

# WORLD BRIEFS

## DOZENS OF JOURNALISTS PROTEST GOVERNMENT ASSAULT ON RIGHTS

ACCRA, Ghana (PANA) - Dozens of placard waving demonstrators staged a three-hour march to the Supreme Court buildings in Accra to protest against "growing threats to press freedom." The group, Friends of Freedom of Expression, included journalists, members of Parliament, academics and publishers. The group's leader, Kwame Karikari, acting director of the School of Communications Studies at the University of Ghana, presented a five-page petition to Deputy Judicial Secretary George Afflah Aryeetey. In it, the group said since the return of constitutional rule there has been an emerging trend of data from decisions and sentences which show that the courts are using the law to cripple the media. The petition said the spate of sentences and orders for arrest and detention of journalists increasingly serves to intimidate courageous journalists. "The courts are now becoming an institution to subvert press freedom," the report said, adding that the fines being slapped on journalists and publishers are leading to a weakening of the media. On July 23, a Court of Appeal sentenced for contempt Abdul Rahman Harruna Atta, editor of the *Statesman*, and Kweku Baako, former editor of *The Guide*, to one month imprisonment. The court also fined Kinesic Publishing Limited and Western Publications Limited 10 million cedis each for the same contempt charge.

## ENVIRONMENT MINISTERS ADOPT COASTAL PROTECTION DECLARATION

MAPUTO, Mozambique (PANA) - Environment ministers from 43 African states have signed the "Maputo Declaration" supporting measures to protect the 36,343 km of the continent's coast. It was signed at the end of a nine-day Pan-African Conference on Sustainable Integrated Coastal Management (PACSICOM). The meeting was organized by the government of Mozambique, in partnership with UNESCO, UNEP, FAO and the government of Finland. In a videotaped closing address, UNESCO's Director-General Federico Mayor said he hoped the meeting would "initiate an innovative process that should result in the design of a comprehensive strategy for sustainable, integrated development of the coastal environment of the African continent, including the cultural and social dimension of development." It was noted in Maputo that successful coastal management programs are halting degradation of some coastal zones, but others have already suffered irreversible damage. According to G.O.P Obasi, secretary-general of the World Meteorological Organization, "in some parts of West Africa, coastal erosion is already reported to have reached 30 meters annually." In Gambia, for example, extraction of sand for construction, combined with erosion, has led to a cemetery, once inland, being literally engulfed by sea water, with waves washing around the tombstones.

## ANNAN SENDS ENVOY TO ANGOLA TO SQUELCH RETURN TO VIOLENCE

NEW YORK, (PANA) - As the resurgence of violence in Angola raises fears that the country may slide back to war, UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, has dispatched an envoy to the area to impress on its leaders the need to follow the path of peace. Annan's spokesman, Fred Eckhard, said that the envoy, Lakhdar Brahimi, former Algerian foreign minister, would also be traveling to neighboring countries to seek their cooperation in the search for peace in Angola. Brahimi is currently UN Under Secretary-General for special assignments in support of the secretary general's preventive and peace making efforts. The trip will afford him the opportunity to evaluate the situation in the country and advise the secretary general on the course of action, particularly about future UN presence in the country, the UN said in a statement. The UN has a peacekeeping mission in Angola, currently scaled down to about 90 military observers and support staff.

## MINE, ENGINEERING, TRANSPORT EXHIBITION FILLED WITH ACTIVITY

BULAWAYO, Zimbabwe (PANA) - A three-day mining, engineering and transport exhibition at the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair concluded today. The facility was filled with a flurry of activity as exhibitors entertained potential suppliers and buyers. But the exhibition failed to attract the world's heavy equipment save for a few earthmovers and trucks. Also conspicuous with their absence were such Zimbabwean household names such as Wankie Colliery, Zimbabwe Iron and Steel Company and National Railways of Zimbabwe. The companies which were exhibiting, including small to medium enterprises, were busy accepting inquiries and making contacts with potential business partners.

# INTERNATIONAL

## Sudanese declares unilateral peace agreement

*Special to Sentinel-Voice*  
KHARTOUM, Sudan — The Sudanese government declared a unilateral cease-fire last week throughout southern Sudan, where a 15-year war has aggravated a worsening famine.

The announcement came on the eve of peace talks between the government and the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army. The truce took effect August 4 and expands the scope of a limited three-month cease-fire reached in July.

"The cease-fire ... is to demonstrate the keenness of the Sudanese government to prepare the ground for the success of the peace talks," government spokesman Ghazi Salah Eddin Atabani said.

"We hope the rebel movement will listen to the voice of reason and declare on its part a comprehensive cease-fire as well," Atabani was quoted as saying by the official Sudan News Agency.

*"The cease-fire ... is to demonstrate the keenness of the Sudanese government to prepare the ground for the success of the peace talks"* —Ghazi Salah Eddin Atabani

A rebel official, speaking in Cairo, Egypt, dismissed the announcement as "just a maneuver" ahead of the talks. The official, Daniel Kodi Angelo, said he could not comment on the leadership's response.

Aid workers estimate about 1.5 million people are facing starvation in southern Sudan, mainly in Bahr al-Ghazal province, as a result of drought and the fighting.

The U.N. World Food Program is dropping 9,500 tons of food a month — at a cost of \$30 million — into the south in the world's largest aid operation.

The last major cease-fire in Sudan, brokered by former

President Carter, was signed in March 1995 and lasted two months. The government then extended it another two months.

The government called its latest truce "a further measure in the continuing effort by the government to contain the humanitarian situation in southern Sudan."

The talks in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia were the first negotiations between the government and the SPLA since May, when the two sides met in Nairobi, Kenya.

They are expected to deal with the issue of self-determination for the people of southern Sudan and the relationship between religion

and the state.

The SPLA has fought since 1983 for autonomy for the south's Christian and animist peoples from the Islamic north. An estimated 1.5 million have died in the fighting and war-induced famines.

Meanwhile, three Roman Catholic priests working in Sudan were arrested last week in Khartoum, including one who acts as a liaison between Sudanese authorities and the local church, a Vatican news agency said Monday.

The three, Lino Sebit, Hillary Boma and William Nilo, were accused of involvement in explosions June 30 in the capital, according to Fides, the news agency of the Vatican's missionary branch.

Sebit was arrested Wednesday and Boma and Nilo were arrested Saturday, the report said. It said Nilo was released after a few hours, but Boma and Sebit remain in custody.

## South Africa wants to regulate 'witch doctors'

*Special to Sentinel-Voice*  
CAPE TOWN, South Africa — Seeking to break the stereotyped image of witch doctors chanting and waving wands, South African lawmakers took steps last week to legitimize traditional healers. A report drawn up by parliamentary committees has recommended setting up a special council to regulate the 350,000 men and women who practice traditional medicine in South Africa.

Proposals include giving healers medical certificates, allowing them to claim costs from their patients' medical insurance and developing a code of conduct.

The council would also standardize treatments and prices and promote training, research and the creation of a traditional medicine database.

Using traditional medicine is still widespread in South Africa, especially in rural areas. Government figures estimate up to 80 percent of South Africans will at some point go to a healer.

"The report attempts to redress the inappropriate government policies of the past, which were repressive and dehumanizing," the document said. "Traditional healers were not only dehumanized but branded as witches."

The report recommends classifying traditional healers into four types: herbalists, diviners, birth attendants and surgeons, who primarily perform circumcisions.

Meetings between doctors and government are scheduled

for later this year and early next year to discuss how to implement the report's recommendations.

Several other countries have

already put traditional medicine on the same level as modern medicine.

In China traditional doctors can go to special universities

for training, and hospitals are divided into sections for those who mainly use traditional methods and those with Western-style doctors.

# GAUDIN



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