

WCI Headlines

May 2008

Ethiopia

Summary Analysis:

In response to the ever-growing food crisis, further exasperated by the drought, Ethiopia has been offered aid by the United Nations as reports of malnutrition, especially among children, and the possibility of starvation become more frequent. Adding further to the humanitarian issues was a recent flood, causing the death of 25 people, the majority of which were children. With the rainy season impending, reports of similar incidents are expected. Ethiopia is still present in Somalia, with more information about incidents by Ethiopian soldiers toward Somali civilians continuing. Also, former dictator Mengistu, who is not expected to be extradited from Zimbabwe, has been sentenced to death by the supreme court.

Focus Areas:

Conflict

- Somali Islamist Group claims responsibility for deadly bomb attack in Ethiopia
 - <http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2008/05/29/africa/AF-GEN-Ethiopia-Somalia-Bomb-Attack.php>
- Ethiopian court sentences Mengistu to death
 - <http://www.iht.com/articles/reuters/2008/05/26/africa/OUKWD-UK-ETHIOPIA-MENGISTU.php>
- Ethiopian soldiers accused of war crimes in Somalia
 - <http://www.iht.com/articles/2008/05/06/africa/somalia.php>
- Ethiopia/Uganda deny breaking U.N. Somali arms ban
 - <http://www.iht.com/cgi-bin/search.cgi?query=ethiopia&sort=publicationdate&submit=Search&fstart=61&pstart=0>

Economy

- Ethiopia's price hikes 'normal'
 - <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7308578.stm>
- Oil Price Widens Ethiopia's Balance of Trade Gap
 - <http://www.addisfortune.com/Oil%20Price%20Widens%20Ethiopia%92s%20Balance%20of%20Trade%20Gap.htm>

Social/Cultural

- UN Allocates \$13 Million for Drought Victims
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200805300161.html>
- Soaring Malnutrition Hits Children Hardest
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200805280835.html>
- Humanitarian Situation Rapidly Deteriorating Says UN
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200805240103.html>
- As many as 25 people killed in flash floods
 - <http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2008/05/30/africa/AF-GEN-Ethiopia-Flooding.php>

Political

- Press Freedom Still Under Attack
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200805280007.html>
- Ethiopian Ruling Party Sweeps Elections
 - <http://www.voanews.com/english/2008-05-18-voa11.cfm>

Sri Lanka

Summary Analysis:

The conflict between the Liberation Tigers of Tamileelam (LTTE) and the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) continues, with civilians becoming targets and casualties. Violence occurred throughout the May 10th elections, with many organizations therefore condemning the election results as unfair. The state of emergency continues to be renewed by Parliament. Despite efforts to keep its seat to the United Nations Human Rights Council, the efforts of many groups, in Sri Lanka and internationally, prevailed causing Sri Lanka to become the only country in the recent election not to receive a second term. This loss has been touted as the beginning of a wake-up call for the country.

Focus Areas:

Conflict

- TV journalist killed in Sri Lanka
 - http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7424286.stm
- Eight killed in Sri Lanka train bombing

- <http://www.iht.com/articles/reuters/2008/05/26/asia/OUKWD-UK-SRILANKA-EXPLOSION.php>
- Sri Lanka's military says 7 rebels, 2 soldiers killed in latest fighting
 - <http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2008/05/25/asia/AS-GEN-Sri-Lanka-Civil-War.php>
- LTTE wreaks pre-dawn carnage in Jaffna town
 - <http://www.dailynews.lk/2008/05/30/sec01.asp>
- Forces foil Tiger attempt to breach Jaffna islet
 - <http://www.dailynews.lk/2008/05/30/sec02.asp>
- UN humanitarian chief condemns targeting of civilians in attacks in Sri Lanka
 - <http://www.thecolombotimes.com/2008/05/un-humanitarian-chief-condemns.html>
- Interview with B. Nadesan, Political Head of the Liberation Tigers of Tamileelam
 - http://www.tamilstar.com/news/lanka/article_9532.shtml

Politics/Elections

- UNP levels various allegations against the government
 - <http://www.srilankanewsfirst.com/Politics/3088.html>
- CAFFE: East elections “not Free and Fair”
 - http://www.tamilstar.com/news/lanka/article_9503.shtml
- Sri Lankan election brings no change
 - http://www.upiasiaonline.com/Politics/2008/05/14/sri_lankan_election_brings_no_change/9942/
- Unfair elections may alienate Muslims
 - http://www.upiasiaonline.com/Politics/2008/05/07/unfair_elections_may_alienate_muslims/8121/
-

Women

- Women Tigers documentary producers win award for new film
 - http://www.tamilstar.com/news/lanka/article_9416.shtml

International Relations

- Senior U.S. Human Rights official visits Sri Lanka
 - http://www.tamilstar.com/news/lanka/article_9364.shtml
- EU pledges \$100million for Sri Lanka
 - http://www.tamilstar.com/news/lanka/article_8953.shtml
- U.N. Human Rights Council drops Sri Lanka
 - http://www.upiasiaonline.com/Human_Rights/2008/05/23/un_human_rights_council_drops_sri_lanka/3831/
- Nobel Prize Winners tell UN: Vote Sri Lanka off Human Right Council

Colombia

Summary Analysis:

While the conflict between Colombia's armed forces and *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC) continues, hopes for an end to the violence have grown stronger in recent weeks. The sudden death of FARC leader and founder Manuel Marulanda, which has been confirmed by many sources, the surrender of a FARC commander, Nelly Avila Moreno and the extradition of other paramilitary leaders to the United States have increased hopes that paramilitary forces are weakening. Relations between Colombia and Venezuela have not repaired, especially in light of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez's connection to FARC. The Union of South American Nations (UNISUR) was established, however, with Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay and Venezuela. In other international relations news, the United States is being encouraged by the World Bank to pursue the trade deal with Colombia, while Colombia has sought ties and arms in ties with Russia.

Although there is optimism for an end to the violence between paramilitary forces and Colombia's armed forces, the Colombian people have been subject to nature's forces. Earthquakes and floods have rocked the country, causing many residents to leave their homes. Water born diseases, from the floods and heavy rains, have become a problem.

Focus Areas:

Conflict

- Colombia Extradites 14 paramilitary leaders
 - <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/14/world/americas/14colombia.html>
- FARC Leader's Death Brings hope for hostages' freedom
 - <http://www.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/americas/05/26/farc.future/index.html>
- Colombia rebel leader surrenders
 - <http://www.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/americas/05/18/colombia.farc/>
- Second drug-kingpin twin caught
 - <http://www.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/americas/05/02/colombia.kingpin.ap/index.html>
- Colombia says rebels bomb oil pipelines
 - <http://www.reuters.com/article/latestCrisis/idUSN02168489>
- Interpol backs Colombia on files connecting FARC to Chavez
 - http://www.newsobserver.com/nation_world/story/1074488.html
- Earthquake Rocks Central Colombia
 - <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/7418876.stm>
- Weeks of rain bring disease to Colombia
 - <http://www.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/americas/05/28/colombia.floods/index.html>
- Colombia rain kills 11, flood thousands of homes
 - <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=aZLwlzrXVWaM>

International Relations

- World Bank urges U.S. to pass Colombia trade deal
 - <http://www.reuters.com/article/politicsNews/idUSN0836112120080509>
- Colombia Seeks Russian Arms to Match Venezuela, Kommersant Says
 - http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601086&sid=aHIPnMhO5.6A&refer=latin_america
- Colombia paramilitary bosses' laptops cause stir
 - <http://www.latimes.com/technology/la-fg-laptops30-2008may30,0,4748497.story>
- South America forges new union
 - http://www.upi.com/NewsTrack/Top_News/2008/05/23/south_america_forges_new_union/7072/

Economy

- Colombia Lures Investors as Violence Wanes
 - <http://blogs.wsj.com/informedreader/2007/05/18/colombia-lures-investors-as-violence-wanes/>

Liberia

Summary Analysis:

In response to the food crisis affecting Liberia, the World Bank and European Union will be providing the country with \$10 million and \$25 million, respectively. Also in response to the growing crisis, the Liberian government announced its ban on food exports, in addition to other measures to mitigate the effects of the crisis. Liberian refugees from Ghana have begun the process of repatriation, desire for which is growing in the refugee community. While refugees are returning from abroad, many Liberians are being displaced due to coastal erosion that has stolen their homes. Anti-rape and violence against women campaigns have intensified. Many international organizations have noted that gender equity is necessary for peace and stability in the country, with Amnesty International accusing the Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDRR) program of discrimination towards former female fighters. These female fighters were highlighted in the documentary “Pray the Devil Back to Hell,” the winner of documentary category at the 2008 Tribeca Film Festival which also took place this month.

Focus Areas:

Post-Conflict Situation

- Coastal Erosion Displaces Hundreds
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200805280760.html>
- As armed robbery rises civilians defend themselves
 - <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=78095>
- Liberia Hosts Mano River Union Summit With High Cost of Food High on Agenda
 - <http://www.voanews.com/english/Africa/2008-05-14-voa3.cfm>

- Liberia Battles Rising Crime Rate
 - <http://www.voanews.com/english/Africa/2008-05-01-voa4.cfm>
- Government takes measures in response to food crisis
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200805220868.html>
- Anti-Corruption Act Faces Hiccups
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200805281263.html>
- More Liberian Refugees Return
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200805160896.html>
- Ban Imposed on Food Exports
 - http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/13/world/africa/13briefs-BANIMPOSEDON_BRF.html?partner=rssnyt&emc=rss

International Relations/Aid

- Senior UN Human Rights Official visits Liberia
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200805280934.html>
- Skepticism Abounds as AFRICOM Launch Looms
 - <http://www.voanews.com/english/Africa/Skepticism-Abounds-as-AFRICOM-Launch-Looms-PART-3-of-5.cfm>
 - Part 3 of a 5 Part Series
- World Bank gives Liberia \$10 million (US), EU gives \$25 million (US)
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200805300891.html>

Women and Gender

- Campaign Intensifies Against Female Genital Mutilation
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200805290866.html>
- Amnesty International says DDR program flawed and discriminates against women
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200805281266.html>
- UN Mission in Liberia and government launch anti-rape campaign
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200805200410.html>
- Advancing Women's Rights Critical to Liberia's Growth
 - http://www.analystliberia.com/women_rights_critical_to_liberia_dev_may08_08.html
- Former UN Special Envoy Warns Sexual Violence Can Doom Peace Efforts in Africa
 - <http://www.voanews.com/english/Africa/2008-05-29-voa20.cfm>
- President Sirleaf Addresses Africa's Development and Girls' Education
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200805280026.html>
- The Terrifying Normalcy of Assaulting Women
 - <http://www.alternet.org/reproductivejustice/85282/>
- 'Pray the Devil Back to Hell' wins top doc honor at Tribeca
 - <http://abcnews.go.com/Entertainment/wireStory?id=4769938>

Summary Analysis:

Attention has been drawn to the upcoming 2009 Presidential elections in Malawi in a variety of ways. The most visible circumstance concerned the arrest of ex-President Bakili Muluzi and other members of the opposition party on accusations of treason. Parliament was also disbanded for a period in the beginning of the month, due to its boycott by members of the opposition party. Also, current holder of the Miss Malawi title announced an interest in running in the upcoming Parliamentary elections, resulting in praise from women's groups who see this as an opportunity to bring more women into politics. As other African countries are beginning to see widespread effects of the food crisis, President Bingu wa Mutharika made statements alluding to the success of the fertilizer subsidy programs. Despite these claims, others, such as Jeffrey Sachs from the Earth Institute at Columbia University, point to the need for a variety of efforts to be made and not to trust solely on fertilizer subsidies.

Focus Areas:

Agriculture and Environment

- President Mutharika: 'We believe in Malawi that Africa can feed itself'
 - <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/KKAA-7EY9G6?OpenDocument&rc=1&cc=mwi>
- Malawi mentioned as possible recipient of new insurance plan by the World Bank to help with food crisis
 - <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/ECAEXT/BELARUSEXTN/0,,contentMDK:21788208~pagePK:1497618~piPK:217854~theSitePK:328431,00.html?cid=3001>
- Carbon credits could fund development
 - <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/IRIN/d6fc31e9825536022d97b72a2ce6fb6e.htm>

Women's Issues

- Nurses protest for better working conditions
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200805190980.html>
- Miss Malawi contemplates running in the 2009 parliamentary election
 - <http://www.afrol.com/articles/29026>

Politics and Elections

- Malawi court grants bail to ex-president accused of treason
 - <http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2008/05/30/africa/AF-GEN-Malawi-Treason.php>
- Malawi opposition ends boycott to Parliament
 - <http://www.reuters.com/article/latestCrisis/idUSL06933412>
- Malawi expands arrests on coup plot charges
 - <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/L1414075.htm>

- Aid will not be conditional – EU to Malawi
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200805160798.html>

Social

- Malawi to evacuate 3,000 citizens from South Africa: official
 - <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/KHII-7F25EU?OpenDocument&rc=1&cc=mwi>
- Free AIDS drugs slash death rate in Malawi study
 - <http://www.iht.com/articles/reuters/2008/05/08/africa/OUKWD-UK-AIDS-MALAWI.php>

Older, Relevant Headlines

- Small farmers hit by changes in the climate (April 2007 but relevant to agricultural programs)
 - <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=71726>
- Subsidizing Agriculture not enough (February 2008)
 - <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=76591>
- Floods take homes and crops (February 2008)
 - <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=76535>
- Malawi Women Fight for Rights Amid Challenges (March 2008)
 - <http://www.voanews.com/english/archive/2008-03/2008-03-06-voa21.cfm?CFID=243658754&CFTOKEN=23909469>