,000 civilians at risk.

Guterres, the spokesperson said, "is alarmed by reports of the use of heavy weaponry in densely populated areas, resulting in dozens of civilian casualties, significant displacement and the destruction of civilian infrastructure".

"He recalls that civilians in the area are already facing a looming famine and the consequences of over a year of war."

The UN estimates that at least 15,500 people have been killed across Sudan since the war broke out in mid-April 2023 between the RSF and the Sudanese Armed Forces. More than 8.8 million people have been forced to flee their homes.

Rights groups have accused both the RSF and the Sudanese Armed Forces of war crimes, including killing civilians in both deliberate and indiscriminate attacks.

The RSF has come under a particular spotlight, having been accused of killing "at least thousands of people" in West Darfur, Human Rights Watch said earlier this month. Attacks on the capital of West Darfur, el-Geneina, saw the RSF and allied militias destroy entire neighborhoods housing

people from the non-Arab Masalit community, HRW said.

Residents, aid agencies and analysts have warned that the fight for el-Fasher, a historic center of power, could be protracted and inflame longstanding ethnic tensions.

The RSF grew out of the Popular Defense Forces, a government-backed Arab militia called “Janjaweed” by rebels that targeted non-Arab groups in Darfur throughout the almost two-decade-long war in Sudan’s large western region, and only ended in 2020.

Many of the Darfuri groups that fought against the “Janjaweed” initially remained neutral during the current conflict, but some have increasingly aligned themselves with the Sudanese Armed Forces, seeing the RSF as a greater threat due to its history in the region, and its animosity towards non-Arab groups.

On Wednesday, the medical charity Doctors Without Borders, known by its French initials MSF, said it had received 454 casualties at the South Hospital it supports in el-Fasher amid the escalation of violence since May 10.

Of that, 56 people have died of their injuries, Dr Prince Djuma Safari, MSF’s deputy medical coordinator in el-Fasher, said in a dispatch shared on the group’s website.

“But the wounded and death toll are likely far higher, since the fighting continues to be so intense that many people cannot reach the hospital,” Safari said.

“Until now, North Darfur had been a relatively safe haven compared to other parts of Darfur. Now, there are snipers in the streets, heavy shelling is taking place, and nowhere in the city is safe at all.”

The US sanctions imposed on Wednesday freeze the targeted individuals’ assets in the country and prevent any US citizens or entities from doing business with them.

Source; <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/5/15/us-sanctions-two-rsf-commanders-as-fighting-escalates-in-sudans-darfur>

ETHIOPIA

FORAGE, A GENE BANK, AND CLIMATE INITIATIVES IN ETHIOPIA'S STAGNANT AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY

MAY 25, 2024

As the world faces crucial issues like food security, climate change, and the transformation of food systems, the livestock sector offers potential solutions to the challenges involved with keeping a population well fed.

For decades, organizations like the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute (EBI), the Alliance of Biodiversity, the International Center for Tropical Agriculture, and the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) have been crucial in maintaining and providing forage globally, including in Ethiopia.

On May 15, 2024, ILRI hosted an event under the theme of “Seeds for the Future: Food Systems Transformation with Climate and Environmental Benefits” to celebrate the 40th anniversary of ILRI’s Forage Genebank, International Day for Biodiversity, and the launch of exciting new forage and climate research.

The event marked four decades of ILRI and its partners’ pioneering work in preserving and utilizing forage biodiversity in low- and middle-income countries. The Forage Genebank, with over 18,000 accessions from nearly 2,000 species collected from more than 150 countries, continues to provide essential feed solutions for livestock globally.

During the conference, it was emphasized that forage diversity is central to ILRI’s Feed and Forage Development program, addressing challenges like inadequate and variable animal feed supplies and climate impacts. The importance of forage availability and diversity for livestock productivity, and the advantages offered by improved forage were highlighted. The conservation of forage genetic diversity also has significant economic benefits, particularly for disadvantaged regions worldwide.

The event gathered a notable group of participants, including Namukolo Covic (PhD), ILRI director-general’s representative to Ethiopia; Melesse Maryo (PhD), director-general and national focal person for the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture; and Yohannis Girma, animal and plant development sector advisor to the Ministry of Agriculture and representative for Fikru Regassa (PhD), a state minister of Agriculture, among others.

At the event, Yohannis highlighted that Ethiopia has one of Africa’s largest livestock populations, emphasizing that animal well-being is crucial for economic reasons, cultural heritage, and food security. Despite the sector’s vast potential, Ethiopia faces numerous challenges threatening

its sustainability, including low productivity, feed shortages, inefficient marketing systems, and climate-related disasters.

Yohannis emphasized programs such as the Climate Smart Livestock initiative, led by ILRI, are leading efforts to create a more resilient and sustainable livestock sector. He notes that Ethiopia has made considerable progress in incorporating climate change adaptation and resilience-building into its agricultural policies and strategies.

Abraham Tekle from The Reporter conversed with Yohannis about the pivotal role of agriculture in the nation's economy, and its efforts to boost sector productivity, strategies implemented to develop improved forages, and the Genebank's contributions to enhancing agricultural output in Ethiopia.

The Reporter: Agriculture is a key driver of Ethiopia's economy, and the country is also renowned for its livestock and husbandry. What new initiatives has your Ministry implemented to enhance productivity in these sectors?

Yohannis Girma: Agriculture is not only the backbone of the Ethiopian economy, but also a fundamental necessity for our society. It plays a crucial role in generating foreign currency. Our livestock, though globally renowned and potentially rich, has not been performing up to its expected productivity. However, under Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's initiative over the past year and a half, the sector has shown signs of improvement. Ethiopia has ample human resources and favorable environmental conditions, which we are leveraging to drive significant achievements across various regional states, enhancing productivity across the sector's value chain.

From a national perspective, we have implemented several strategic measures to boost livestock productivity. First, we are improving livestock breeding and species to enhance productivity. Second, we are focusing on forage, which constitutes 70 percent of livestock production costs, by setting plans to enhance its quality and availability. Third, improving livestock health is vital, and we are actively working towards this goal. These three measures are essential for advancing the country's livestock development and productivity.

The new initiative, inspired by the success of the national 'Green Legacy' initiative, drives these measures. We are witnessing better results and making progress towards our goals. Forage plays a critical role in achieving these objectives. Ethiopia has vast pastures, industrial waste products, and crop residues that serve as forage sources. Additionally, the Genebank is instrumental in improving forage quality by producing protein-rich forages that enhance livestock productivity. It has significantly impacted livestock productivity in Ethiopia.

WHAT ARE THE KEY INITIATIVES THE MINISTRY IS UNDERTAKING TO IMPROVE THE AGRICULTURAL SERVICES AND ITS PRODUCTIVITY?

Our Ministry is intensifying efforts on extension services and productivity. We are training extension workers in each region, who then train, demonstrate, and teach model farmers to utilize forages effectively and increase productivity. Simultaneously, we are creating platforms

to encourage private sector investment in establishing Genebanks that produce high-quality, protein-rich forage.

WHAT ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES IS THE MINISTRY IMPLEMENTING TO ENHANCE THE USE OF FORAGE FOR IMPROVED PRODUCTIVITY?

The primary focus is to develop and distribute advanced forage for animal consumption, increasing their diversity across the country. As discussed at the conference and mentioned earlier, we have historically underutilized our resources. However, we have now identified and evaluated over 22 advanced forage types, distributing them to users. Despite this progress, we still face challenges in effectively gathering and advancing these forages to maximize productivity.

Under the 'Ye-Lemate Tirufat' initiative, we aim to improve the productivity of milk, chicken meat, and eggs in the agricultural sector. As a Ministry, we set a goal for each person to consume 200 liters of milk per year, but the current average is only 66 liters. To achieve this, we must triple our current production, making the increased cultivation and production of forages an urgent priority.

Each farmer with a few livestock should have the opportunity to cultivate advanced forage types on their land to boost both livestock and crop productivity. However, much work remains at the national level. We need to commercialize forage production with enhanced research capabilities.

To address this, we have developed a national strategy that focuses on forage productivity, collection, and distribution across the country, considering the needs of both model and general farmers. This strategy ensures that all farmers can access advanced forage, helping them increase their productivity. Achieving this will require providing practical lessons and training to farmers.

DOES THE MINISTRY OFFER ANY SPECIFIC PROGRAMS OR MECHANISMS TO HELP FARMERS ENHANCE THEIR PRODUCTIVITY?

The primary goal is to introduce farmers to the various types of forage produced by the Genebanks and raise awareness about their availability, purposes, and specific livestock uses. Increasing the variety of forages is crucial to achieving our objectives. As discussed in the conference, we currently have 22 advanced forage types developed through extensive laboratory research. To ensure these products reach their intended users, we have established mechanisms to demonstrate their benefits, provide support to farmers, and make the forages easily accessible in most parts of the country.

HOW DOES THE GENE BANK CONTRIBUTE TO ENHANCING FARMERS' PRODUCTIVITY AND BOOSTING THE COUNTRY'S OVERALL AGRICULTURAL OUTPUT?

Our Genebank requires extensive support, including additional resources, advanced technology, and enhanced research. This support is essential for significant capacity building. To achieve this, we need ample resources, thorough research, and robust infrastructure. Sustainable collaboration with various stakeholders is crucial to ensure that collected, segregated, protected, and developed forages reach farmers across the country. We must work diligently to meet our goals, reinforcing the sector with adequate support and technological advancements. Ultimately, the Genebank needs maximum enhancement to improve its productivity.

HOW ESSENTIAL IS THE GENE BANK IN HELPING FARMERS INCREASE PRODUCTIVITY AMIDST THE CHALLENGES OF CLIMATE CHANGE? WHAT CONTRIBUTIONS HAS THE MINISTRY MADE TO SUPPORT THIS EFFORT?

The Genebank operates as an independent entity under the Biodiversity Institute, with its own organizational structure and activities. Despite its autonomy, there is close collaboration between the Genebank and our Ministry. Our role involves taking the advanced and researched forages developed by the Genebank and distributing them to farmers. We also provide training to farmers on how to effectively utilize these forages through an extension system. This collaborative effort is one of our primary responsibilities, ensuring that each sector, while operating independently, contributes to a unified goal of improving agricultural productivity and sustainability.

The most important thing is utilizing the resources that we have at hand properly and effectively, with the farmers given the proper services in time that could help them to be efficient and more productive. This can be done before or after the harvesting time and especially in times when we can collect ample byproducts and preserve as well as use them. This is one of the biggest responsibilities of our Ministry and we are doing it aggressively, with protecting the grazing lands from erosion as well as from climate changes.

It is important to highlight the critical role of the "Green Legacy" initiative in enhancing productivity. This initiative significantly contributes to the availability of forages and animal feeds. By focusing on environmental protection, it helps preserve existing forage species and raises farmers' awareness about climate and environmental issues. This progress is achieved through continuous training and exposure, which our Ministry actively promotes. To improve efficiency and boost sector productivity, it is crucial to involve the private sector and provide support with the latest technology. We are committed to these efforts to ensure sustainable agricultural development.

Source: <https://www.thereporterethiopia.com/40139/>

“HARD TO COMPREHEND”: AMERICAN AID REMAINS LIFELINE FOR MILLIONS IN 21ST CENTURY ETHIOPIA

MAY 18, 2024

This year marks a significant milestone: 120 years of diplomatic relations between the United States and Ethiopia. The US is the single largest bilateral donor of humanitarian assistance to Ethiopia, and with reports showing that over 21 million people in the country require aid in 2024 due to the compounding effects of conflict, climate shocks, and insecurity, it is safe to assume that Washington will continue to play an important role across Ethiopia.

Scott Hocklander, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) mission director for Ethiopia and Djibouti, spoke with The Reporter's Sisay Sahlu about the burgeoning demand for humanitarian aid in Ethiopia. He described the role USAID has played and continues to play in Ethiopia, challenges facing the Agency and other development and aid partners, and the effects that violent conflict has had on humanitarian missions.

THE REPORTER: THE US AND ETHIOPIA ARE CELEBRATING THEIR 120TH DIPLOMATIC ANNIVERSARY. COULD YOU GIVE US A SHORT OVERVIEW OF SOME ACHIEVEMENTS SO FAR?

Hocklander: A lot has been done over the years. I haven't been around the entire time but I'd say it's been a very important relationship, and humanitarian [work] is one of the areas which I think the United States has contributed incredibly to over the time.

My history in this country goes back almost 20 years; I first came to Ethiopia in 2005 with USAID working for support and disaster assistance. So, my understanding began in terms of understanding the humanitarian situation here and realizing the big needs, the high levels of poverty and insecurity that I think we've worked on collectively over the past couple of decades.

This is an area where I think the United States government, through the generosity of US taxpayers, has seen a role here in providing not just food assistance but also development assistance. And when you add those two together, the USAID mission here in Ethiopia is one of the biggest in the world providing long-term investments in health, which has been massive at over 200 million dollars a year.

In agriculture as well through the Feed the Future Initiative resilience activities, our support to the productive safety net just over the past five years is 550 million dollars, but that's long-standing as well going back to the very initiation of the program itself, just through agriculture and resilience over the past five years that's another 500 million. We do big investments in water and sanitation both in urban and rural areas, highland and lowland, education, democracy, and governance. It's a full portfolio of development and humanitarian assistance we implement now and over the past many years. I think there has been a strong partnership; there have been gains.

But as you know now, we're facing very serious multiple compounding crises through the conflict that we're seeing in Amhara, in Oromia, the impacts of droughts and climate shocks, the inability to get needed inputs like fertilizers and seeds into the country, the high prices; all these things are hitting the Ethiopian people very hard and particularly those that are vulnerable. Which is why we're seeing such high numbers of people in need. I think 21.4 million was the latest from the UN report, really across the country. And this is an area where I think the US has played a leadership role here.

Also internationally, contributing 153 million to the latest pledging conference in Geneva, the US being the biggest international donor. I think we're at 60 percent of the humanitarian response plan right now and that's been a tradition for the US. But we want to see things get better, we want to see the government, as well as other donors, step up. The needs right now are staggering. The contributions we have so far are not enough, we do need to do more for all of the people out there who are trying to get over these shocks, all the mothers who are trying to feed their kids, to feed their families, and the things in the community.

WHAT ARE THE SUCCESS STORIES OF THE US GOVERNMENT THROUGH ITS HUMANITARIAN ENGAGEMENT IN ETHIOPIA?

I know it's hard when you look at 21.4 million in need to look at success but there certainly has been success. I think health is one of the most important areas in which we have seen significant success. We've seen life expectancy increase significantly over the past decade moving to just under 69 years of age. I think that's a really important indicator of success. We've seen gains made against terrible diseases like tuberculosis and malaria, even though with malaria we've seen those numbers go up again. But the provision of basic health services has improved.

On the humanitarian side, some of the gains that we have made are being jeopardized by conflict around the country. When you see a lot of the investments that not only the US government has made, but many donor governments have made as well, we see the impact on the infrastructure both on the health side and on the education side. That's when you have this level of conflict you're going to potentially jeopardize very important gains that have been made.

THE US REMAINS THE LARGEST HUMANITARIAN DONOR IN ETHIOPIA, AS WITNESSED IN GENEVA. COULD YOU TELL US HOW MUCH FUNDING THE US IS PLANNING FOR ETHIOPIAN HUMANITARIAN NEEDS IN TOTAL FOR THE YEAR 2024?

Yes, the 153 million [pledged in Geneva] is all new money for the fiscal year 2024, and it's also important to mention that we had in the country over 300 million dollars' worth of food systems, 450,000 metric tons mainly from the fiscal year 2023, but that food is now really the main food assistance that's being used for distribution in areas that the joint emergency operation which our international non-governmental organizational consortium delivers in specific areas, as well as the majority of the assistance that the World Food Program has to deliver assistance in those areas.

It's very large when you start looking at humanitarian assistance. These are huge figures and you add those to the investments in agriculture in resilience and health and water sanitation; it's a big number.

SOME CRITICS ARGUE THE AID IS A POLICY TOOL AND POLITICALLY MOTIVATED. IN SOME CASES, THEY SAY THE AID IS NOT REACHING ITS INTENDED TARGETS DESPITE THE HUGE BUDGET. HOW WOULD YOU RESPOND TO THIS?

I can understand the skepticism, in this day and age, it's hard to know exactly unless you can see something for yourself where assistance is going. That's why it's been so important for me and for the rest of my team to get out and see the assistance taking place. But you know the money is getting out there and we are making a huge difference, just in the past round the US government helped provide food assistance for 2.1 million Ethiopians and I've been out there and I've seen this work in progress on the last two trips. I went to Afar and was able to see a mobile clinic, see kids getting immunizations for the first time, and see malnourished kids receive treatment to help improve their health.

Before that I was in southern Ethiopia in South Omo, seeing our work down there in supporting some of the nation's improving biodiversity. But it's also looking at health and education. I think that for a country as large as Ethiopia, it's massive and there is so much need for development, and so when I think of our work this is one reason why it's good that we're talking to you, being able to communicate more effectively all these things in different ways will help to address some of the skepticism. I think that's something we can do much better in terms of showing all the great things that we're doing across all this work.

HOW DOES USAID IDENTIFY AND PRIORITIZE THE MOST VULNERABLE POPULATIONS AND TAILOR ASSISTANCE ACCORDINGLY? DO YOU GIVE EQUAL ATTENTION TO ALL AREAS OF ETHIOPIA?

We try to be driven by data as much as we possibly can, so I think it's a combination of things. One, it's about the data you know. For example, the US government has invested in the early warning system for many years that uses a very data-driven set of indicators to tell us where the need is greatest and so based upon where those areas are, it helps us decide where we need to work.

But it's more than that because it's not just the US government. I mean, ultimately, responsibility for food security belongs to the [Ethiopian] government. So we work closely with the government and with the United Nations. We work closely with other development partners to look at the broad set of needs to decide who and where is the best place to provide that assistance to coordinate that effort. In the case of food assistance itself, it's largely divided between the joint emergency operations program which I talked about, the World Food Program, and the government. So between the three, and based upon what the needs are, determine where everyone operates.

But in terms of USAID our development could work all over the country and it's certainly based on needs. It is based upon the relationships that we have. Unfortunately, a lot of the work lately has been impacted by conflict, so the ability to work in Amhara is extremely challenging right now, areas in Oromia are extremely challenging.

I just want to just take the opportunity to highlight the dangers to our partners and the courage in particular of our humanitarian implementers that we work with and the risks that they take to ensure that people who need it get assistance in a timely, appropriate, and accountable way. It is a testament to their professionalism. But also I think it is just a reminder that it is dangerous out there, and the best way for us to address the challenges that we're talking about is through peace.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE DANGERS FACING HUMANITARIAN WORKERS SINCE THE CONFLICT IN AMHARA BEGAN? HOW MANY HAVE BEEN INJURED OR KILLED WHILE AT WORK?

I think in general the latest figure I heard was around ten who lost their lives. What we understand from our partners is that it is very insecure, it's very unpredictable, things can change very rapidly. I think that again our partners have done an amazing job of being able to operate in a very conflicted area through the relationships they have. But things can change very quickly.

AN EFFECTIVE HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE REQUIRES STRONG DATA SUPPORT AND RELIABLE INFORMATION. HOW DO YOU MANAGE THE AVAILABILITY OF QUALITY DATA FOR HUMANITARIAN WORK?

I don't think I'm ever satisfied with data. I think it's a continuous challenge for all of us to get better at it and to use it more effectively and we have a lot of very strong technical relationships with all of our partners, including the government, and that's true on the humanitarian side, where there's a specific meeting that takes place every couple weeks that goes over all of the data that we have. It's always something that we can do better at. In areas where there is conflict, it makes accessing data more difficult than it otherwise would have been.

That is something that we're all working together to try to improve. I wish that data would be more easily available in an area where nutrition is needed, in areas where the situation can change very quickly and can necessitate it. It is something that we're working with the regional health bureaus on, to make better connections between those health bureaus and the partners that can respond.

I would say this is true of my entire career, that we are always trying to get better in terms of having more accurate, timelier, more usable data to make better decisions.

IN ETHIOPIA, THERE ARE OVER 20 MILLION PEOPLE WHO NEED HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE, ALMOST A FIFTH OF THE POPULATION. HOW DO YOU SEE THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT'S READINESS AND PREPAREDNESS TO RESPOND TO THIS NEED?

It is a staggering figure. It's really hard to comprehend. I had the opportunity to travel with our assistant administrator during her visit to Ethiopia a couple of months ago. In Afar, in Tigray, when you go out and you see the need, it can be overwhelming at times.

I can tell you that through the course of my career, I've done a lot of things but the hardest thing I think is to see a mother who is agonizing over her inability to feed her child. It's something hard to imagine and which you just can't get out of your head. Being able to help that mother, to help that family, to help those communities, the food that they need, the nutrition they need, the medication that they need, the clean water that they need, is extremely important.

I think in many ways these are huge challenges that we all collectively need to come together to try to address.

ETHIOPIAN OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN HEARD SAYING THAT A SURPLUS OF WHEAT IS BEING PRODUCED, BUT AT THE SAME TIME, MILLIONS OF PEOPLE ARE STARVING. HOW DO YOU SEE THESE TWO ISSUES? HAS USAID EVER PURCHASED WHEAT FROM ETHIOPIA? IF NOT, WHY?

Some programs involve local purchases. I know the World Food Program has done local purchases for programs in the past. I think if we have talked to the Ministry of Agriculture about this. For example, one of the things that they will say is that there still are challenges logistics-wise in terms of being able to move food around. That's one of the things that's been discussed. As you mentioned data is very important and getting the latest data and understanding about what is available is also very important.

We do know that the number of inputs for example going into Amhara both on the fertilizer side, as well as the improved seed side, are not what was targeted in the past year.

Again, peace is going to help all these things – the ability to deliver resources like fertilizer and tools like seeds to these productive places. I don't think anyone's going to be capable of reaching the kind of goals either the government or the international community have.

WHAT ARE THE TOOLS USED TO SUPPORT AND PROVIDE ASSISTANCE, CONSIDERING THE HUGE NUMBER OF THE NEEDY?

As I mentioned, there are different analytics that have been in use in Ethiopia for many, many years. The household economy approach is one that USAID began to develop to be able to get down into the community level, to look at what those areas in the country needs, what the livelihoods are and then calculate the impacts of inputs. All these changes give us a sense of how many in this particular area will need assistance. So that's a very important one that we developed and we've done that in close collaboration with all our partners, including the government.

The famine early warning system is another very critical tool that helps look into the future and determine which areas are going to be harder hit than others based upon weather and successive rains, the prices, the production. All these things come together in very sophisticated modeling to help guide us to make the best decision we can.

As I'm sure you know the amount of need in the world today is at an unprecedented level. Just look around Sudan and many other parts of Africa, Ukraine, and Gaza, there are all these areas in which the need is extraordinary and so, for us on the development side but also the humanitarian assistance side, we have to make really good decisions.

We have to use the data to prioritize the areas that need it most. We see that in our tools, they tell us which areas are most at risk and that's really what we use to make decisions.

HUMANITARIAN AND DEVELOPMENT AID ARE RELATED, BUT UNLESS AID IS SUPPORTED BY INVESTMENT, THE RESULTS MIGHT NOT BE FRUITFUL. IN SOME PARTS OF ETHIOPIA, SOME PEOPLE HAVE BEEN RELIANT ON AID SCHEMES FOR YEARS. HOW LONG CAN THESE PEOPLE CONTINUE TO DEPEND ON AID?

That's a good question. I think that the development aid that we provide and how we provide it needs to continue to get better and to get smarter and we need to come up with solutions that are not just about providing food assistance.

Because food assistance in of itself is not going to help people get off aid, it's opportunities, it's access to markets, it's being able to send kids to school, it's having better access to health and water. All these things have to be part of the development picture to be transformative in people's lives.

I think that's something that all development organizations and the USAID understand, we are getting much better at integrating our approaches across all of our sectors for working on really important strategies. For example, in the Somali region with the regional government, President Mustafe brings all of our partners together at the same time and makes sure that those interventions like supporting each other overlap, support the beneficiaries, and also develop in a more comprehensive long-standing durable way.

Though when you're talking about a lot of places right now, where you have conflict like we're seeing now, which is destroying these investments, it's going to be very hard to get assistance. I think ultimately you have to have peace in these areas to make progress right and that's true here and around the world.

IN WHAT WAY IS USAID SUPPORTING THE NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT INSTITUTION TO BUILD ITS MITIGATION STRATEGY?

Mitigation is very important and we're looking at being able to support disaster risk management here in a stronger way. I think the entire portfolio is evolving and also needs to be based on responding to the different risks of climate as a priority of USAID administrator Samantha Powers, as part of USAID. In general, we recognize how the rains are changing. I was here 10 years ago and I remembered a much more defined rainy season. Now it's really hard to know when the rainy season starts.

But that's not unique to Ethiopia, that's happening around the world. Understanding how our climate is changing at a micro level is incredibly important to develop the kinds of programs that will help the people in Ethiopia to adapt, respond, and hopefully do well.

TELL US MORE ABOUT THE INCIDENT LAST YEAR WHEN AID AGENCIES DISCOVERED AID DIVERSION, AND THE SUBSEQUENT INVESTIGATION TO HOLD THOSE WHO WERE INVOLVED IN AID SIPHONING ACCOUNTABLE.

At one point it was turned over to the USAID Office of the Inspector General and that investigation continues. They can always be contacted about that information. But the decision to suspend aid was gut-wrenching for all of us, particularly for our humanitarian team who have been working with these populations regularly.

But it was a decision that we had to make, in seeing the scale of the diversion, which was very large, look into areas around the country. In communities, in meals, and these different areas like in the transport network, we realized that a huge amount of assistance was not going to where it needed to go.

Our job is to make sure that the assistance gets to the people who need it and that's what the US taxpayer expects as well, that wasn't happening and to fix those systems we had to pause, we had to understand where the challenges were, and we had to incorporate better methodologies that could ensure that the resources were going to make it there. We worked closely with the government to make these critical changes, with the World Food Program as well as with our non-governmental actors.

I also want to make the point that although the food assistance was paused, our nutrition program never stopped and over the course of 2023, we provided nutrition assistance for over 2.2 million both moderately and severely malnourished kids.

But once we made some significant changes, the responsibilities of logistics, transport, and distribution for the food assistance went to the humanitarian actors and that was incredibly important.

We agreed that how we developed the beneficiaries lists and how we targeted was a process that brought the humanitarians to the fore. Lastly, we integrated a new targeting system based

upon vulnerability that allowed all the partners to understand down to the household level who needs it most.

We have a lot of innovations with our humanitarian aid as well, using technology and other tools to track all these resources has given us the confidence that at this point we believe the assistance is going to where it needs to be and that's why in December we were able to restart and deliver in a very timely way the assistance that people need around the country.

WHAT ROLE DOES THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT PLAY IN THE RESUMPTION OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE?

It was very important in terms of negotiating all these things with the government through the Ethiopian Disaster Risk Management Commission in particular, but also there's still work to be done. We still need to see all these changes put into law. I think there's a role at that level and a lot of it is respecting humanitarian principles, respecting the independence of the humanitarian process in terms of making selection based upon need, based upon vulnerability.

So it depends, there's the interaction at each level – on the national level, regional level, and community level, and just in terms of doing the targeting itself. It involves local officials at that level bringing the community together and ensuring the safety of the humanitarians who are there being able to implement these changes and making sure that it's communicating well.

What we're finding is, for example, areas where beneficiaries were never getting their full allotment of food and now that with better information about why beneficiaries were chosen and about what exactly they're supposed to be getting, we're seeing there the right people get the food.

I think in Ethiopia we have an incredible team who are dedicated to the mission. They're the ones that are going out in these communities, they're the ones that are seeing the suffering that's taking place. No one is more dedicated than our humanitarian affairs here at USAID to put all these innovations in practice.

IS THE INVESTIGATION STILL ONGOING?

We continue to express the need for those who took part in the diversion to be held accountable, but the investigation process takes time, our Inspector General is still working. It does take time, but it's something that we continue to communicate both here at the national levels as well as when we go out to the regions. We tell them about the need to continue to pursue these investigations until their completion.

YOU HAVE MENTIONED THE CHALLENGES HUMANITARIAN AGENCIES ARE FACING IN AMHARA AND OROMIA. ARE THERE OTHER REGIONS THAT COULD BE DANGEROUS FOR HUMANITARIAN WORKERS?

Unfortunately, it's not just Amahra and Oromia, I think the border areas are always fraught with insecurity in areas of Gambella, and Benishangul-Gumuz. That's been the case for many years around the borders. It can often be unpredictable and dangerous.

Even Addis has become very, very difficult for all of our partners due to the issue of kidnapping and conflict. I mean there are so many different things that have increased the level of insecurity, making delivering assistance more and more difficult, which is something that I know our partners are adapting to. They are bringing in security specialists and they're changing the way that they do business. But it is having an impact. It's not just the destruction of actual buildings and infrastructure and things that we've worked on. A lot of assistance, a lot of people living in major cities are not able to go out because the security situation is unknown. All this has a big impact. It's not just USAID's work, it's all work that's being done to provide services, to work on development, to provide humanitarian assistance.

It has taken a toll I think also in terms of mental health. So many people in this country have gone through trauma; the people themselves but it's also the people who deliver assistance. That's an area which USAID is hoping to work on and we'll work on in the future.

DONOR GOVERNMENTS AND AID AGENCIES HAVE RECENTLY BEEN CALLING FOR ETHIOPIAN OFFICIALS TO CORRECT BUREAUCRATIC HURDLES, RED TAPE, AND VISA PROCESSING ISSUES. WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THIS?

In that regard we work very closely with our humanitarian partners and with the government to try and make sure that the right people are getting in at the right time and with the right equipment et cetera.

The UN plays a very important role in making sure that visas are available for humanitarian workers. For example, one of the key issues is security for our staff, communication with the Ethiopian defense force and others so that we can make sure when a humanitarian convoy needs to go down a road, they can go down that road. It's something that we are continually working on collectively and, I think, as long as this conflict persists is going to have to be a focus. I think some of these questions were outlined in Geneva but we just need to continue to follow up on those and make sure that all the sides are committed and making good on what they're obliged to do.

HAVE VISA ISSUES BEEN AN OBSTACLE FOR USAID?

There are two things. One is the timeliness of the visa. Even when they are approved, sometimes it takes much longer than one would expect. The second is the clarity of the process. Sometimes it's uncertain whom to go to request an extension or to get a new approval.

THE US GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO PROVIDE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE BUT CONFLICT CONTINUES. WHAT IS YOUR MESSAGE FOR ETHIOPIAN OFFICIALS, BESIDES PROVIDING AID WHEN CONFLICT ERUPTS AND THERE ARE DEMANDS FOR AID?

I think peace is the message and that peace is what's needed first and foremost. The most direct way or the first sort of step towards a peaceful resolution is for people on all sides to sit down at the same table and to work it out. I know the US Ambassador Massinga is very much committed to that. From a development perspective, we see the impacts that this conflict is having on the work that we're doing and the suffering that's taking place.

It is a difficult job, but it's what we have to do. But the clearest is a path towards reducing the amount of humanitarian assistance needed to make our development investments and activities have a bigger impact.

Source; <https://www.thereporterethiopia.com/40036/>

RELIANCE ON VIOLENCE, SCARCE MORAL INTEGRITY, INCOMPETENT POLITICIANS: THE SORRY STATE OF ETHIOPIAN POLITICS.

MAY 11, 2024

Desta Dinka is currently the chairman of the Joint Council of Political Parties and holds the posts of Secretary General of the Ethiopian Federal Democratic Unity (Medrek) and Audit and Inspection Secretary of the Oromo Federalist Party (OFC).

Desta began his political journey in 1991 with the advent of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), though he was also involved in political activities while attending Addis Ababa University in the years prior.

He has since worked as a zonal prosecutor in the Oromia region, as a lawyer, and later in the banking industry, but his full immersion in Ethiopian politics did not come about until 2014.

Desta observes that the country's political leadership has traditionally been, and continues to be, in the hands of incompetent politicians. He sees that political parties and their leaders have long faced considerable obstacles in conducting peaceful activities, but, despite this, Desta says he and his party have chosen to embrace peaceful methods for attaining meaningful political change.

Abraham Tekle of *The Reporter* sat down with Desta for an exclusive look at his political career, the challenges within Ethiopian politics, and his views on potential paths forward for the country.

The Reporter: You have been involved in politics during both the EPRDF and Prosperity Party regimes, witnessing the fall of the Derg and the leadership of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed following the political transition in 2018. Could you describe the state of the country's political landscape during these two periods?

Desta Dinka: Having actively engaged during both the Derg regime and the EPRDF administration, I can provide a detailed perspective on the political environment and structure during these periods. The Derg era's political ideology revolved around "Ethiopianism," which was ingrained in us from childhood through primary and secondary education. Political lessons and ideology were taught as part of the educational curriculum from the 4th to the 8th grades, with additional reinforcement through sports and music that promoted values like socialism, Ethiopian unity, and a national identity. These formative experiences influenced my interest in politics.

When the Derg took power, it implemented significant reforms, transitioning from a feudal system to socialism. The "Land to the Tiller" (*Meret Larashu*) slogan epitomized this shift and was a central rallying cry for the student movement until Emperor Haile Selassie I was overthrown in September 1974. While the Derg promoted socialism and *Ethiopianism*, political rights were not a focus. Political parties lacked a solid foundation, making them easy targets for a regime that ultimately became a military dictatorship, effectively eliminating the multiparty system until its fall in 1991.

The Derg's military approach prompted the emergence of armed resistance, leading to the rise of ethnically based groups like the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF). The TPLF formed a strong alliance with the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), then known as Jebha, which had started its armed struggle during the feudal era. Due to the restricted political landscape, these groups resorted to armed struggle to pursue their goals.

In 1991, the alliance between the TPLF and the EPLF, along with other resistance movements, succeeded in toppling the Derg regime. The EPRDF took power with widespread public support, suggesting a hopeful era of political transformation. However, the EPRDF's political strategy was less straightforward. It created the OPDO from captured Oromo fighters, sidelining the OLF, and formed the Amhara Democratic Party (ADP) from former Derg members.

Consequently, a transitional council was established with 87 members from 27 ethnic-based political parties. The EPRDF secured 36 seats, while the OLF won 12, indicating the emergence of a more inclusive political process. However, some critics noted that parties with a more nationalistic perspective, like the Derg itself, EDU, and EPRP, were excluded, marking the beginning of a narrowing political landscape.

Then came the 1995 FDRE Constitution, which established a federal system with power decentralization and a multiparty system. Yet, the EPRDF gradually tightened control over the political sphere, limiting genuine political competition. This suppression, combined with the entrenched ethnic-based political ideology, contributed to the political unrest that ultimately led to the collapse of the EPRDF's dominance in 2018.

Following the political transition, there was initial optimism about the changes in the country. However, I had reservations because many of the same individuals from the EPRDF retained power. My skepticism was validated as the anticipated reforms took a different direction, leading to the centralization of power in a single political group. As a result, the country's political landscape, despite initial promises, became dominated by one political entity, curtailing genuine political diversity and inclusivity.

WHAT IS THE STATE OF DEMOCRACY IN A POLITICAL LANDSCAPE DOMINATED BY A SINGLE, POWERFUL POLITICAL GROUP?

The same is true here. Democracy fundamentally involves the right to participate in various groups without being under the control of a single dominant political entity. Additionally, it means governing without resorting to the use of force or military power.

In the aftermath of the 2018 political transition, Ethiopia is grappling with a surge in violence at a scale not witnessed for many years. This is evident in the ongoing conflicts in Oromia and the more recent hostilities in the Amhara region after the two-year northern war was brought to a halt with a peace agreement. What, in your opinion, are the consequences of all this unrest?

In my view, the current conflict and bloodshed in Ethiopia can be attributed to a profound lack of moral integrity. If you're wondering who is responsible for this immorality, it traces back to failures in ethical conduct and deficient moral leadership within the political sphere. The ruling party, which swore to govern the country justly, has not only misdirected the reform process but also constricted the democratic and political landscape, contributing to the present turmoil.

On the other hand, the opposition parties that fiercely opposed the EPRDF prior to the 2018 political transition share some of the blame. Despite advocating for democratic reform and political freedom, these parties, once powerful forces for change, ultimately capitulated to the ruling party, becoming its passive followers rather than agents of accountability. This shift allowed the administration to consolidate power without significant resistance.

Adding to this, political activists, media organizations, and various informal groups, which were once prominent in the struggle for change, have also played a part in the current unrest. Their inability to maintain a consistent commitment to moral values has led to a chaotic political environment. This collective failure to uphold ethical principles within Ethiopia's political and social systems has contributed to the violence and instability that we see today.

Armed struggle is evolving into an increasingly common strategy in Ethiopian politics. Would you say this shift is driven by the issues mentioned earlier? What underlying factors are pushing these groups toward armed conflict instead of a more peaceful approach? Is armed struggle more likely to produce political change than non-violent methods?

Political changes can occur under different conditions, and history shows that these scenarios have materialized in various ways. The first type involves democratic and peaceful struggle, while the second involves armed conflict, as demonstrated by the 17-year-long struggle that

ended with the EPRDF toppling the Derg regime. A more recent example of a peaceful political transition was the 2018 shift, following protests that ultimately led to changes in leadership. Both cases represent significant milestones in our country's political history.

However, while political changes can take place through both methods, the key question is about the outcomes they produce. It's a complex issue. In the case of armed struggle, it indicates a troubling trend where violence is used to achieve political objectives rather than resolving issues through peaceful means. This suggests that our political practices have not evolved, and we continue to rely on violence and conflict to bring about change. This reliance on force reflects a failure to establish a stable political culture that embraces dialogue and peaceful resolution.

AS AN OPPOSITION PARTY, WHAT STEPS HAS YOUR ORGANIZATION TAKEN TO HELP DISCOURAGE THESE PRACTICES IN THE COUNTRY?

As mentioned earlier, three key groups are primarily responsible for the country's political turmoil: the ruling party, opposition parties that play major roles, and political activists, media organizations, and various informal groups have contributed due to their lack of moral integrity and inability to stand up for their communities. It's sometimes said that the general public is part of the problem, but it is always subject to the ruling government's actions.

Thus, as a political party, we must acknowledge our share of responsibility for the current state of affairs. Even though our party, the OFC, has strong support in the Oromia region, we are still accountable for contributing to the country's problems. What's most unfortunate is that the Oromo people want democratic political change, but the political scene is controlled by those who act without regard for the greater good.

HOW WOULD YOU EVALUATE THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRACY? COULD YOU SHARE YOUR PARTY'S OFFICIAL STANCE ON THIS ISSUE?

In my opinion, every government entity in Ethiopia acts out of fear. They fear democracy, they fear the rule of law, and that's why they resort to force to govern the country. To bring about true democracy, a government must be daring and confident enough to lead without resorting to violence or repression.

Additionally, leaders should have the knowledge, skills, and awareness to prioritize the interests of the public and genuinely care about their country. I often say that the government should act more like a reformer, rather than like the rebels they claim to oppose. The current administration isn't authoritarian but it is scared and unprepared to meet the demands of the modern world as well as those of the country.

It is debatable whether any ruling government in Ethiopian history has ever enjoyed as much widespread public support as the current incumbent. Do you think it has effectively utilized this level of support and taken full advantage of the opportunities it presents?

A golden opportunity is just that—an invaluable chance. This government witnessed the people’s discontent over the years due to repression, lack of democracy, authoritarian practices, and violations of the constitution. Despite this, they didn’t learn from the mistakes of the past. The suffering endured by the people for 27 years helped the current ruling party gain power, providing them with a unique opportunity to bring about change and leave the past behind. However, in just five years or so, they’ve managed to repeat the same oppressive behaviors that took the previous regime. Essentially, they squandered the golden opportunity the public had given them to make things right.

WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF INCREASING EXTRAJUDICIAL KILLINGS, KIDNAPPINGS, AND LACK OF ACCOUNTABILITY IN ETHIOPIA?

It feels like everything has gone off the rails, with chaos turning everything on its head. A small problem can grow into something much bigger if it’s not fixed early, and that’s exactly what’s happening here. In our country, you see people acting like they’re in charge just because they have guns, while wealthy individuals seem to be driving the increasing chaos. Like I mentioned before, the three factors are all part of the problem. There’s no accountability for the violence, kidnappings, and other crimes that have escalated to this point. It seems like the government and other authorities are unable to hold the perpetrators responsible, allowing the situation to spiral further out of control.

BUT WHAT’S REALLY CAUSING THE WIDESPREAD KILLINGS TAKING PLACE THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY?

The root causes, aside from the factors that I’ve already mentioned, are poor governance and restrictive political practices.

IN GENERAL, WHAT ACTIONS DO YOU THINK ETHIOPIA COULD TAKE TO FUNDAMENTALLY AND SUSTAINABLY ADDRESS ITS CURRENT PROBLEMS?

It’s straightforward: instead of focusing solely on yourself, it’s better to consider the well-being of your people and your country. Once you do that, be ready to engage with others who have different ideologies or interests, fostering open dialogue and discussion without resorting to violence. Prioritize peaceful, public-focused solutions, as this approach benefits everyone, whether they are armed groups or the government itself. To resolve conflicts, stop being self-centered, and focus on the common good through conversation and mutual understanding, keeping in mind the nation’s broader political context.

Source: <https://www.thereporterethiopia.com/39968/>

RWANDA

SUNAK SAYS NO RWANDA DEPORTATION FLIGHTS BEFORE ELECTION AS CAMPAIGNS BEGIN

A LABOR VICTORY IN JULY 4 POLL COULD SCUTTLE CONTROVERSIAL GOV'T SCHEME THAT AIMS TO SEND ASYLUM SEEKERS TO THE AFRICAN COUNTRY.

23 MAY 2024

No deportation flights to Rwanda will take place before a July 4 snap election, United Kingdom Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has said, meaning a Labor Party victory could stop the controversial Conservative Party scheme from ever leaving the tarmac.

Sunak made the announcement on Thursday during the first full day of campaigning. The Labour Party currently maintains a commanding 20-point lead in opinion polls and has promised to scrap the deportation plan if it wins power.

Speaking at a campaign event on Thursday, Sunak cast the policy as central to the political race. In April, he had promised the flights would take off in 10 to 12 weeks. Mass arrests of potential deportees began earlier this month.

“We’ve started detaining people ... the flights are booked for July, airfields on standby, the escorts are ready, the caseworkers are churning through everything, so all that is happening, and if I’m re-elected as your prime minister, those flights will go to Rwanda,” Sunak said.

The deportation plan has been a flagship policy for Sunak since he took office in October 2022. He has continued to champion it even after the UK Supreme Court in November ruled the plan unlawful on the grounds that Rwanda could not be considered a safe third country.

In response, Sunak signed a new treaty with the East African country and passed new legislation in June to circumvent the ruling. Nevertheless, more legal challenges remain possible.

For his part, Labour leader Keir Starmer vowed earlier this month to trash the plan, which has already cost hundreds of millions of pounds, “straight away” upon taking office.

But with the number of asylum seekers making the dangerous journey across the Channel rising to record numbers so far in 2024, Starmer also introduced a separate plan to launch a new border enforcement unit and tap counter “terror” powers to tamp down on people smuggling.

SURPRISE ANNOUNCEMENT

Immigration is expected to be a prominent issue in the election campaigns, with the economy and the National Health Service's record waiting times also set to loom large.

The decision to call the vote months earlier than expected came as a shock to some members of Sunak's party, with 14 years of at times chaotic Conservative rule leaving many in the country disillusioned.

Conservatives have lagged behind the Labour Party in opinion polls since Sunak replaced former Prime Minister Liz Truss following her resignation after just 44 days in office. Some political observers have questioned the timing of Sunak's announcement, noting there is little reason for optimism the climate will shift.

Speaking at an event in Gillingham, southeast England on Thursday, Starmer portrayed himself as the candidate who can renew, rebuild and reinvigorate the UK. He pointed to the disparity in cities like London, which house massive corporations like Google.

Referencing children who live in inner-city areas, he said, "They cannot imagine themselves ever making that journey from their school to those jobs. It's a few hundred yards."

Starmer is the country's former chief prosecutor who augured the party towards the centre after it shifted farther left under his predecessor, Jeremy Corbyn.

Victory would make Starmer the sixth prime minister in eight years in the UK. The highest turnover rate since the 1830s has become emblematic to some of a period of heightened political turmoil with no end in sight.

The Rwanda deportation plan is not the only signature Sunak policy in doubt. A bill that would gradually raise the minimum age to buy cigarettes for anyone born after 2009 – effectively making it increasingly difficult for the younger generation to smoke – is also unlikely to pass before Parliament dissolves on Friday ahead of the election.

Separately on Thursday, Nigel Farage, the former face of the Brexit campaign, has said he would not seek election for the six-year-old Reform UK party.

The move could diminish the appeal of the right-wing party, which had threatened to siphon support from the Conservatives' voter base.

Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/5/23/sunak-says-no-rwanda-deportation-flights-before-election-as-campaigns-begin>

‘BLOOD MINERALS’: WHAT ARE THE HIDDEN COSTS OF THE EU-RWANDA SUPPLY DEAL?

EU PLANS TO SECURE SUPPLIES FOR GREEN REVOLUTION FROM RWANDA ARE LIKELY TO SUPPORT SMUGGLING OF CONFLICT MINERALS FROM DR CONGO.

2 MAY 2024

As the green revolution revs up, the European Union has signed a deal with Rwanda that will ensure a supply of precious minerals needed to build clean tech like solar panels and electric vehicles.

What’s not to like? As the European Commission described it, after inking a Memorandum of Understanding back in February, the deal will “nurture sustainable and resilient value chains for critical raw materials”.

But all is not as it seems. It turns out that Rwanda is a country that exports more than it mines. Vast amounts of minerals like coltan and gold are smuggled from the war-ravaged Democratic Republic of the Congo to Rwanda, where they enter global supply chains.

The racket has been extensively documented by United Nations experts reporting on the DRC war – a spillover from the Rwandan genocide, which has dragged on nearly three decades, the outside world largely ignorant of the widespread use of rape to subjugate enemies and the massacres that have killed a staggering six million people.

The DRC says M23 rebels, who claim they are protecting local Tutsis from Hutu genocidaires in the resource-rich east, play an instrumental role in moving the goods over Lake Kivu. The DRC accuses Rwanda of backing the M23 – an allegation Rwanda has consistently denied.

Last year, Congolese finance minister Nicolas Kazadi said his country’s economy was losing \$1bn a year in minerals through the illicit trade.

There is no shortage of evidence that conflict minerals are not only fuelling the fighting but also tainting supply chains. So why is the EU, which has condemned Rwanda’s role in the war, actively going after the spoils?

WHAT’S THE BACKDROP IN THE DRC?

The DRC should actually be one of the richest nations in the world, sitting on untapped reserves of precious metals and minerals – including coltan, cobalt, zinc, tin, gold and diamonds – mined

from Haut Uele in the north to Katanga in the south, the overall value estimated at a whopping \$24 trillion.

As the clean energy revolution picks up steam, eyes are on the conflict-ridden eastern provinces of North and South Kivu, where much of the country's 3T minerals – tin, tungsten and tantalum extracted from coltan – needed for everything from small electrical components to turbines, are mined.

These minerals are mined in the mayhem of a war featuring more than 100 armed groups, and hostilities between the DRC and Rwanda ramping up since 2021, with each country accusing the other of supporting various militias.

WHAT ARE THE GROUPS FIGHTING FOR?

In 2022, UN experts said they had “solid evidence” that Rwandan troops were present in eastern DRC, providing support to M23 rebels. The Tutsi group re-emerged in 2021 with “increasingly sophisticated firepower and equipment”, fighting the Congolese army and its allies in the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), the latter said to include Hutu killers from the 1994 Rwandan genocide in its ranks.

Unable to restore peace, DRC President Felix Tshisekedi called upon fighters to rally against the M23 two years ago, bringing together a motley crew of local defence and armed groups under the umbrella of the “Wazalendo” – Swahili for patriots. The role of the Wazalendo – untrained and traumatised by previous brutality – adds to an already toxic brew of national and ethnic rivalries.

Now M23 rebels have surrounded Goma, the provincial capital of North Kivu, controlling the 3T supply routes. Nearby, more than a million people displaced by the war huddle in squalid camps on the outskirts of the city, the women and children leaving the zone in search of ever-scarce supplies of food, in particular danger.

“They [the M23] massacre people to scare them off, they rape because raping is a way of humiliating people, to make them lose all dignity so they are obliged to leave, to go far away and to leave the area free for them,” a doctor living in the border town of Bukavu in South Kivu told Al Jazeera, speaking on condition of anonymity.

“The prime objective of this war is to gain access to mines,” he said.

HOW HAS THE DRC LOST CONTROL OVER ITS MINES?

The DRC has a system for ensuring supply chains are free of conflict minerals. It's called ITSCI – the International Tin Supply Chain Initiative. Set up by industry actors, the OECD declared in 2018 that the initiative was 100 percent aligned with its due diligence recommendations on mineral supply chains.

ITSCI provides suppliers and external auditors with certification guaranteeing that supply chains only include minerals from government-validated mines, with a “bagging and tagging” system designed to prevent conflict minerals from tainting the flow.

But in April 2022, British NGO Global Witness accused ITSCI of contributing to the laundering of conflict minerals, child labour, trafficking and smuggling in the DRC.

Alex Kopp, a senior campaigner with Global Witness, who conducted the investigation in the two Kivus, told Al Jazeera he had found evidence that minerals from mines where armed groups were present were entering the ITSCI system. In certain areas, in up to 90 percent of cases, minerals did not originate from the mines indicated on tags.

On the Rwandan side, where ITSCI is also operating, there were cases of bags being dumped in mines for “re-mining”, he said. Sometimes tags indicated mines that did not exist, or “dummy mines”, as one of Kopp’s sources called them. “Sometimes it’s not even a mine. It’s just a hole somewhere in the earth or a cave,” he said.

WHAT’S HAPPENING IN MINES RIGHT NOW?

ITSCI said in April that it had resumed operations in the Masisi territory in North Kivu. This is Coltan Central, where most of the country’s precious supplies are mined by thousands of “creuseurs”, as artisanal miners are called.

Al Jazeera spoke to a Goma-based human rights activist, who had recently visited the Rubaya mines in the area and shed light on how battle lines are frequently blurred in the self-interested battle for mineral money.

The mines are owned by Societe Miniere Bisunzu (SMB), though the government withdrew the company’s operating permit last year and mining activities there are currently barred.

Insisting on anonymity, the activist said Wazalendo patriots are now running the show, some doing direct business with the M23, which controls local roads between exchange points in the town of Mushaki and Goma, and the border.

He told Al Jazeera that miners are paid \$2 a day to “go underground like animals” – frequently breaching government rules that they dig no deeper than 30 metres – extracting the mineral with shovels, pickaxes and bare hands.

As well as being docked a day’s pay each month as tax, they are forced to slave one day a week without pay for Wazalendo fighters.

Global Witness’s Kopp said that, given the evident gaps in the ITSCI tracing system, there was a high risk that the EU could end up sourcing “minerals that are smuggled and could be connected to armed conflict”. “It’s a system that really doesn’t work,” he said.

WHAT EFFECT WILL THE EU DEAL WITH RWANDA HAVE?

In the West, Rwanda is today largely perceived as a beacon of progress, 30 years after the 1994 genocide that saw 800,000 minority Tutsis slaughtered by their Hutu compatriots – though rights groups say that any progress has come with a hefty side order of repression.

The country is on excellent terms with Brussels, even if the latter last year condemned its alleged meddling in the DRC. In 2002, the EU gave the Rwandan military 20 million euros through its European Peace Facility mechanism to beat back armed groups in Mozambique, thus securing the site of a gas project being built by France’s Total.

The MoU signed by Brussels and Kigali deepens that relationship. It speaks of achieving “sustainable and responsible production” through “increased due diligence and traceability, cooperation in fighting against illegal trafficking of raw materials and alignment with international Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) standards”.

However, with ITSCI the only system for tracing minerals in the DRC, it is difficult to see how regulators can crack down, say experts. “I have no idea what they’re talking about when they say ESG international standards because it actually means not much,” said Caroline Avan, of the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre.

“There are international standards around responsible mining, but they are all voluntary and not in place everywhere,” she said. One such voluntary arrangement is the Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance, a coalition of industry, NGOs and trade unions. On paper, it makes sense, but with no international authority overseeing enforcement, it lacks teeth.

WILL THE DEAL GO AHEAD?

Last week, the issue of tainted supply chains came under the spotlight, when lawyers acting for the DRC government warned Apple that it could face legal action if it carried on purchasing “blood minerals” smuggled from the embattled east into Rwanda.

The formal notice to the tech giant could exert pressure on the European Commission to review its plans. European officials working in the DRC themselves disapproved of the deal, said Marc Botenga, a Member of the European Parliament with the Belgian Workers’ Party, who wants to see it scrapped.

“When you make this kind of deal, it’s basically saying to Rwanda, ‘We’re perfectly fine with what you’re doing and we’re going to encourage you,’” he said. “If we allow the commission to get away with it, this deal will stand because they need the raw materials for their windmills, for their solar [panels] and so on.

Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2024/5/2/blood-minerals-what-are-the-hidden-costs-of-the-eu-rwanda-supply-deal>

TANZANIA

THE CHANZO MORNING BRIEFING,

29 MAY 2024

In our briefing today: Tanzania, US commences commercial dialogue in Dar es Salaam; Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Partner with NSSF to Build High-Rise Buildings in DRC and Kenya; Why is it important for young people to participate in local government elections? EU launches board to drive youth action, and empowerment in Tanzania

Dar es Salaam. Good morning! The Chanzo is here with a rundown of major news stories reported in Tanzania on May 29, 2024.

TANZANIA, US COMMENCES COMMERCIAL DIALOGUE IN DAR ES SALAAM

Tanzania and the United States have initiated a commercial dialogue in Dar es Salaam, aiming to enhance the business environment between the two nations. Key issues on the agenda include the business regulatory framework in Tanzania, the digital economy, and export-import between the two countries.

This dialogue follows an agreement signed in October 2023 by U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo and Tanzanian Minister for Industry and Trade Dr. Ashatu Kijaji.

During the opening ceremony, the U.S. Ambassador to Tanzania, *Michael A. Battle Sr.* emphasized the significance of the dialogue, noting the potential for mutual opportunities.

“The United States does not pursue commercial dialogues with every country. This is a very unique and special opportunity,” the Ambassador said. “We only establish commercial dialogues when we feel that the trade and economic relationship holds promise.”

He added, “We believe that Tanzania and the U.S. have opportunities to share, grow with each other, to learn from each other in a partnership where we are equals in this partnership, there’s no big and little.”

Dr. Hashil Abdallah, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Industries and Trade, expressed optimism about the dialogue’s outcomes, saying that a framework will be out in three months.

“The U.S. is a crucial stakeholder in Tanzanian business,” Dr. Abdallah said. “This meeting is vital for smoothing our trade relations. We anticipate having a working framework in place within three or four months.”

The dialogue is set to be an annual event, co-chaired by the Tanzanian Minister for Industry and Trade and the U.S. Secretary of Commerce. Hosting duties will rotate between the two countries, with participants including senior government officials and executive-level private sector stakeholders from both sides.

Tanzania Ministry of Industry and Trade shows Tanzania exports to the US through Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) have increased from USD 95.95 Million in 2016 to USD 205.82 Million in 2023. In total, Tanzania companies have exported a total of USD 968.83 Million under AGOA between 2016 and 2023.

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO PARTNER WITH NSSF TO BUILD HIGH-RISE BUILDINGS IN DRC AND KENYA

Tanzania's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and East Africa Cooperation has announced a series of partnerships with Tanzania's National Social Security Fund (NSSF) to construct high-rise buildings in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Kenya.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, January Makamba, made this announcement in parliament yesterday during the presentation of the 241 billion budgets for the financial year 2024/25, a decrease from the 247 billion budgets approved for the year 2023/24

The ministry plans to build a twin-tower building with 22 floors on its Upper hill plot in Nairobi. Makamba confirmed they have already completed the construction handover arrangement with the NSSF.

In the DRC, the ministry plans to build a 25-floor commercial building on its plot in Boulevard du 30 Juin in Kinshasa.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS?

As the 2024 local government election approaches, preparations are unfolding on multiple fronts, engaging both governmental bodies and stakeholders in the realms of politics and democracy.

On the governmental side, it appears that the Ministry of President's Office, Regional Administration, and Local Government (PO-RALG) will oversee the elections. This assumption is drawn from the PO-RALG budget speech in the current parliamentary session, which earmarked funds for the forthcoming local elections.

This arrangement contrasts with the expectations of democracy advocates, who had anticipated that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) would oversee the elections in accordance with the new Independent National Electoral Commission Act of 2024.

Section 10 (1)(c) of this Act mandates that INEC coordinate and supervise local government elections according to procedures outlined in a yet-to-be-enacted law. Despite this, there remains a call for the government to introduce a bill addressing the forthcoming local government election law.

EU LAUNCHES BOARD TO DRIVE YOUTH ACTION, AND EMPOWERMENT IN TANZANIA

The European Union (EU) in Tanzania has launched the Youth Sounding Board (YSB), an initiative to amplify youth participation and empowerment in key areas such as the blue economy, human capital and employment, and governance.

A statement released Monday that the board comprises 25 young leaders from the Tanzanian Mainland and Zanzibar who will advise the EU Ambassador to Tanzania, the EU delegation, and Team Europe, which is the EU and its member states.

The YSB was officially launched at the Europe Day celebrations in Dar es Salaam, hosted by Ms Christine Grau, EU Ambassador to Tanzania. Mwigulu Nchemba, Minister for Finance, attended the event as the guest of honour.

Other guests included ambassadors, heads of missions, senior government officials, religious representatives and members of civil society and the media.

Source: <https://thechanzo.com/2024/05/29/the-chanzo-morning-briefing-tanzania-news-may-29-2024/>

BLAST IN SUGAR FACTORY KILLS 11 IN TANZANIA

23 MAY 2024

Eleven people have been killed and two others injured in an explosion at a sugar factory in Tanzania's eastern district of Mvomero, authorities say.

The blast happened after a heavy-duty steam pipe burst as workers were starting production on Wednesday night, the fire and rescue team said.

As well as Tanzanians, citizens of Brazil, India, China and Kenya are among the dead, officials say.

Alex Mkama, the regional police commander, said that his team was investigating the cause of the incident.

The explosion occurred at about 01:00 local time on Thursday [23:00 GMT Wednesday] at a factory run by Mtibwa Sugar Estates Limited, one of Tanzania's main sugar manufacturers.

All the deceased were electrical and machine staff who were working in the control room at the time, Mr Mkama added.

Following the blast, Mtibwa Sugar Company has suspended all production activities in the factory, one of the biggest in the country.

The bodies of the deceased workers have been moved to the mortuary of the factory's hospital.

Source: <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c4nnz10vne7o>

UGANDA

NO RESPIRE FOR THE BESIEGED UGANDAN SPEAKER ANITA AMONG,

30 MAY 2024

The United States on Thursday issued sanctions against five Uganda public officials, among them Speaker of Parliament Anita Among and former Deputy Chief of Defense Forces in a crackdown on corruption and human rights violation.

This comes just a month after the United Kingdom announced similar sanctions against the leader of the National Assembly and two ex-ministers.

The US State Department, said in a statement dated May 30, 2024, Ms Among was placed under sanctions due to her involvement in significant corruption tied to her leadership of Uganda's parliament.

The Speaker is also battling sanctions announced by the United Kingdom at the end of April for corruption, which has led to the freezing of her property and financial holdings in the UK, the statement said.

The UK sanctions have triggered investigations, with multiple state agencies and officials, including President Yoweri Museveni taking Ms Among to task to give details of the mentioned property and financial assets in the UK and if she declared them as required under the Leadership Code Act.

Read: UK sanctions 3 Uganda officials over iron sheets theft

The US also announced sanctions against former Minister of Karamoja Affairs Mary Goretti Kitutu and her deputy Agnes Nandutu, as well as Minister of State for Finance Amos Lugolobi, over their alleged involvement in significant corruption, misuse of public resources and diverting materials meant for Uganda's needy communities.

"All four officials abused their public positions for their benefit at the expense of Ugandans," said the statement issued by Matthew Miller, Department of State Spokesperson.

But breaking ranks with the UK, Washington aimed at the military, President Museveni's most trusted state institution, by designating Lt-Gen Peter Elwelu, who, until two months ago, was the Deputy Chief of Uganda Peoples Defence Forces (UPDF). Sanctions against him are pegged on gross violations of human rights.

“Specifically, Peter Elwelu was involved, while commanding UPDF forces, in extrajudicial killings that members of the UPDF committed.

As a result of these actions, the designated Ugandan officials are generally ineligible for entry into the United States,” the statement said.

In 2016, while he was Commander of UPDF’s Second Division, Elwelu led the attack on the palace of the Rwenzururu King Charles Wesley Mumbere, resulting in a massacre that left a chilling air all over the area’s main town Kasese, with over 100 people killed, among them children and more than 180 others arrested and detained.

Despite wide condemnation of the raid on the palace by politicians, religious leaders, and local and international human rights groups, Elwelu, then a Brigadier-General, was not held accountable for the massacre but instead was promoted and appointed Chief of Land Forces.

Read: [Uganda urges UK to stop meddling in local affairs after sanctions](#)

Currently, Elwelu is also a Member of Parliament, representing the army in the National Assembly.

According to the US statement, the sanctions are made under Section 7031(c) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2024 (Div. F, P.L. 118-47).

Washington also places under sanctions Ms Among’s spouse Moses Hashim Magogo; Kitutu’s spouse, Michael George Kitutu; and Lugolobi’s wife, Evelyne Nakimera, who will be ineligible for entry into the United States.

These additional steps to impose visa restrictions on multiple other Ugandan individuals are being taken under Section 212(a)(3)(C) of the Immigration and Nationality Act. The Department of State said it is also taking steps to impose visa restrictions on multiple other Ugandan officials for undermining the democratic process and repressing members of marginalised or vulnerable populations in Uganda.

“These individuals are responsible for, or complicit in, the repression of Ugandan members of political opposition groups, civil society organisers, and vulnerable communities in Uganda,” the statement said.

Ms Among has repeatedly denied the corruption allegations, saying they are a smokescreen by the West, and the reason she has been targeted and placed under sanctions is due to her role in presiding over Uganda’s controversial anti-homosexuality Act, which prescribes a death sentence for aggravated homosexuality.

Human rights and gay activists have attacked the Uganda government for enacting one of the world’s harshest laws against same-sex relations, as an obstacle to marginalised groups, especially sexual minorities, to live freely and also access critical services, including healthcare.

But opposition political leaders have also accused the government and security agencies of violating their supporters' rights, including holding them incommunicado, placing them under detention without trial for several years, while others have been forced to flee the country.

Read: [US imposes entry ban on Uganda Speaker, army chief, ministers](#)

National Unity Platform supporters were kidnapped and detained in 2019 for supporting President Yoweri Museveni's main challenger Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu alias Bobi Wine in the 2021 presidential election.

The US said it stands with Ugandans advocating democratic principles, a government that delivers for all its citizens, and accountability for actions committed by those who abuse their position through corruption and gross violations of human rights.

"Impunity allows corrupt officials to stay in power, slows the pace of development, facilitates crime, and causes unequal distribution of resources, which can affect underrepresented and underserved populations disproportionately," the State Department said.

"Today's actions reaffirm the US commitment to support transparency in Uganda's democratic processes, counter corruption globally, and address the broader culture of impunity that prevents all Ugandans from enjoying their human rights and fundamental freedoms."

Analysts say that in placing Elwelu under sanctions, the US is yet again sending the Uganda government a message to rein in on its high-ranking military officers who are involved in gross violation of human rights and extrajudicial killings.

Source: <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/no-respite-for-the-besieged-ugandan-speaker-anita-among-4643486>

MUHOZI KAINERUGABA: UGANDAN PRESIDENT PROMOTES HIS SON TO MILITARY CHIEF

UGANDA'S PRESIDENT YOWERI MUSEVENI, 79, HAS PROMOTED HIS SON GEN MUHOZI KAINERUGABA TO HEAD THE MILITARY.

22 MARCH 2024

The 49-year-old's promotion comes amid a major cabinet reshuffle in which five ministers were sacked.

In power since 1986, Mr Museveni has denied speculation that he is grooming his only son as his successor.

Gen Kainerugaba is a controversial figure, becoming increasingly involved in the political arena, in breach of military protocols.

- [BBC Africa Live: Updates from across the continent](#)
- [Who is Gen Kainerugaba?](#)

In 2022 his father sacked him as commander of the army's land forces after he made threats on Twitter, now known as X, to invade neighbouring Kenya.

President Museveni also issued an apology to Kenya's leader and asked Kenyans for "forgiveness" on behalf of his son.

However, Gen Kainerugaba's offending tweet has never been removed, he was promoted to general and retained as his father's adviser.

He followed up with another controversial post that said he would send troops to Moscow to help President Vladimir Putin defend Russia against Ukraine.

He now replaces Gen Wilson Mbadi as head of the country's defence forces - his predecessor moving to head the trade ministry.

Two of Gen Kainerugaba's closest advisers have also been named as ministers in the reshuffle.

Reaction to Gen Kainerugaba's promotion has sparked concern.

Opposition lawmaker Ibrahim Ssemujju Nganda told AFP news agency that President Museveni was treating Uganda as "a personal enterprise of his family".

He condemned the appointment and said Ugandans needed to oppose the "family dynasty".

After the 2021 elections, the opposition accused President Museveni, his son and other officials of torture and abductions.

The president's spokesperson denied these claims and told The New York Times his political rivals were "peddling wrong information".

Gen Kainerugaba has said he would run for president in the 2026 election, in a now deleted X post.

He has recently been holding rallies, mobilising support around the country, which has drawn criticism in some quarters.

He joined the army in 1999 and has had a meteoric rise. His ascent to power has been dubbed the "Muhoozi Project" by local media.

Source: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-68635411>

UGANDA ON ALERT AS IS-LINKED ADF MILITANTS' CROSS BORDER FROM DR CONGO

UGANDAN SECURITY FORCES ARE ON HIGH ALERT AFTER THEY SAID FIGHTERS FROM AN ISLAMIC STATE-LINKED GROUP ENTERED THE COUNTRY AT THE WEEKEND.

19 MARCH 2024

The Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) militants are planning attacks in urban areas, places of worship, schools and public events, according to the army.

It urged the public to remain vigilant "to avoid being victims of ADF terror".

The ADF has been linked to a series of deadly attacks in Uganda, including targeting a school last June.

The group was originally formed in Uganda in the 1990s by people disgruntled with the government's treatment of Muslims. But after being routed by the army, the remnants fled across the border to the Democratic Republic of Congo.

In 2021, Uganda and DR Congo launched a joint offensive to drive the ADF out of their Congolese strongholds, but have so far failed to put an end to the group's attacks.

Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni has repeatedly said the operation has succeeded in killing a large number of ADF fighters, including some commanders.

But the ADF has been accused of continuing to carry out attacks including on a school in western Uganda in June last year, when dozens of pupils were killed. In October last year, the group was blamed after a honeymooning couple and a Ugandan tour guide were shot dead in a national park.

Uganda's deputy military spokesperson Col Deo Akiiki said in a statement released on Monday that a group of ADF militants crossed into Uganda from DR Congo on Saturday.

"This group is suspected to be under the command of a notorious ADF commander Ahamed Muhamood Hassan, aka Abu Waqas, a Tanzanian-born ADF bomb expert," the statement added.

The army urged the public to identify and report any suspicious individuals or packages as it "catches up with this group".

Source: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-68603701>

TV STATIONS REFUSE TO AIR MUSEVENI'S CENSUS MESSAGE FOR FREE

9 MAY 2024

Uganda's privately owned TV and radio stations have refused to broadcast a presidential message promoting efforts to carry out a national census, citing a lack of funding.

This is despite a directive by the state-linked Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) to all broadcasters to give the census "maximum publicity" for free.

President Yoweri Museveni had recorded a video message explaining to Ugandans the importance of participating in the exercise.

But the broadcasters' association dismissed the directive, saying they could not comply with it without adequate government funding.

The government has declared Friday a public holiday to enable citizens to fully participate in the National Housing and Population Census.

The 10-day exercise, carried out by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), is intended to gather social and demographic data for proper government planning.

Mr Museveni's message has been posted on social media, urging Ugandans to co-operate with data collectors and to provide them with accurate information.

On Tuesday, the UCC ordered all local broadcasters to air the message throughout the exercise to ensure its success.

It reminded broadcasters of their obligation, under official guidelines, to give the government free airtime for national events.

In response, the industry representative, the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB), said that private broadcasters provided free coverage during national emergencies but expected the government to fund pre-planned events like the census.

Media outlets operated as commercial entities, paying licensing fees and taxes to the government, while also having other costs, like staff salaries, NAB chairman Innocent Nahabwe said in a statement.

Complying with such directives without appropriate funding would set a worrying precedent, he added.

"It is based on these considerations that we have regrettably declined to comply with the directive issued by the UCC and will advise our members accordingly," Mr Nahabwe said.

Uganda will be carrying out its sixth national census, with digital systems being used for the first time, local media reported.

The last census in 2014 put the East African's state's population at 36 million. Estimates suggest that the number has since risen to about 45 million.

Source: <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ck5k03z0wk8o>

KENYA

KENYA'S DEAL TO SEND CHEETAHS TO INDIA EDGES CLOSER

KENYA IS ON THE BRINK OF SENDING CHEETAHS TO INDIA, FOLLOWING A PIVOTAL VISIT BY A SIX-MEMBER KENYAN GOVERNMENT DELEGATION LAST WEEK.

31 MAY 2024

The delegation, focused on appraising India's ambitious Project Cheetah, also presented a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA). This MoU outlines key collaborations in wildlife conservation, capacity building, and knowledge sharing.

The MoU, detailed in a report by the India Express, aims to establish a comprehensive understanding between Kenya and India.

Among the proposed collaborative efforts, Kenya seeks India's assistance in acquiring equipment for forest rangers to enhance field patrolling and wildlife conservation. This initiative highlights the broader goal of strengthening ties between the two nations on wildlife conservation.

However, when probed about the sourcing of cheetahs from Kenya for phase-II of Project Cheetah, NTCA Member Secretary Gobind Sagar Bharadwaj clarified, "There was no concrete outcome on the issue of cheetah sourcing during this meeting. The steering committee on Project Cheetah will take the final call on the issue after deliberations and due diligence are carried out."

India has been considering the option of sourcing cheetahs from Kenya for the next phase of Project Cheetah, given Kenya's similar tropical climate which may facilitate better adaptation of the animals. India's plan under Project Cheetah involves the introduction of eight to fourteen cheetahs annually over five years, subject to availability.

The formalisation of the MoU will proceed through the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). "The MoU would be forwarded to our high commission in Nairobi and we would share our inputs through the MEA. If there is any agreement on sourcing cheetahs from Kenya, that too, would be made part of the broad and over-arching MoU," a source familiar with the developments told Indian Express.

During their three-day visit, the Kenyan delegation held a meeting in Delhi with NTCA officials and visited Kuno National Park and Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh. This visit was a follow-up to India's expressed interest in sourcing cheetahs from Kenya during President William Ruto's visit in December last year.

Previously, India's Environment Ministry had written to Kenya expressing a desire to visit and learn from their wildlife management practices. However, the Kenyan government proposed to visit India first. During their visit to Kuno National Park, the Kenyan delegation engaged with field staff who presented the efforts made in the cheetah reintroduction programme.

"They made queries on our field management practices and we discussed the efforts we have taken over the last 1.5 years since the cheetahs were reintroduced in India," stated Uttam Kumar Sharma, field director of Kuno National Park.

At Gandhi Sagar Sanctuary, the Kenyan officials were briefed on fencing and prey augmentation preparations for the sanctuary, set to welcome cheetahs later this year. The Kenyan delegation is expected to share a report on their appraisal of India's cheetah reintroduction project.

In September 2022, India made headlines when eight radio-collared cheetahs were flown 5,000 miles from Namibia to Kuno National Park. This marked the final phase of the 13-year-long Project Cheetah, which aims to reintroduce cheetahs to India's grasslands, 70 years after they were hunted to extinction. The project's launch coincided with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 72nd birthday, who celebrated by releasing the first cheetah into the park.

Despite the project's promising start, it has faced significant challenges. Since March, nine out of the 20 cheetahs, including three cubs, have died from various causes. These setbacks, attributed to health complications and management issues, have prompted heightened vigilance and scrutiny of the high-profile conservation project.

Source: <https://www.kenyans.co.ke/news/101229-kenyas-deal-send-cheetahs-india-edges-closer>

UHURU'S MONTHLY MILLIONS, WORLD BANK CONDITIONS FOR RUTO

GOVT REVEALS UHURU'S RETIREMENT PACKAGE

After months of controversy over the alleged mistreatment of former President Uhuru Kenyatta and his staff, the government has come out to clear the air.

According to a statement by Government Spokesperson Isaac Mwaura, President William Ruto has honoured the law on making payments to Uhuru for his service to the country.

Mwaura revealed that Uhuru was initially paid a lump sum of Ksh48 million after exiting office. This is money that is provided for in the Presidential Retirement Benefits Act of 2003.

“A retired President shall, during his lifetime, be entitled to a lump sum payment on retirement, calculated as a sum equal to one year’s salary for each term served as President,” reads the Act in part.

Further, the former President also received a monthly retirement package of Ksh2.6 million. Out of this package, Ksh1.6 million is paid as his pension while the rest caters for his allowances.

Additionally, the government also has a Ksh20 million medical insurance cover which can be used in local and foreign hospitals.

On the other hand, the government acknowledged that it had been furnishing and maintaining Uhuru’s retirement office. Uhuru’s retirement office in Nairobi is located next to State House.

Further, he also has 33 staff which includes a doctor, private secretaries, principal assistant hospitality officers, public communication assistants, housekeepers and paramedics.

“The office of the retired president is entitled to a total of 34 staff of his choosing. The office submitted a list of 33 people, who have so far been deployed and earning salaries.

“I wish to confirm that the office of the retired third president has staffers well paid, with some at higher job groups, the level of a Principal secretary,” Mwaura stated.

CARS USED BY UHURU AND HIS MOTHER, MAMA NGINA KENYATTA:

- 2 Toyota Land Cruisers with a 4,000cc engine capacity
- 1 Mercedes Benz with a 5,000cc engine

- 4 Toyota Prados with 2.700cc engines
- 2 Range Rovers with 4,200cc engines
- 2 Range Rovers with 5,000cc engines
- 1 Subaru Forester with a 2,000cc engine

Discrepancies: According to the Act, the vehicles provided for the duo should not be above the 3,000cc engine limit.

“A retired President shall, during his lifetime, be entitled to two new cars of the retired President’s choice, replaceable every three years, each car having an engine capacity not exceeding three thousand cubic centimetres,” stipulates the Act.

Source: <https://www.kenyans.co.ke/news/101225-uhuru-monthly-millions-world-bank-conditions-ruto>

KENYA’S REFUGEE POLICY REFORM AMONG CONDITIONS TIED TO KSH156 BILLION WORLD BANK LOAN

TO SECURE A KSH156 BILLION (USD1.2 BILLION) LOAN FROM THE WORLD BANK, PRESIDENT WILLIAM RUTO’S GOVERNMENT HAS PLEDGED TO IMPLEMENT EXTENSIVE REFORMS ACROSS THE CIVIL SERVICE AND PRIVATE SECTOR.

The loan, issued on Thursday, May 30, comes with stringent conditions aimed at modernizing Kenya’s economic and administrative landscape.

The government’s commitments include the operationalization of the Treasury Single Account and a full transition to an e-Procurement system by the public sector, a measure backed by both the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. This shift to e-Procurement is expected to reduce procurement-related spending by 10 to 15 per cent, translating to an annual saving of approximately Ksh 90 billion.

All Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) must complete their procurement using the e-Procurement system by 2027.

In addition, the government will consolidate the public sector wage bill through the approval of a Payroll Management Policy, eliminating manual payrolls and rationalizing allowances for employees of state corporations.

These measures aim to reduce the public sector wage bill from 47 per cent of total revenue in 2023 to 35 per cent by 2027.

Furthermore, the government plans to increase the proportion of reviewed and verified declarations of personal interests of public officials to 85 per cent by 2027.

In the education sector, the government aims to boost the number of students enrolled in tertiary education, including Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions and universities, from 362,834 in 2023 to 500,226 by 2027.

Additionally, there is a target to increase revenue from e-Commerce from US\$3.6 billion in 2023 to US\$5.7 billion by 2027.

One of the most contentious aspects of the loan agreement involves the integration of refugees into the Kenyan economy.

President Ruto's government has committed to simplifying procedures for issuing Class-M job permits and updating regulations to recognize refugee identification documents. The full implementation of the Refugee Act of 2021 is also a condition of the loan.

The World Bank estimates that up to 400,000 refugees could be integrated into the community by 2027, representing three-quarters of the population in Kenya's two largest refugee camps.

The Bank highlights that while refugees account for almost one percent of Kenya's population, their potential contributions to the economy remain underutilized.

According to the Refugee Act, all registered refugees will have the right to civil registration and identification, allowing them to be recognized as refugees or asylum seekers. They will also have access to permits enabling them to participate in gainful enterprise and employment, contributing to the economic development of their host communities. Those opting to return to their native countries will be able to do so after surrendering their documents to the government.

This shift aims to transform the funding model for refugees from aid dependency to development and self-reliance. County governments hosting refugees will benefit as their regions become eligible for support from development partners such as the World Bank and UN Habitat.

The government has previously announced plans to transform the Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps into permanent urban centres. This change, expected to be completed within five years, will allow refugees to remain in Kenya with special IDs that enable them to engage in income-generating activities. This move is seen as a way to alleviate Nairobi's security concerns while fulfilling humanitarian obligations.

In 2021, the government declared its intention to close Dadaab and Kakuma camps, which were hosting over 500,000 refugees, primarily from Somalia.

The World Bank projects that these reforms will provide refugees with increased access to efficiently delivered services integrated into national and county systems and greater access to the labour market. Improved access to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services will enhance health outcomes for refugees and address climate change-exacerbated water scarcity.

Source: <https://www.kenyans.co.ke/news/101216-kenyas-refugee-policy-reform-among-conditions-tied-ksh156-billion-world-bank-loan>

By: Wal Nyak Dol, Betty Joggo Wani and Ricardo Makuil Dak

CSPS
MONITOR



© 2024 CSPS. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without permission in writing from CSPS, except in the case of brief quotations in news articles, critical articles, or reviews. Please direct inquiries to: CSPS

P.O. BOX 619, Hai Jebrona, Adjacent to Martyrs School,
Opposite Simba Playground, Juba, South Sudan.
Tel: +211 (0) 920 310 415 | +211 (0) 915 652 847
<https://cspss.org.ss>