

WORLD BRIEFS

KENYAN WINS 'AFRICAN BOOKER' LITERARY PRIZE

NAIROBI, Kenya (IPS/GIN)—This year's Caine Prize for African Writers has been won by Kenyan Yvonne Adhiambo Owour, for her short story, "Weight of Whispers." The story is "narrated by an aristocratic Rwandan refugee in the aftermath of the 1994 massacres," said chairman of the judges at the prize-giving ceremony in Oxford University's Bodleian Library last week. "Its great strength is the subtle and suggestive way it dramatizes the condition of the refugee and also...incorporates so many large issues." Born in Nairobi, Owour studied at Jomo Kenyatta University, Kenya, and then Reading University in England. She currently works as the executive director of the Zanzibar International Film Festival. The Caine Prize is awarded to Africans for a short story by published in English by a writer born in African whose writing reflects that African background. As well as \$15,000 prize money, Owour will be offered a travel grant.

FOUR CANDIDATES ANNOUNCED IN RWANDA'S POST-GENOCIDE ELECTIONS

KIGALI, Rwanda (IRIN)—Rwanda's National Electoral Commission has approved four candidates to contest the country's first post-genocide presidential elections, scheduled for August 25. At the end of last Friday's deadline to prove eligibility, the commission cleared four of six candidates who had declared their interest in the presidency. The approved candidates are the incumbent, President Paul Kagame; former Prime Minister Faustin Twagiramungu; a woman candidate, Alvera Mukabaramba; and former Member of Parliament Nepomuscene Nayinzira. The presidential poll will mark an end to the nine-year transition to democracy led by Kagame's government of national unity, which was installed after the 1994 genocide that claimed the lives of at least 800,000 ethnic Tutsis and politically moderate Hutus. Apart from Kagame, the other three presidential aspirants are from the majority Hutu ethnic community. Kagame and Mukabaramba are each backed by a political party while Twagiramungu and Nayinzira are contesting as independents. The candidates are due to begin public campaigns on Aug. 1.

HIGHER COTTON PRICES TO HURT SOUTH AFRICAN TEXTILE FIRMS

DURBAN, South Africa (IPS/GIN)—While the anticipated higher price for world cotton is good news for local growers, a 35 percent increase over the past year sounds a death knell to the feeble textile industry. Hennie Bruwer, the chief executive of Cotton South Africa, has stated that the global price is expected to rise by \$0.07 a pound to \$0.63. He said that this is a good price but the benefits to commercial and emerging farmers have been cancelled by the recent strong rand. However, Walter Simeoni, the president of the Textile Federation, said higher prices meant the industry was losing R2 (\$0.27) on every ton of cotton bought. The price bottomed out about 18 months ago, with real prices hovering at their lowest since the Great Depression of 1933. Blame has been placed largely on the U.S. government, which subsidizes its cotton farmers to ensure that they are paid a minimum of \$0.72 a pound. "As the world's largest cotton exporter, providing 20 percent to 30 percent of global needs, the US determines world prices as the global market is irrelevant to its farmers, who produce a surplus, artificially driving down prices," Bruwer said.

FORMER UGANDAN DICTATOR IDI AMIN IN COMA

JEDDAH, Saudi Arabia (IPS/GIN)—Idi Amin, during whose rule an estimated 400,000 Ugandans were killed or disappeared, is in a coma in a Saudi Arabian hospital. Doctors say that 78-year-old Amin's condition is worsening. And one of his wives told Associated Press that her husband has had high blood pressure for some time and fell into a coma July 18. She added that two of his 43 children are currently at his bedside. Amin seized control of Uganda in 1971 and proceeded to oversee one of the bloodiest rules in African history before being deposed eight years later by Tanzanian troops and people he had exiled. He fled to Libya, then Iraq, and finally Saudi Arabia, where he has since been living in luxury with his entourage in the city of Jeddah.

INTERNATIONAL

Botswana deports 26,000 Zimbabweans

By Gabriel Packard

GABARONE, Botswana (IPS/GIN)—Botswana has deported 26,717 Zimbabweans who had fled the chaos in their own country and were living illegally in neighboring Botswana, the government said last week.

Botswanan authorities organized border patrols and raids across the country to find illegal immigrants, Chief Immigration Officer Roy Sekgororoane told the SAPA news agency. He added that those caught often say they came to look for work.

Unemployment in Zimbabwe is currently estimated at 70 percent. The country's

inflation is rocketing and has reached 300 percent, there are shortages of food and fuel, and also reported widespread political repression.

Meanwhile, a new study says the number of people leaving the country in search of a better life is increasingly dramatically. The study shows many of those leaving are skilled professionals.

A draft copy of the report by a government research institute says Zimbabwe is losing thousands of professionals to other countries every year. The brain drain, the report says, has reached unacceptable heights.

Carried out by the Scien-

tific and Industrial Research and Development Center in Harare, the report says more than 479,000 Zimbabweans are working outside the country, with most of them in four countries, Botswana, South Africa, Britain and the United States. The survey included professionals in various fields, among them engineers, teachers, financiers, and medical professionals. Medical personnel made up the largest percentage of those leaving—almost 25 percent.

Those who leave gave reasons for going into exile as economic, historic and in some cases political. Media reports say more than one

million Zimbabwean emigrants have left the country in recent years, but exact figures are hard to get.

A spokesman for the Central Statistical Office says not everybody leaving Zimbabwe says they are leaving for good. As a result, there are no clear figures distinguishing between emigrants and those who are leaving the country temporarily.

Another reason exact statistics are hard to come by is that many Zimbabweans simply leave the country by walking across the border into a neighboring country, with South Africa and Botswana the most popular choices.

Network to aid nation's health, education issues

JOHANNESBURG (IPS/GIN)—South Africa has finally got a techno solution to its educational and healthcare challenges: Mindset Network, a new R225-million (\$30 million U.S.) multimedia satellite television network.

Presented as an 85th birthday "gift" to Nelson Mandela, Mindset Network will develop a series of channels, each of which will focus on a particular educational issue—from pre-school education to AIDS education to entrepreneurial skills. These channels will be broadcast by DSTV, and supported by content on the Internet as well as supplements in appropriate print publications.

The network is a public-private partnership where the Liberty and Standard Bank Foundations have together committed R74 million (\$9.8 million).

Founding partners include the Nelson Mandela Foundation, Sunday Times, PanAmSat, Sentech and Multichoice Africa, while the SABC is a support partner. Hylton Appelbaum, executive director of the Liberty Foundation and the man who conceptualized the network explains why the network has opted for the satellite route:

"We realized that two hours a day on TV was never going to be enough to make the necessary impact across all of schooling. The Learning Channel has played a vital role in matric support, but we need to address the earlier years as well as the last two years of schooling. For this reason, Mindset Network will be available at least

twelve hours a day seven days a week."

The first educational channel on the system is Activate, targeting grade 10, 11 and 12 learners and providing math, science and English subject support to 300 schools countrywide. In a country boasting 28,000 schools and about 12 million learners, this is a modest start.

A time-tabled curriculum is broadcast in the mornings and late afternoons to allow for school and home viewing, and in the early afternoons for educators. Broadcasts run from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on weekdays.

Mindset kits, which include satellite receivers, decoders, smart cards, teacher training and technological

support, cost R12,000 (\$1,603) each. Many private individuals have dipped into their pockets to contribute towards these kits. But the content is provided free of charge, and hardware and teacher training is also provided for free to economically disadvantaged schools.

A health channel will be launched in October 2003, focusing on HIV/AIDS, and eventually broadcasting into 7,000 clinics and hospitals around the country, with information for patients and training for healthcare workers. Two more education channels and a livelihood channel will also be launched next year.

Other birthday celebrations and dedications in-

cluded Bill Clinton delivering the inaugural lecture of an annual series bearing Mandela's name; an MTV documentary on his life that will reach a potential audience of 1 billion people worldwide; and — to mark Mandela's time as a heavyweight boxer—he is being inducted into the World Boxing Hall of Fame.

Anti-apartheid hero and former president of South Africa, Mandela celebrated his birthday on July 18, just 12 days after U.S. President George Bush celebrated his 57th birthday. Although Bush visited South Africa recently, he did not meet with Mandela, who left the country on the same day the American president arrived.



IN THE LINE OF FIRE

A Palestinian militant from Jenin Martyrs Brigade, a militia linked to Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's controversial Fatah movement, shoots while young people carefully slither under barbed wire during military exercises at a youth training camp in Bureij refugee camp southern Gaza Strip on Wednesday.