

The following information was gathered during the period of May 25-31, 2010 from: Reuters, bbc.co.uk, The new Times, allafrica.org, News 24 and Africa Press agency.

Rwanda arrests US lawyer Erlinder for genocide denial

A US lawyer has been arrested on allegations of genocide denial, days after arriving in Rwanda, the nation's police force has said. Peter Erlinder had arrived to help defend opposition leader Victoire Ingabire Umuhozwa, who was charged with promoting genocide ideology last month. Police spokesman Eric Kayiranga said Mr Erlinder was arrested on Friday morning and would face charges in court.

Source: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/10187580.stm>

UNFPA donates to Rubavu flood victims

UNFPA, in conjunction with the women's organisation (PRO-FEMMES/Twese hamwe), yesterday donated assorted items to residents who were affected by recent floods in Rubavu District.

Several victims in the sectors of Nyundo, Nyakiribaba and Rubavu received health kit, The items included clothes, blankets, towels and soap, all totalling to about Rwf 16.9m.

"We are here to affirm that we're standing with you in this time of need," Alphonse Munyakazi, assistant representative of UNFPA said while handing over the donation.

More than 500 people in Rubavu were left homeless by last week-end's landslides that were triggered by heavy rains. Six people were reportedly killed and many houses were destroyed.

Nyundo Health Centre which was also destroyed and authorities are still looking for new premises, received bed sheets from UNFPA.

<http://www.newtimes.co.rw/index.php?issue=14268&article=29434>

Refugees Get ID's

The government officially began issuing Identity Cards to refugees last week, an exercise that will see over 20,000 refugees from several countries given identification documents.

The inaugural launch that saw 20 refugees get identity cards, took place at the premises of APAPE secondary school in Gikondo, Kicukiro District.

Source: www.newtimes.co.rw

SMS-for-Health Records Success

Musanze — With an aim of preventing maternal and child deaths in the country, the Ministry of Health, supported by the joint UN programming that involves agencies like UNFPA and UNICEF, have reaped the benefits of introducing the SMS-for-health programme.

This was revealed by the Director of Ruhengeri Hospital, Dr. John Kalachi. According to Kalachi, this year, 432 Community Health Workers (CHWs) who are responsible for maternal health in the district, were given phones to report on the health progress of pregnant mothers and children.

Source: New Times + Reuters

Religious Leaders Vow to Reduce Maternal Deaths

Religious Leaders from various Faith based organizations have agreed to increase their involvement in the fight against maternal mortality. The leaders, who were meeting in Kigali, last week, to lay a roadmap on the issue, noted the importance of the family component citing that it should be the duty of leaders to ensure that members of their congregation give birth in a family setting.

Father Janvier Nduwayezu from Ruhengeri said that some girls may become pregnant out of wedlock and fear to reveal it because they know that it is not right.

The meeting was organized in partnership of Ministry of Health and UNFPA.

Dr. Anicet Nzabonimpa, from the Ministry of Health, explained that religious leaders should play a key role in encouraging people to have few children they are able to raise. He emphasized that one of the reasons for maternal mortality is having too many children.

U.S. questions freedom of speech ahead of August ballot

Top American diplomat Johnny Carson warned that the Rwanda government was tightening political expression in the country, and criticized the arrest of an opposition politician.

Mr Carson, speaking to the United States Congress in Washington DC, said that the political environment in Rwanda was "riddled by a series of worrying actions," including the arrest of a controversial opposition candidate.

"We appreciate, in the context of the most tragic event in recent history -the genocide - the need for security, stability, and reconciliation is critical, but long-term stability is best promoted by democratic governance and respect for human rights," Mr, Carson said.

In an email exchange with local reporters Rwanda's foreign minister and government spokesperson Louise Mushikiwabo said America's understanding of Rwanda had to be "contextualized."

"Rwandans in Rwanda don't have any anxiety. They are at a very exciting time of their history," the minister said.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201005280694.html>

Women entrepreneurs celebrate their achievements

At the occasion of the Global Women Entrepreneurs Day, the Private Sector Federation on Friday (21 May) hosted a dinner to celebrate the success of Rwanda's businesswomen.

According Henriette Zimurinda, the chairperson of women's chamber at PSF, the number of women young entrepreneurs has increased significantly, due in part to the chamber's social advocacy and policies put in place aimed at mobilizing women to set up their own businesses. Zimurinda said that the chamber has already implemented more than half of this year's program.

Visit UNFPA Rwanda website on: <http://rwanda.unfpa.org>