

INTERNATIONAL

WORLD BRIEFS

PHOTOS HELP PLACE LOST
RWANDAN CHILDREN

NEW YORK (PANA) — Thousands of children, too young to provide information about their identity, the names of their parents or their places of origin, are still stranded in Rwanda one year after the mass return of refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) delegation to the United Nations has reported that the organization has registered 1,800 cases of such children separated from their families and is using pictures to find their relatives. The Red Cross has prepared its second photo-tracing album with 440 pictures, each of an infant holding a board with an identification number in front of him or her. Because there is no information available about the children, there is no other way of carrying out an active search for their relatives, the Red Cross said. With the help of UNICEF, the Red Cross is distributing 2,500 copies of the photo album to churches, municipal offices and non-governmental organizations throughout Rwanda, even in the most remote parts of the country. The album contains a plea to anyone who recognizes any of the children to contact the nearest Red Cross office. The ICRC is preparing a third photo-tracing album which should be distributed at the beginning of 1999. In May, it distributed the first photo-tracing album with 208 pictures of infants. More than 100 of the children in this first album have now been reunited with their families. ICRC reported that hundreds of other families have contacted the organization because of the album, providing useful details about their own lost children.

UNITED NATIONS SAYS GROWTH
IN AFRICA SLOWED IN 1997

NEW YORK, (PANA) — Economic growth in Africa in 1997 slowed to three percent from 4.4 percent in 1996, according to "The World Economy at the Beginning of 1998," a recently published United Nations report. A weakening economy in Morocco and South Africa, in particular, as well as other countries such as Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Tunisia, Zambia and Zimbabwe — which had grown relatively rapidly in recent years — contributed to the slowdown. The report said expansion was nevertheless widespread and was relatively strong in over one-third of the countries monitored. The two most significant factors behind the surge in growth that Africa had enjoyed in 1996 — high oil prices and improved agricultural output — contributed much less to growth in 1997. The report said oil prices declined and agricultural production fell in many countries, including Ethiopia, South Africa and Zambia, after bumper crops had raised agricultural output to record levels in 1996. While only reducing aggregate GDP growth moderately, the weather played havoc in some parts of the continent, the report said. Droughts and poor rains were especially severe in northern, eastern and central Africa. "Given the significance of agriculture in these economies, smaller harvests have had adverse effects on income, consumption and on the growth of the processing sectors," it noted.

HOSTILITY FORCES UNITED NATIONS
TEAM TO LEAVE MBANDAKA

NEW YORK, (PANA) — Citing growing threats to their security, members of the United Nations human rights team investigating the Democratic Republic of the Congo withdrew from Mbandaka where they were deployed to begin investigating the alleged massacres of Rwandan refugees. United Nations spokesman Juan Carlos Brandt said that the team had withdrawn to Kinshasha, following continuing demonstrations by people in the community in opposition to the investigation. Besides, he said, the team reported that traditional rulers in the community had demanded money and provisions as pre-conditions for allowing team members to carry out their work. After a four-month delay, caused by government's opposition to the terms of the investigation, the UN team was supposed to survey areas of reported massacres, hear testimonies from witnesses and contact local authorities and members of the community. Efforts were underway to resolve that hitch when the Mbandaka incidents occurred. Brandt said he is not sure when the team will return to Mbandaka. But he said that the team will remain in the country, as indicated by the UN secretary general.

Women upset Zambia still lacks gender policy

By Vusa Dawini/Wanga Saili
Special to Sentinel-Voice

LUSAKA, Zambia (AIA/GIN) — A global campaign for women's rights has put the spotlight on the lack of a national gender policy in Zambia.

Women's rights activists have expressed concern that the government has not yet honored the commitment made at the Beijing conference to adopt a national gender policy to end discrimination against women.

Gladys Mutukwa, chairperson of Women in Law and Development in Africa says she is dissatisfied with the government's inaction.

She says the absence of a government policy is in sharp contrast to the election promises made in the manifesto of the ruling Movement for Multiparty Democracy party in 1991.

It stated that "the party

recognizes the specific oppression which Zambian women have continued to suffer. The government will accord full equal rights to women in all aspects of national life. The government will review all discriminatory laws against women in all aspects of national life. The government will remove all discriminatory practices and fight the present prejudices against women in financial institutions."

In practice the government's position has been undefined and unclear. In fact neither it, nor the previous UNIP government, has produced a national policy. Zambia has been a signatory of the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women since 1980.

One of the areas where women have lagged behind men is in access to

employment. Although the overall picture shows that women are increasing their representation in both the formal and informal sectors, they are still in the minority in formal wage employment and even more so at the higher levels of management.

By 1986, women had about 15 percent representation in the formal sector, rising to only 19 percent in 1991.

Until 1990, an employer was obliged to provide housing for married men, but not for married women.

The area of most concern is the increased level of violence against women. Mutukwa says this has been aggravated by the inadequate laws.

"Government must enact and strengthen legislation against violence against women including marital rape. Men who commit violent crimes against women only get away with light sentences," she

says.

She did say that the government has made progress in the education of girls, but says there are still some glaring deficiencies. Almost half of the girls of school-going age are not in school, especially those in the rural areas.

Professor Michael Kelly of the University of Zambia concurs, adding that there has been a significant increase since 1990 in the number of girls who fail to finish primary school.

The National Program of Action for Children says that more than 10,000 girls fail to complete primary school each year due to poverty or pregnancy. The government has taken one important step — allowing pregnant girls to write their examinations.

With regards to the complaints about the governments lack of a national

(See Zambia, Page 16)

Nigeria to hold elections in February

Special to Sentinel-Voice

ABUJA, Nigeria (AP) — Nigeria's military regime will hold democratic elections at the end of February and hand over power to a popularly chosen government in May, the electoral commission announced Tuesday, following up on a pledge by the nation's new leader.

Gen. Abdulsalam Abubakar, who came to power in early June after the sudden death of the former dictator, Gen. Sani Abacha, promised last month to bring civilian rule to a nation still reeling from the hangover effects of his predecessor's repression and corruption.

"We have now unequivocally chosen democracy as our preferred option of governance," Abubakar said Tuesday during a state visit to South Africa — Nigeria's first to the southern nation.

"Nigerians want nothing less than true democracy in a united and peaceful country."

But Abubakar, perhaps unintentionally, injected a note of uncertainty in his statement surrounding the plan to hold elections Feb. 27 and swear in a new president on May 29.

"It shows our determination to grow democratically and, hopefully, come May we will hand over power to whomever is elected," Abubakar told reporters.

He did not elaborate on his use of the word "hopefully."

Elections for the national assembly in Africa's most populous country will be held

one week earlier, on Feb. 20, the Independent National Electoral Commission said in a statement.

Local government council elections will be held on Dec. 5 of this year and voting for state assemblies and governors will come on Jan. 9, 1999, the commission said.

All political parties will be able to field candidates in the local elections, but only parties that earn at least 10 percent of the vote in at least 24 of Nigeria's 36 states will be able to run candidates in the state and national voting.

Electoral commission rules forbid members of the armed forces and police from joining political parties.

The voting is being highly anticipated in Nigeria, where Abacha's death has brought about a sudden shift in the country's political landscape.

Abubakar, while still widely viewed with suspicion by Nigeria's political opposition, quickly set about moving Nigeria on a different course from that of his predecessor.

He freed political prisoners, met with international envoys

and has repeatedly vowed to allow a return to civilian rule in Nigeria, which has been ruled by military governments for all but 10 years since gaining independence from Britain in 1960.

The last presidential elections, held in 1993, were annulled by the military government.

Abacha imprisoned the apparent winner, millionaire businessman Moshood Abiola, one year later.

Abiola died in prison in July, just before Abubakar was to have freed him.

The True Inter-Lock Technique

PERFECT FOR ALL HAIR TYPES

- No more glue, no more braids — This weave stays in 2 & 3 months!
 - No more worries — No one will know you are wearing a weave.
 - Find out the secret celebrity stylists have been using for years!
 - Plus, you don't have to remove this weave to obtain hair services.
- Your stylist can: • Perm • Relax • Color • Tint • Frost • Condition — all with the weave intact!
- It looks and feels as natural as your own hair if you are thinning, balding, or just want to change your hairstyle, come to the expert.

JEAN ATKINSON
International Stylist

In Las Vegas for only 4 days

Sept. 11 (1 pm), Sept. 12 (9 am), Sept. 13 (9 am) & Sept. 14 (9 am)

706 N. RAINBOW (Americana Plaza)

For more information call 878-9090