

INTERNATIONAL

WORLD BRIEFS

MALARIA CASES ON RISE
IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

HARARE (IPS) — A malaria epidemic is spreading throughout Southern Africa, placing the lives of millions at risk, according to the World Health Organization. "All the signs show a severe malaria season for Southern Africa," says Dr. Shiva Murugasamitillay of the WHO Regional Office for Africa, based in the Zimbabwean capital of Harare. Murugasamitillay says the months of March and April are the high risk periods in the region. Southern Africa, with a population of about 195 million people, groups Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Malaria is one of the leading health problems in Africa, South of the Sahara. The disease attacks between 270 and 480 million people and kills between 1.5 and 2.7 million each year.

CARIBBEAN REGION UP IN ARMS
OVER NUCLEAR SHIPMENT

SAN JUAN (IPS) — Regional governments and environmentalists are strongly denouncing plans for yet another shipment of nuclear waste to be transported through the Caribbean Sea in defiance of repeated protests and diplomatic exchanges on the matter. The ship, which left France on Feb. 25, is expected to enter the Caribbean Sea via the Mona Canal which separates the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico. The Caribbean Community (Caricom) leaders are calling on the governments of France, Japan and the United Kingdom to respect the economic importance and ecological fragility of the Caribbean Sea and the well-being of the millions of people who depend on this unique resource for their very existence. In Puerto Rico, environmental groups are preparing for battle. "This shipment constitutes an element of enormous danger for ecosystems and populations all over the Caribbean," said Jorge Fernandez, environmental adviser to the Puerto Rico Independence Party.

CUBAN CIGAR PRODUCERS
IN CUBA IN A QUANDARY

HAVANA (IPS) — Imagining a Cuba without cigars is as difficult to believe as a Brazil with no coffee. But, cigar producers are in a quandary over the decision by President Fidel Castro to quit smoking. The bearded visage of Castro contentedly puffing on a Havana had for years served as an advertisement for the national brands of cigars that emerged with the triumph of the revolution in 1959. But while Castro may have given up smoking Cohiba cigars, the brand of the revolutionary era, Cuba is counting on the continued support of cigar smokers worldwide to boost tobacco exports. The goal this year is not only to increase production of cigars to 200 million units — 40,000 more than in 1998 — but also to reach new markets, including China. Spain is still the main buyer, followed by France, Switzerland, Britain and the Far East. The highly-desirable United States market, meanwhile, is still closed because of U.S. sanctions against Cuba, although a single Cohiba can bring as much as \$50 on the black market.

U.N. official: Security firms supply arms in wars

By Thalif Deen

UNITED NATIONS (IPS) — Ongoing civil wars in Africa — particularly in Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo — are being fought mainly for the pursuit of mineral riches, according to a senior U.N. official.

"These conflicts are referred to as diamond wars," said Felix Downes-Thomas, who has just returned from a visit to sub-Saharan Africa.

Downes-Thomas, the head of the U.N. Peacebuilding Support Office and Representative of the Secretary-General in Liberia, admitted at a hearing earlier this month that mercenaries were involved in some of the conflicts in Africa.

He traced a link between security firms hired by warring factions and the flow of military equipment to Africa's battle zones.

Sandline International and Defense Systems Ltd., both of London, and the now-defunct Executive Outcomes, which was based in Pretoria, have all been identified as participants in several civil wars.

Downes-Thomas said his office was engaged in curbing the demand for arms.

"But there is also a need to deal with the flow of arms from the supply side," he said.

He was critical of the double standards by which the international community is fighting drugs by attacking it from the supply side while refusing to advocate a similar policy in relation to the arms trade.

"I wish the same logic would be applied to small arms, and arms in general, particularly in West Africa," he said.

According to a U.N. report released in October,

mercenaries have been involved in several countries in Africa, including Angola, Sierra Leone, Lesotho, Liberia, Mozambique, Namibia, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (former Zaire), Zambia and Zimbabwe.

In a report to the General Assembly, Enrique Bernales Ballesteros of Peru, the U.N. Special Rapporteur on Mercenaries, said the ousted President of Sierra Leone Ahmad Tejan Kabbah sought help from Sandline International "in providing military backing and assisting his return to power."

Mining and financial companies with interests and assets in Sierra Leone allegedly supported and even partially funded the hiring of Sandline International. The London-based company also was accused of exporting military equipment and

helicopters to Sierra Leone last year, despite a U.N. embargo.

In an article published in the New York Times last month, Elizabeth Rubin wrote that in 1995 Sierra Leone hired Executive Outcomes only after the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity and the international community had failed to help restore the democratically elected government in that country.

"The company was willing to do what the United Nations cannot: take sides, take casualties, deploy an overwhelming force and fire pre-emptively," she said.

Executive Outcomes agreed to put down the rebels and restore law and order in Sierra Leone in return for \$15 million and diamond mining concessions, she added.

(See Wars, Page 14)

U.S. Embassy in
Kenya being razed

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — Engineers on Monday began a 90-day project to demolish the bomb-damaged former U.S. Embassy building in the heart of Nairobi.

The five-story embassy building has been ruled structurally unsound, embassy spokesman Chris Scharf said. The adjacent six-story Ufundi House collapsed when the bomb exploded between the two buildings.

The bombing killed 201 Kenyans and 12 Americans and injured more than 5,400 people. A near-simultaneous bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Tanzania killed 11 people.

Embassy operations in Nairobi were relocated to temporary quarters and will move to a building outside the city center.

"The most serious concern

I have is safety," said Roger Currier, an engineer sent from Washington to oversee the demolition. "There are dangers that are not immediately evident... like a column that has been cracked."

He said the first phase of the project, likely to take several weeks, would be to clear rubble from inside the building to determine the structural damage. Today, workers were taking measurements and marking the site.

The building will be brought down in pieces with a crane, beginning at the top floor, Currier said. The work is being done by a Kenyan company.

Currier said he expects the demolition to be completed

(See Embassy, Page 13)

Libya seeking arrest of nine Americans

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) — As the date nears for Libya to turn over two suspects in the Lockerbie bombing case, a Libyan court on Monday told state prosecutors to speed up efforts to arrest nine Americans.

Egypt's Middle East News Agency said the court wants to try the Americans for the 1986 bombing of the Libyan capital Tripoli and the port of Benghazi.

The attacks were ordered by former President Ronald Reagan to retaliate for the bombing of a German disco

in which two U.S. servicemen died.

Libyan prosecutors last December ordered the arrests of nine U.S. officials, including the late CIA director William Casey, former National Security adviser John Poindexter and Marine Lt. Col. Oliver North.

Reagan was not named in the suit. The court hearing came just three days after Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi told visiting South African President Nelson Mandela that he would turn over by

April 6 two Libyans charged in the 1988 bombing of a Pan Am jet over Lockerbie, Scotland. The bombing killed 270 people.

Gadhafi had long said the suspects could not get a fair trial in either the United States or Britain. Under a compromise, the trial will be held before Scottish judges in the Netherlands.

Libya says the 1986 bombings of Tripoli and Benghazi took the lives of 31 people, including Gadhafi's adopted daughter. It says 226 were wounded.

After ordering prosecutors to speed up efforts to arrest the suspects, the judge scheduled the next hearing for Sept. 22.

Libya says the Americans are charged with premeditated murder, intent to commit murder and "inspiring fear in the hearts of innocent civilians," the Egyptian news agency said.

Libya will seek help from the U.N. Security Council if the men are not turned over for trial, it said. A trial in a third country could be possible, it added.

Do you Want to Know How
We'll Get from HERE to THERE
in the Future?? read on.....

1999 Transportation Fairs

Please Join.....

the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) at a mall near you to plan how we and future generations - will travel in Clark County.

The Purpose.....

is to review and discuss alternatives for the proposed Las Vegas Fixed Guideway System and other transportation projects in the valley. Transportation projects featured at the fair will include: the fixed guideway system, expanded bus service, alternative transportation programs and opportunities, and street & highway projects.

In Addition to the RTC.....

other participating agencies will include the Nevada Department of Transportation, Clark County Public Works, and the City of Las Vegas. These agencies will be present to answer questions about projects such as the Spaghetti Bowl, US-95, the Las Vegas Beltway and the California-Nevada Super Speed Train.

When and Where.....

Saturday, March 27, 10:00am - 7:00pm
Sunday, March 28, 11:00am - 6:00pm

Galleria at Sunset, 1300 Sunset Road, Henderson
Robinsons-May Court, 1st floor

For More Information.....

call the RTC Resort Corridor Project staff at 455-2152.

A sign language interpreter can be made available by calling 455-4481 or TDD 455-5997 48 hours in advance.

CAT services all fair locations. Call CAT-RIDE (228-7433) for route and schedule information.

Resort Corridor Project



Regional Transportation Commission
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Las Vegas, NV 89101