

What's new in Africa?

Weekly newsletter of the Polish Center for African Studies
18th week of 2015 (27.4 – 4.5.2015)

Top story of the week

Boko Haram: 300 girls and women taken to safety 2 May 2015

A group of nearly 300 women and girls, which the Nigerian army says were freed from Boko Haram militants earlier this week have been taken to a refugee camp in north-eastern Nigeria. They had travelled for three days from the vast Sambisa forest where they were rescued, according to the army. Reports suggest nearly 700 women have been rescued from Boko Haram over the past week as the army continues its operation against militant strongholds. But it is still not clear if any of the more than 200 girls abducted from a school in Chibok in April 2014 were among those freed. The military said the freed hostages were being screened to establish their identities. Some analysts are sceptical of the army's claims - querying the the use of the term "rescue".



Read more [here](#)

Other stories

Over 300 Senegalese, Malian migrants drowned in Med 28 April 2015

More than 300 Senegalese and Malian migrants have died in recent sinkings in the Mediterranean, their governments said on Tuesday, as pressure mounted on European nations to take action. Sorry Kaba, a foreign ministry official in Dakar, told AFP "more than 200 Senegalese perished" in the worst migrant shipwreck recorded on the sea, earlier this month. Some 1,750 migrants have died crossing the Mediterranean to Europe this year, 30 times more than during the same period in 2014. At least 700 were killed on April 19 after their rickety trawler sank between Libya and southern Italy, sparking global outrage and demands for a solution.

Read more [here](#)

Cyber Security Concerns in Malawi 29 April 2015

Cyber Security is a new area in Malawi and there is need for awareness as the nation is experiencing increasing electronic transactions which will enhance economic activity of the country. Chief Secretary to the Government George Mkondiwa was speaking at in Lilongwe on Tuesday [April 28] at a sensitization workshop on cyber security organized by Malawi Regulatory Authority (MACRA) in collaboration with Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). He said government has placed Information Communication Technology including cyber security issues at the heart of the national development agenda. Cyber threats include data theft, proliferation of destructive malware and denial-of-service attacks which the ICT sector world over is facing.

Read more [here](#)

French soldiers accused of raping CAR children 30 April 2015

France is investigating allegations that its peacekeepers sexually abused children in the Central African Republic after a leaked UN report said victims as young as eight were raped in exchange for food and money. An investigation was opened shortly after by Paris prosecutors, it said. French President Francois Hollande vowed to "show no mercy" if the troops were found guilty. The abuse was alleged by around 10 children, the ministry said, and reportedly took place at a centre for displaced people near the airport of the capital Bangui between December 2013 and June 2014.

Read more [here](#)

Senegal: PSE Blueprint Profiled for Investors & Policymakers 30 April 2015

A high-level government delegation provided an overview on Plan Senegal Emergent (PSE) - or Emerging Senegal Plan - a development blueprint developed by President Macky Sall and his team to accelerate the country's progress toward emerging-market status and address inequities in income and opportunity. The two-hour session was moderated by Dr. Mima Nedelcovych, president and CEO of the Initiative for Global Development, an organization of major global corporations committed to poverty alleviation. IMF managing director Christine Lagarde called Plan Senegal Emergent "an ambitious yet feasible path towards emerging economy status," during an address to the National Assembly in Dakar earlier this year.

Read more [here](#)

Congo-Brazzaville bans Islamic face veil in public places 1 May 2015

The authorities in Congo-Brazzaville have banned people from wearing the full-face Islamic veil, including the niqab and the burka, in public places. They have also banned Muslims from other countries spending nights in mosques. They say the measures are designed to counter extremism. Thousands of people, mostly Muslims, have fled violence in the neighbouring Central African Republic and have been taking shelter in mosques. Congo-Brazzaville is thought to be the first country in the region to ban full face veils and burkas, the most concealing of all Islamic veils. A government spokesman said it was a secular country that respected all religions but added that some Muslim women had used the veil as a disguise in order to commit terrorist offences.

Read more [here](#)

Burundi vows crackdown after grenade attack

2 May 2015

The Burundi's government has vowed a major crackdown on political protests, accusing opposition and civil society groups of providing cover for a "terrorist enterprise". Burundi's Security Minister Gabriel Nizigama said on Saturday an overnight grenade attack that killed three people, including two police officers, was "linked to those who say they are demonstrating" against the controversial bid by the central African nation's president to serve a third term in office. Following the announcement, Burundi's defence minister declared the army's neutrality in the political crisis and called for an end to attacks on citizens' rights. At least 10 people have died and scores more have been hurt since the protests began a week ago.

Read more [here](#)

UN threatens sanctions on Mali fighters

2 May 2015

The UN Security Council has demanded an immediate halt to an upsurge in fighting in Mali and has threatened to impose sanctions against those responsible for the violence. The 15-member council said on Friday that renewed fighting this week "threatens to undermine the peace process" and "demanded that the hostilities cease immediately". A peace deal is due to be signed in the Malian capital, Bamako, on May 15. Armed fighters from the Movement of Azawad reportedly entered a northern Mali town on Thursday, AFP news agency reports. The UN Security Council recalled in a joint statement that it had threatened to impose sanctions earlier in April and said it would now "evaluate next steps" following the fresh fighting.

Read more [here](#)

Did you know that?

Ladysmith and Salif Keita release anti-xenophobia song 1 May 2015

Two of Africa's most famous musicians have released a song against the recent violence against foreigners in South Africa. The song United We Stand brings together Ladysmith Black Mambazo from South Africa and Malian singer Salif Keita. Lyrics include the line "Africa is our home, make it a better place". At least seven people have died over a month of attacks on foreigners and foreign-owned property in South Africa. Ladysmith Black Mambazo singer Sibongiseni Shabalala told the BBC he was trying to send the message that "Africa is for all of us". The song is playing on South African radio from Friday, will be premiered on TV on Friday evening and will be released on iTunes on Monday.



Read more [here](#)

The weekly newsletter "What's new in Africa?" is published by the Polish Centre for African Studies, address: ul. Latawcowy 8/23, 54-130 Wrocław, Poland; e-mail: pcsa@pcsa.org.pl

Author: Mária Kučerová

Analyst and Research Fellow in the Polish Centre for African Studies

E-mail: maria.kucerova@pcsa.org.pl