

What's new in Africa?

Weekly newsletter of the Polish Center for African Studies
31th week of 2015 (27.7 – 3.8.2015)

Top story of the week

Barack Obama warns South Sudan's warring factions

28 July 2015

United States President Barack Obama has hinted his government is contemplating imposing fresh sanctions against South Sudan's warring parties if they do not agree on a proposed peace deal. President Salva Kiir and rebel leader Riek Machar are pondering over a proposal deal proposal that includes a power-sharing arrangements and demilitarization of the capital city, Juba, among others. The mediators have set August 17 as the deadline for both parties to reach an agreement. However, Obama told East African leaders during a visit to Ethiopia that Kiir and Machar did not appear to be committed to peace. Thousands have been killed and more than 2.2 million displaced since fighting broke out in December 2013. Both sides have been accused of human rights abuses and indiscriminate killings, which have often been carried out along ethnic lines.



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Other stories

Uganda passes tough anti-smoking law 29 July 2015

Uganda's parliament on Tuesday passed a tough anti-smoking law, threatening smokers with arrest and imprisonment. The penalty for breaching the new anti-smoking law is a minimum sentence of six months imprisonment or a fine of 480,000 Uganda shillings (\$200). The law requires smokers to smoke at least 50 meters away from a public place. The law requires traders to only sell cigarettes in packets, and criminalises selling single cigarette sticks, a common practice in Uganda. The new law also prohibits the prominent display of cigarettes at points of sale by manufacturers, or traders.

Read more [here](#)

Kenya: Church Told Off Over Polio Vaccine 29 July 2015

The Catholic Church was told on Wednesday to stay away from the polio vaccine debate. Health Cabinet Secretary James Macharia said the arguments over the vaccine's safety "will cause total confusion and children will continue dying". Speaking when he launched a document on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases, the CS appealed to the church to let medical experts do their work. WHO country director Custodia Mandlhate accused the church of "lying and being hypocritical" while Medical Services Director Nicholas Muraguri said the campaign would go on despite the church's resistance. He said the vaccine had been distributed to 8,000 health centres in readiness for August 1 to 5 immunisation.

Read more [here](#)

Tanzania: Mixed Reaction Greet Lowassa Move to Opposition Chadema 30 July 2015

As the defection of former prime minister, Mr Edward Lowassa, from the ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) continues to spark mixed feelings, CCM say the party will remain strong. Instead, the party has said that it would register a landslide victory in the elections given that the opposition have received a person they have always publicly criticised.

Read more [here](#)

Major Ivorian cocoa buyers boycott local exporters scheme 30 July 2015

Major cocoa buyers are boycotting a scheme in Cote d'Ivoire aimed at guaranteeing local firms a share of the lucrative export market, arguing that these players lack the expertise and financing to ensure reliable deliveries. A 2011 reform of the cocoa sector in Ivory Coast, the world's largest producer, specified that a significant share of the annual crop should be allocated to local companies for export, in a bid to develop the domestic industry. This season, the Coffee and Cocoa Council (CCC) regulator awarded contracts to local exporters for the delivery of 150,000 tonnes of cocoa, from an estimated total crop of 1.7 million tonnes. The boycott could leave the CCC holding several thousands tonnes of unsold cocoa beans at the start of the 2015/2016 cocoa season.

Read more [here](#)

A vengeful sentence for a 'Blood diamonds' journalist 30 July 2015

If the six-month suspended sentence handed down in late May to Angolan journalist Rafael Marques de Morais for criminal defamation was designed to silence the activist, it has had quite the opposite effect. Media houses and human rights groups from around the world have seized upon the case, with a number of high-profile journalists and public figures adding their names to the petitions and letters of outrage circulating on social media. At the heart of the case was his book, *Diamantes de Sangue: Corrupção e Tortura em Angola*, published in Portugal in 2011. It contains allegations that high-ranking generals and a mining company were criminally responsible for killings, torture and land grabs carried out in Angola's diamond fields. Those parties deny all wrongdoing.

Read more [here](#)

Uganda: Ex Prime Minister, Mbabazi to run as independent candidate in presidential election 31 July 2015

Uganda's former prime minister Amama Mbabazi said on Friday he would stand as an independent candidate in the 2016 presidential election, accusing the ruling party of illegally blocking his efforts to stand on its ticket. A former close ally of veteran leader Yoweri Museveni, who is widely expected to secure another five-year term, Mbabazi is one of Uganda's most popular and skilled politicians. He is the second opposition figure, after Kizza Besigye, to announce a campaign against Museveni's bid to extend his near 30-year rule.

Read more [here](#)

Nigeria: Military Arrests Boko Haram Commander, Rescues 178 People 02 August 2015

The Nigerian military announced on Sunday that it has arrested a Boko Haram commander. The army said the culprit was arrested in an operation by troops of 7 division along Aulari in Bama axis of Borno State. The insurgent leader, the military said, is currently undergoing investigation. The "offensive operation" that led to the capture of the terrorist was done in collaboration with troops of 21 Brigade and elements of 151 Task Force Battalion of 7 Division of the Nigerian Army, spokesperson of the division, Tukur Gusau, said in a statement. Mr. Gusau said during the operation, 178 people - 101 children, 67 women and 10 men- were rescued.

Read more [here](#)

Did you know that?

Top African Universities 23 July 2015

A Top 30 list of universities in Africa has been released at the inaugural Africa Universities Summit, under way in South Africa. Respected global experts, Times Higher Education (THE), have revealed a snapshot of what the first-ever ranking devoted to African universities might look like. So who's who on the list? Focus on Africa's Akwasi Sarpong has been speaking with Phil Baty, Editor of the World University Rankings.



Read more [here](#)

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