

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Voices of African Women Campaign Quarterly E-Bulletin, Jan-April 2010

Introduction

Welcome to UK WILPF Voices of African Women Campaign Bulletin. Our Aim is to alert you to information or events that are happening to raise the voices and initiatives of grassroots African women in the UK and worldwide. We also highlight programmes related to our work, external conferences and WILPF internal events.

In 2008, UK WILPF held a series of events in London to promote the voices of African women to the UK public, at UK Parliament, Chatham House and Amnesty International Human Rights Center.

For more info: <http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/events/view/-/id/945/> or website: www.ukwilpf.org.uk

This initiative generated a Voices of African Women's Declaration and a petition that is available online.

For more info, please visit the following link: <http://www.gopetition.co.uk/online/24336.html>.

Since the seminars, UK WILPF has been busy getting support for women's organisations and has been holding monthly meetings as well as organizing training workshops. Whilst giving an opportunity for individual country's case or context to be presented at each meeting, we have also continued collectively to analyse the situation of women, peace, security and development in different African countries.

Summary of our activities from January –April 2010

In February, we held a special training workshop on Legal Frameworks for African women's human rights. In March WILPF women from Sudan and D.R.Congo participated to the 54th session of the UN CSW that took place in New York. We also held a brain storming session on how to fast track gender transformation in Africa. We also held a meeting in April and strategise on strengthening our Campaign.

For more information please send a message to office@ukwilpf.org.uk or voaw@ukwilpf.org.uk. If you have any suggestions for future items to include in this bulletin, please email us at;office@ukwilpf.org.uk

Next meeting

Come along to our next meeting **on the 17th May**, in which we will hear the Voices of Zimbabwean women. After popular demand, we will be holding another workshop on legal frameworks for women's human rights on the 19th June. We will hold a special event on the 31st July for the African women's day, to formally launch the AU African Women Decade 2010-2020, in the UK. Come to find out how you can contribute to this important campaign. Venue: **Ground floor, Tindlemanor, 52-54 Featherstone St, London EC1Y 8RT**. For more information or to register in advance, please contact us on 0207 250 1968 or email office@ukwilpf.org.uk

UK WILPF's work is carried forward by volunteer members who bring their expertise to advance and implement UK WILPF programs. UK WILPF supports the leadership of African women in their research and work on the development of WILPF section in Sudan, DR Congo, Nigeria and Chad.

For more info: voaw@ukwilpf.org.uk or office@ukwilpf.org.uk

UPDATE OF VOAW CAMPAIGN

UK WILPF VOAW Campaign at the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW54).

From the 1-12 March 2010, WILPF women from Sudan and DRC participated to the 54th session CSW that took place in New York. They all were speakers at various panels at the CSW to represent the voices of women in their respective countries, in the evaluation of Beijing +15 platform of Action.

The Voices of Sudanese women

UK WILPF members Khadiga Hussein and Dr Mariam Suliman were self funded and represented Sudanese women. They were very pleased about WILPF international support during the CSW. Khadiga Hussein was one of the panelists during the US WILPF CSW side event on **Advancing Women as Peacemakers from Jane Adams to UN SC RES 1325**. She emphasized that there is much to be done to implement the vision of 1325 in Sudan, and gave constructive recommendations on how this could be achieved. The event was well attended, and honored by the presence of the Sudanese high representative to the UN, Dr Abdelmahmoud, who answered a pertinent question about accountability in the case of the rape of women of Darfur and on impunity in Sudan.

Khadiga and Dr Mariam Suliman were later invited by Ambassador Swanee Hunt, Chair of the Institute for Inclusive Security, as she convened a group of civil society leaders in New York to follow the discussion of strategies for increasing the development and implementation of UNSCR 1325, National Action Plans (NAPs), and to encourage creative international cooperation on NAPs. Khadiga Hussein and Dr. Mariam Suliman were also invited to two receptions in New York for UK CSW delegates, one hosted by the UK Minister for Women and Equality, Harriet Harman and the other hosted by HE Sir Mark Lyall Grant, the UK Permanent Representative to the UN. They both expressed their appreciation and testified how they were able to network with decision makers and raise the voices of women from Sudan at the international level...

Dr Mariam was particularly pleased to be mentored by Mama Khadiga: she was very empowered after each meeting and was able to articulate as well as voice the concern of Sudanese women adequately. Khadiga Hussein and Dr Mariam were grateful for the hospitality that was provided by Amira Burma during their stay in New York. Dr Mariam attended other events where she raised the issue of lack of women's representative participation at the ongoing peace negotiation meeting in Qatar. She is currently in Qatar, attending the meeting to raise the voices of Sudanese women. Khadiga Hussein is now in Sudan to work with other women. She will be reporting back on the Elections.

The Voices of D.R. Congolese women

From 25 Nov to 10 Dec 2009, during the 16 days of activism against gender based violence, various WILPF Connect sessions and training were organised in Kinshasa, Bukavu, Goma and Rutshuru by UK WILPF member Marie-Claire Faray.

In March 2010, the Global Fund for Women awarded a travel grant to enable the participation of one WILPF DRC member, Jeanine Ngungu to travel to attend the UN CSW54. Although there were many difficulties to obtain a US entry visa, Jeanine Ngungu and the senator Eve Bazaiba were able to travel from the DRC to New York. Annie Matundu went to France to take part in various activities organised by the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the France based network Genre en Actions.

With the collaboration of the WILPF UN office in New York, there was a very special parallel side event in the history of the CSW independently initiated and organized by Congolese women, with a panel of key speakers representing Congolese civil society, politics and Diaspora, raising the voices of grassroots Congolese women in synergy. The panel discussion was introduced by a short documentary called "*Women's war*" that showed an

exchange initiated by the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation between women human rights activists from the Balkans and the DR Congo in 2009. Then three objectives of the BPfA were simultaneously addressed: Violence against women, women and armed conflict and women and power/decision making.

Violence against women in all its forms and failure of the application of the law addressing this issue remain the main obstacle to the protection of women and the advancement of women with their effective participation as citizens in the good governance of the DRC. Recently collected national data in the DRC was presented and demonstrated how violence against women strongly correlates with under-development, therefore achieving gender equality for peace negotiation, country reconstruction and other politics are imperative for good governance, lasting peace and sustainable development in the DRC. The massive implication of women in the management of the DRC public affairs is imperative in order to bring qualitative change requiring an integration of a gender approach taking into account VAW and the specific needs of men and women.

The CSW DRC side event was a positive achievement in terms of Congolese women's autonomy. They were very grateful of all the support they received from WILPF UN office and other WILPF members from US and Sweden. They also met with the DRC government delegation and the DRC representatives at the UN. Congolese women had ample opportunity to raise their concerns at the international level to the gathering during CSW assembly, speak to United Nations officials, policy-makers, members of the New York civil society and community, as well as key members of President Obama's administration. The women came with a singular focus, to articulate how Congolese women felt the global community could best address the fourteen-year conflict in the D.R. Congo. For more information about their speeches, please visit the link below: <http://www.sfbayview.com/2010/congolese-women-offer-prescriptions-for-ending-sexual-violence-in-congo/>

Congolese women also had an opportunity to meet with the new UN SRSG on Sexual Violence, Margot Wallstrom, and raise important issues about the nature and context of sexual violence in the DRC which is intrinsically linked to the context of war, lack of rule of law, local and international impunity, illicit traffic of small arms and corruption for illegal natural resource exploitation. They were able to present recommendations, giving the options and expectations of grassroots women. There was a strong recommendation about the SGR having a Congolese woman to advise her about the DRC issue and assist her for her upcoming trip to the DRC (planned for the 12-18 April 2010).

The Voices of Chadian women

From the 23rd Dec 2009 to the 3rd Feb 2010, by Khadija Fadoul travelled to Chad, capital N'djamena, where she worked on a small project from the Darfur Training Committee. The DTC provides training for the Diaspora Darfur women in the UK, to enable them to later go and train Sudanese women in refugee camps, externally displaced in neighboring countries. It was difficult for Khadija to go to the refugee camps in the East of Chad, but she was able to meet with Diaspora Darfur women in N'djamena and organize meeting. It was very successful, as she was able to practice what she's learned from the UK DTC. She also told the Darfur women about what she's learned from WILPF and VoAW, for instance, legal frameworks, such as the UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. Khadija Fadoul also attended various events with CELIAF, a major Chadian based women's network addressing issues about peace, women and security. Chad has not signed up to CEDAW; there is little awareness about women's human rights. She also talked to representatives of Islamic Relief organisation in Chad. Christian women's groups appeared to be more involved than Muslim ones because of the culture. She talked to the women about WILPF work in the UK and other places in the world. Women were interested in being involved if a WILPF group was initiated in Chad. Khadija also expressed regret that Chad not being represented at the UN CSW, for the evaluation of Beijing 15+. Chadian women are suffering a lot from human rights abuse and recent conflicts, their voices need to be heard at the international level.

New Voices from Eritrea and Zimbabwe

We wish to welcome new member Priscilla Nyathi from Zimbabwe, she will be raising the voices of Zimbabwean women on the 17th May and present some her research work. We also welcome new members Yasmine and

Khedidjah from Eritrea. They will be leading our various researches about the situation of women in Eritrea and we will hear more about the voices of Eritrea women on the 19th June.

THANK YOU

We extend gratitude to all UKWILPF members and WILPF international for their support. We thank all past and present office interns as well as the Campaign coordination team for all their work

GLOBAL NEWS ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

CSW: OUTCOME OF THE 15 YEARS REVIEW OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION

From 1-12 March 2010, the 54th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women undertook a fifteen-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The Commission adopted a declaration, seven resolutions and decided to transmit the Moderator's summaries to the 2010 Annual Ministerial Review of the Economic and Social Council.

For more information, visit the CSW site: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing15/outcomes.html>

NGOS REPORTS: THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION 15 YEARS ON

A 15-year Review of the implementation of the BPfA (Beijing +15) has seen civil society organisations contribute numerous studies, reports, statements and updates on whether or not commitments made have been met and to offer recommendations on how to improve policy and practice. A total of 3,440 NGO representatives from 138 countries attended the fifty-fourth session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women. This update from Siyanda brings together a selection of NGOs materials.

Read more: http://www.siyanda.org/archive/april10_siyanda.html

CSO TO HELP ADVISE U.N ON ROLE OF WOMEN IN PEACE AND SECURITY

The United Nations has invited a newly established group of independent experts to advise on ways to better protect women in conflict situations, and to ensure that their voices are heard in peace processes and that they are included in post-conflict reconstruction and governance structures.

Read more: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=33992>

NO JUSTIFICATION FOR NEGLECTING WOMEN'S HEALTH

Activists have cautioned that the Gates Foundation funded study, released in The Lancet and showing welcome progress on reducing maternal mortality globally, also reveals one catastrophic exception. They said that current global AIDS programmes were reminiscent of the Victorian era, casting pregnant women as potential vectors of disease, and ignoring their health in the single-minded rush to achieve a 2010 goal of preventing the transmission of HIV to their babies.

Read more: <http://www.health-e.org.za/news/article.php?uid=20032738>

[WOMEN HOLD THE SOLUTIONS: THE GLOBAL FUND FOR WOMEN'S REPORT](#)

Read about the Global Fund for Women's 21st grantmaking year in their latest annual report: [Women Hold the Solutions](#) at <http://www.globalfundforwomen.org/cms/annual-report/2008-2009/overview.html>

The Global Fund's new strategic initiative supports women's bold resistance to militarization and invests in strategies that reclaim and restore genuine peace and security to communities worldwide. Read a Letter from Global Fund For Women Chair and the President:

<http://www.globalfundforwomen.org/cms/annual-report/2008-2009/letter-from-the-chair-and-the-president.html>

[AWID: THE POWER OF MOVEMENT:](#)

In November 2008, 2000 women's rights activists from 144 countries gathered in Cape Town, South Africa, to discuss The Power of Movements at 11th International Forum hosted by the Association for Women's Rights in Development. This final compilation examines Forum's approach, impact, and achievements as well as areas for improvement to build an even stronger, bolder forum in 2012. Learn more about [AWID](#) at <http://awid.org/en> and download the pdf at

http://www.globalfundforwomen.org/cms/images/stories/downloads/2009/Forum_08_in_review.pdf

[RADICAL WOMEN, EMBRACING TRADITION.](#)

In November 2009, Global Fund President and CEO Kavita Ramdas spoke at TED India. Her inspiring talk focused on how women walk the line between western-style empowerment and traditional culture. In this talk, Kavita shares three inspiring examples from the Global Fund network, of how women fight to make the world better, while preserving the traditions that sustain them. [Watch the webcast](#) at http://www.ted.com/talks/kavita_ramdas_radical_women_embracing_tradition.html

WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN AFRICA

[AFRICA WOMEN'S RIGHTS: GAPS BETWEEN INTENTION AND IMPLEMENTATION](#)

A landmark report on the status of women in Africa says there is a distinct gap between intention and implementation in relation to women's rights and equality. The African Women's Report (AWR) highlights "the difficulties countries are having with respect to the full realization of women's rights due to the persistence of negative cultural and religious beliefs and attitudes toward women". AWR is published by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and is one of the agency's flagship reports

Read more: http://www.uneca.org/eca_resources/Publications/books/awr/index.htm

[2010-2020 DECLARED AFRICAN WOMEN'S DECADE](#)

A major initiative aimed at achieving gender equality in Africa is underway. The African Women's Decade (2010-2020) has been adopted by the African Union (AU), the continental organization that encompasses 53-

member states. This decade of struggle has been initiated by the Women and Gender Development Directorate of the AU.

Read more: <http://panafricannews.blogspot.com/2010/03/african-decade-of-women-2010-2020-focus.html> or <http://feministsforchoice.com/2010-2020-declared-african-women-decade.htm>

WOMEN'S DECADE: GREATER ATTENTION TO IMPLEMENTATION

The promise of Africa's Decade for Women is action on the various declarations and conventions which have not yet delivered gender equality. We want to use the launch of the decade to push governments to work hard on women's issues; those who have not ratified the various documents to ratify, those who have already ratified to put money aside for implementation," said Litha Musyimi-Ogana, Director AU Gender Directorate.

Read more: <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=50419>

HUMAN RIGHTS LAWS SHOULD BE IN NATIONAL LANGUAGES IN AFRICA

The African Union (AU) Commissioner for Human and People's Rights, Ms Soyata Maiga of Mali, on Monday urged the media to publicize human rights related issues in local languages. She made the appeal on arrival in the Angolan capital, Luanda, at the head of a delegation of the African Commission for Human and People's Rights (ACHPR) for an 8-day official visit to assess the progress of human rights in the country.

Read more: <http://tinyurl.com/2fvyd2x>

TIME FOR COMMITMENT IS OVER, TIME FOR ACTION NOW!

This is a communiqué issued by members of civil society Participating in 'Civil Society Experts Consultation on Maternal, Child and Infant Health and Sexual and Reproductive Health in Africa' Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, April 17-18, 2010, organised by Solidarity for African Women's Rights Coalition (SOAWR), IPPF-Africa Region, Ipas Africa Alliance, Save the Children International, Abantu for Development, and the UN Millennium Campaign in collaboration with the AU Commission to assess progress in reducing maternal, child and infant mortality and implementation of the Continental Framework on Sexual and Reproductive Health (Maputo Plan of Action 2007-10):

Read more: <http://www.pambazuka.org/en/category/advocacy/63864>

WHEN I DARE TO BE POWERFUL

Akina Mama wa Afrika has published a 'transformational' new book 'When I Dare to Be Powerful', a collection of herstories of five women engaged in sex work in East Africa. Its author Zawadi Nyong'o shares the surprised reaction of audiences at the launch of the book, during the 4th Africa Conference on Sexual Health and Rights, which took place in Addis Ababa in February.

Read more: <http://www.pambazuka.org/en/category/books/63532>

SUDAN: WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN PEACE TALKS IN QATAR

Women activists from Sudan, advocate for women to be included from the very beginning of the peace processes and composing no less than 30% of those at the table. Further, these women should be equipped with specialized negotiation training to enable them to full engage and move beyond being simply token representatives. It is vital

that advocacy targets the mediation team and peace partners to fully support and ensure women's inclusion within peace processes.

Read more: <http://www.nobelwomensinitiative.org/blogs/genderjustice/post/voices-from-sudan-on-peace-negotiations-and-implementation>

SUDAN: WOMEN STRIVE FOR CHANGE

Fatma Abdel Mahmoud from the Sudanese Democratic Socialist Union Party is the first female presidential candidate in Sudan's history. Despite having her doubts about the electoral process, Abdel Mahmoud has refused to withdraw from the race - against all odds in a country whose political scene is dominated by men. The 65-year-old paediatrician was also Sudan's first female minister in 1973 and spent 10 years in Sudan's National Assembly

Read more: <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/africa/2010/04/201041015341325129.html>

SUDAN: WOMEN'S VOICES HEARD

UNIFEM has worked to strengthen the capacities of women as candidates and voters in the presidential, legislative and gubernatorial elections in Sudan on 11-13 April, set to be the first multiparty national poll in 24 years. Hodan Addou, Country Programme Director for UNIFEM Sudan said that UNIFEM has extended direct advisory support to the National Elections Commission (NEC) through a Gender Advisor, who is based with the Commission and also works with its state election committees.

Read more: http://www.unifem.org/news_events/story_detail.php?StoryID=1071

ANGOLA: NATIONAL ENCOUNTER OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

The Angola Minister for Family and Promotion of Woman, Genoveva Lino, appealed to Angolan women entrepreneurs to invest more in the agro-cattle, agro-industry and fishing sectors, so as to lessen the effects of the financial crisis in the national economy. The Government official was speaking at the fifth National Encounter of Angolan Women Entrepreneurs, held from March 30-31 in the Soyo capital city of Zaire Province.

Read more: <http://www.ao.undp.org/news61.htm>

ANGOLA: SADC WOMEN POLICE OFFICERS MEETING IN LUANDA.

Angola is hosting the first course for women police officers from the member states of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) here from March 9 to 16. The seminar, which is being organized by the Women Police Network of SADC member states, aims at imparting to the network a major interaction and knowledge of the work modules of each member country.

Read more: <http://news.brunel.fm/2010/03/09/angola-hosting-sadc-women-police-officers-meeting/>

CHAD: WOMEN PROTEST AS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IS WORSENING

Chadian women recently walked for more than 2km, their hands on their heads (a sign of mourning), in the Chadian town of Guelendeng, 153km from the capital N'djamena. In what some Chadians said was a rare public demonstration, the women marched to protest violent acts committed by men on their wives.

Read more: <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=82271>

GUINEA-CONACKRY: THE PRICE OF POLITICAL RAPE.

The transition to democracy in Guinea-Conakry is both a lesson and a warning to those who would wield rape as an instrument of terror - whether in war or in peace.

Read more: <http://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/pablo-castillo-diaz-letitia-anderson/guinea-conakry-price-of-political-rape>

D.R. CONGO: IMPACT REPORT FROM GLOBAL FUND FOR WOMEN.

Funding a Women's Movement Against Sexual Violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo: 2004-2009 is an in-depth study of the underlying causes of violence in the region and how Global Fund support has helped women's groups to promote women's leadership, peace, justice, and respect for human rights. Over five years, we supported 70 groups with over \$880,000 in grants as they implemented innovative community-based strategies. The report shares 10 case studies and recommendations for donors. The report is authored by Muadi Mukenge, Program Director for Sub-Saharan Africa, Caitlin Stanton, Senior Development Officer and Aimée Mwadi Kady, GFW Advisor and National Director of SWAA-Congo. The report is available in English /French

Read more: <http://www.globalfundforwomen.org/cms/images/stories/downloads/2010/GFW-CongoReport-2010-LowRes.pdf>

D.R.CONGO: WOMEN'S RECOMMENDATIONS TO END SGBV AND INSECURITY

[Congolese women offer prescriptions for ending sexual violence and war in Congo.](#) Western based think tanks, humanitarian institutions and policy makers often argue that they have tried everything to bring an end to the conflict. However, a cursory look at the policies that have been prescribed or implemented reveals that almost every policy option tried has avoided core grassroots women's recommendations.

Read more: <http://www.sfbayview.com/2010/congolese-women-offer-prescriptions-for-ending-sexual-violence-in-congo/>

D.R.CONGO: WOMEN CHALLENGED UNDERREPRESENTATION IN GOVERNANCE.

A national conference was held in Kinshasa from 29-31 March 2010 to assess the participation and representation of women in the DRC at political decision-making levels since the country's independence in 1960. It was initiated by female politicians grouped under the Congolese Women's League for Elections (LIFCE) headed by Senator Eve Bazaiba, also a WILPF member, as part of activities commemorating Women's Month. The conference was the first of its kind and was organized in collaboration with the DRC Government, the United Nations, and the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA). The event was intended to benefit women aspiring to enter politics and join political parties. It was an opportunity for women from different political streams to evaluate the 50 years of the DRC state. Congolese women are determined to overcome decades of low female participation in politics and achieve their rightful role in governing the vast African country and rebuilding it after years of civil war.

Read more: <http://monuc.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?tabid=1042&ctl=Details&mid=1096&ItemID=8419> or <http://radiokapi.net/emissions-audio/linvite-du-jour/2010/03/31/eve-bazaiba-s%e2%80%99exprime-sur-la-participation-de-la-femme-congolaise-a-la-vie-politique/>

D.R.CONGO: RAPE WITH EXTREME VIOLENCE, THE NEW PATHOLOGY.

In eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the destructive and sadistic behaviour systematically perpetrated by different armed groups over the last ten years signals a new pathology we classify as rape with extreme violence (REV). REV is devastating to populations and can permanently damage women's reproductive capacity. The Panzi Hospital in Bukavu, South Kivu is one of the few established medical centres that has the capacity to treat REV

cases. Current gaps in the provision of care for REV survivors include a lack of health care infrastructure, insufficient number of qualified psychotherapists, and challenges associated with socioeconomic reintegration. Trafficking of the DRC's minerals directly assists the occurrence of atrocities.

Read more: <http://www.plosmedicine.org/article/info:doi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pmed.1000204>

D.R.CONGO: MS WALLSTROM NEW UN SGSR ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE VISITED THE DRC

During her official visit to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), made from 12 to 18 April 2010, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Sexual Violence in Conflict, Margot Wallström, reiterated the Security Council's commitment to continuing and full implementation of all its resolutions relating to this issue. In a press conference held in Kinshasa on Monday, 19 April, Ms Wallstrom stressed that impunity and armed conflict must be brought to an end if the DRC is to effectively combat sexual violence.

Read more: <http://monuc.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?tabid=932&ctl=Details&mid=1096&ItemID=8617>

D.R.CONGO: FIRST FESTIVAL OF WOMEN

The First festival for women in the DRC took place in Kinshasa on the 18th March 2010. : Market women offering their produce, Stands were set up for women of different conditions (vegetable growers, sportswomen, craftswomen, female music artists, culinary artists, human rights activists, political and community leaders, etc. to display, promote and sell the various products of their work and know-how.

Read more: <http://monuc.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?tabid=1042&ctl=Details&mid=1096&ItemID=8219>

NIGERIA: WOMEN DEMAND EQUAL RIGHTS

Nigerian women have demanded equal rights and equal opportunity from their male counterparts, stating that they can no longer continue with the rate of disrespect and gender inequality being shown to them. They claim that women in Northern Nigeria are seen as second-class human beings: Read more*****

Read more: <http://worldnewsvine.com/2010/03/international-womens-day-nigerian-women-demand-equal-rights/>

NIGERIA: WOMEN PROTEST AGAINST MASSACRES NEAR JOS

Hundreds of women have taken to the streets of Nigeria's capital, Abuja, and the central city of Jos in rallies against Sunday's massacre near Jos. Between [200 and 500 Nigerian](#), mostly women and children, were butchered in the villages of Dogo Nahawa, Zot and Ratsat. The women, mostly dressed in black, demanded that the government protect women and children better.

Read more: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/8562961.stm>

More about the massacres: http://www.mercatornet.com/articles/view/bloodbath_or_bad_blood/

NIGERIA: WOMEN DEMAND EQUAL RIGHTS

Ten years after Nigeria returned to civil rule women still play second fiddle in the male-dominated politics of Africa's most populous nation, women politicians and activists say. Despite the relative improvement in women political participation and representation, however such improvement does not reflect women's numerical superiority," said the coordinator of the Women's Right Advancement and Protection Alternative (WRAPA).

Read more: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201003130001.html>

RWANDA: WOMEN, STILL A CALL, NOT AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Women promotion should be a component of Gender, and not gender in itself. Many ladies who do not entirely agree with the idea of affirmative action for women when it comes to competitiveness, but merely wish to do what is right by an individual through an enabling environment. This can only come true if men are brought on board and prioritized on the gender agenda to encourage their appreciation and acceptance, (not patronage), of the enormous potential of women as their development partners. Else, we shall have to keep putting up with such derogatory remarks like "women are encouraged to apply"; extra points are added for 'gender', women are the in thing today; oh, it's a woman!; and on top of that, having to read conference agenda items like 'women, children and animal rights'!

Read more: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201003080615.html>

RWANDA: ANNE GARRISON WRITE ABOUT THE GENOCIDE

April 2010, marked sixteen years since the beginning of one of the most horrific events in world history—the Rwandan genocide. Ann Garrison from Global research asks How to honor Rwanda's 800,00 dead without honoring the six million more Congolese dead, in the ongoing aftermath of the Rwanda Genocide when Rwanda's war crossed its western border into neighboring D.R. Congo?

Read more: <http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=18570>

RWANDA: OPPOSITION LEADER MS VICTOIRE INGABIRE RELEASED

Ms Victoire Ingabire Umuhoza, a Rwandan opposition leader has been conditionally released after being arrested in Kigali. She is to challenge Rwanda President Paul Kagame in August's election. She has previously said she had been harassed since returning from exile in January. One of her aides was jailed last month. Her party, the Unified Democratic Forces, called her arrest unlawful and demanded her immediate release. The BBC said Ms Ingabire's home had been surrounded by heavily armed security forces. Human Rights Watch says Rwanda's government is attacking and intimidating its critics in the run-up to August's presidential election. Ms Victoire Ingabire Umuhoza's travel restrictions could have a severe impact on her campaign.

Read more: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/8638129.stm>

ZIMBABWE: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN INCREASES

"Violence against women in Zimbabwe increases". A recent brutal murder of a Zimbabwean student by her boyfriend has caused renewed attention towards gender-based violence in Zimbabwe and abroad. Zimbabwe's Vice-President, Joice Mujuru, has vigorously condemned gender-based violence and any cultural practices that put the safety of women at risk..

Read more: <http://www.afrol.com/articles/18383>

ZIMBABWE: WOZA AND MOZA ACTIVISTS WERE ARRESTED IN HARARE

15, 500 members of Women and Men of Zimbabwe Arise marched to the offices of the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA), Megawatt House, in Harare. Three simultaneous protests converged at the ZESA headquarters where the peaceful group handed over 'yellow cards' to staff members of the electricity service provider along with a report that outlines WOZA's demands.

Read more: <http://wozazimbabwe.org/?p=696>

ERITREA: T NEW REFUGEES GOING TO ETHIOPIA

Ethiopia opens new camp to accommodate the growing number of Eritrean refugees arriving each month. A batch of up to 2 000 mostly young men and women are now crossing the border each month to "avoid excessive repression, gross human rights violations and forced conscription into the army."

Read more: <http://humanrights.einnews.com/login.php?redir=%2Fnews.php%3Fwid%3D287721660&n=1>

ERITREA: THTE ROLE OF WOMEN WORKERS IN NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION

In continuation of the celebrations carried out to commemorate the 30th year of the inception of the National Union of Eritrean Women, a final workshop organized by NUEW conducted in Asmara, at Hager Media Hall, Ministry of Information. The workshop executed under the common theme "Our Youths, Our Guarantees!" and focused on "The Role of Women Workers in National Reconstruction". In the workshop, 140 women and 80 men attendants foregathered from different corners of the country.

KENYA: A VOICE FROM THE VOICELESS: DADAAB REFUGEE CAMPS

A letter from the camps with humble respect, on behalf of the refugees living in the camps of Dadaab. Our lives in the camps are far worse than you can imagine. We live in an open prison, far away from justice and humanity. We talk, but our voices are never heard. We move, but only inside a cage. We have many skills and talents, but we are denied our chance to maximize our potential. We are chained to a life full of stress and despair; a life for which many would prefer death.

Read more: <http://www.pambazuka.org/en/category/refugees/63737>

KENYA: NEW LAW TO BENEFIT WOMEN, SAY LAWYERS

Women and children will benefit equitably from family and national resources should the proposed constitution sail through, law experts have said. Speaking at a land reform forum Friday, law experts said the draft law guarantee equitable access to matrimonial property and public land, and provides for the enactment of laws to govern the same.

Read more: <http://tinyurl.com/zbhdi1>

SOUTH AFRICA: GOVERNMENT TO FIGHT CORRECTIVE RAPE

A Cape Town lesbian who was beaten up and raped by a man known to her, is presently being heard at Wynberg Court, government has condemned the ongoing acts of "corrective rape" in the country and has vowed to put an end to them.

Read more: <http://www.mask.org.za/article.php?cat=southafrica&id=2551>

SOUTH AFRICA: MEN BATTLE GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

When Mbuyiselo Botha decided to take the African National Congress League President, Julius Malema, to court for hate speech against women, he was confident from the start that the case had merit. But he also knew that this would be the most challenging test of his 15 years of gender activism.

Read more: <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=50853>

GHANA: WOMEN STILL UNDER-REPRESENTED IN NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES

An administrative instruction has over the years asked that 30% of the membership of district assemblies in the country should be made up of women. Women have, however, continued to be under-represented in Ghana's District Assemblies and indeed all other levels of leadership in the country.

Read more: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201004271004.html>

GHANA: NKRUMA SETS HER AGENDA ON WOMEN

By reviving the Committee of Ghana Women's League and Youth Organisation, Yaba Christina Nkrumah is sending a powerful message to the Ghanaian people that the work started by her father, Osagyefo Dr Kwame Nkrumah is still on course. She said Ghana's poverty crisis can be solved in one generation by focusing on education, health, nutrition and protection against increased vulnerability (creating jobs for the vast unemployed). She said investing in people is crucial to Ghana's development.

Read more: <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/election2008/artikel.php?ID=177515>

SWAZILAND: GRANDMOTHERS HISTORIC GATHERING ON HIV/AIDS

The first-ever African Grandmothers' Gathering takes place on Mother's Day weekend in Manzini, Swaziland - and forty-three Canadian grandmothers will be there, representing thousands of women who form the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign of the Stephen Lewis Foundation. Since 2006, the campaign has raised more than seven million dollars to support African grandmothers who are parenting their orphaned grandchildren in the most challenging of circumstances.

Read more: <http://www.newswire.ca/en/releases/archive/April2010/19/c3710.html>

EGYPT: CONSTITUTIONAL COURT CLEARS WAY FOR WOMEN JUDGES

Egypt's top constitutional court has opened the way for women judges to be appointed to the influential State Council nearly a month after an internal vote on the issue was thrown out, by the general assembly of State Council. The court authorised to settle administrative disputes concerning the exercise of public power, voted by overwhelming majority against appointing women judges to the body.

<http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2010/03/2010315102319122351.html>

SOMALIA: WOMEN FLOGGED

Under the control of the uber-conservative Muslim terrorist group Al-Shabaab, in parts of Somali a woman can be beaten, flogged, or jailed for the "crime" of coming into contact with men while selling tea to support their families. Women are required to wear *abayas*, clothing that covers them from head to toe; however, some poor women cannot afford the style of the bulky garment required, forcing women to remain prisoners in their home or risk assault and arrest.

Read more: http://womensrights.change.org/blog/view/somali_women_flogged_for_selling_tea

MAURITANIA: BANS ON FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM)

There's finally some more good news in the struggle against female genital mutilation (FGM) in Africa: Just weeks after Uganda banned the procedure, the thirty-four member Forum for Islamic Thought in the West African nation of Mauritania has issued a statement outlawing it as well. After convening in the capital, Nouakchott, early last week, the Forum announced that FGM had no basis in Islam and "has been proven by experts to be detrimental, immediately or subsequently. Hence, such a practice, as is performed domestically, is hereby prohibited, on account of the harm it gives rise to." From now on, it said, Mauritanian clerics will denounce female circumcision in their mosques. About 72 percent of the women in Mauritania have undergone FGM which health workers say often causes severe bleeding, problems urinating and potential complications during childbirth.

http://www.alertnet.org/db/an_art/58388/2010/00/21-170431-1.htm

MADAGASCAR'S HIDDEN CRISIS: WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES

With Madagascar's political crisis still far from resolved, economic and social rights have remained outside of the concerns of the country's leadership and mainstream media alike, writes Zo Randriamaro. Incidents of human rights abuses have been much less publicised than developments around political competition, Randriamaro notes, a reality reflective of elite concerns for self-protection and personal enrichment at the expense of ordinary livelihoods.

Read more: <http://www.pambazuka.org/en/category/features/64052>

FOOD SECURITY IN AFRICA

AGRICULTURE IS KEY TO STABILITY

The sixth Partnership Platform (PP) Meeting of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) opened Thursday in Johannesburg, South Africa, providing participants with an opportunity for multi-partner peer interaction, review and experience sharing among the core institutions and partners involved in CAADP implementation.

Read more: <http://tinyurl.com/zbkiwt>

EAST AFRICA: GREEN AGRICULTURE GROWING IN LEAPS AND BOUNDS

Organic agriculture using natural farming methods rather than fertilisers and pesticides has made significant gains in African countries – not just among farmers but among consumers too. Africa needs to triple agricultural productivity by 2050 to keep pace with population growth.

Read more: <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=51138>

AFRICAN MINISTERS OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: AGRICULTURE

The Annual Session of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development held on 29 and 30 March 2010 in Malawi, under the auspices of the AU and the UNECA, reaffirms the commitment to boosting investment in agriculture and allocating a substantial share of national budgets to this vital sector, as provided for in the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) established at the 2003 AU Summit in Maputo.

Read more: <http://www.uneca.org/>

HUMAN SECURITY NOT MILITARY INSECURITY IN AFRICA

THE AFRICAN UNION AND SECURITY SECTOR REFORM

While the AU's attempt is encouraging, it has shortcomings, and a case can be made that SSR requires a new approach and mechanism and should be supported in a much more strategic, patient and regional manner. Africa is the largest 'market' for SSR and SSR-related services. African ownership, however, remains limited. The AU should provide that.

Read more: <http://tinyurl.com/y4b249g>

OBAMA AND US MILITARY ENGAGEMENT IN AFRICA

Upon replacing George W. Bush as US president, hopes were high that Barack Obama would oversee sweeping change in relation to US military policy. But, writes Daniel Volman, far from seeing a reversal, such policy has in fact intensified, entirely at the expense of more progressive diplomatic and economically-based approaches.

Read more: <http://www.pambazuka.org/en/category/features/63866>

AFRICA: OBAMA EXPANDS MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICA

When President Barack Obama took office in January 2009, it was widely expected that he would dramatically change, or even reverse, the militarised and unilateral security policy that had been pursued by the George W. Bush administration toward Africa, as well as toward other parts of the world.

Read more: <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=50898>

THE USEFUL DELUSION OF BEING INDEPENDENT

Fifty years after '18 African countries allegedly gained their "independence" from colonialism', it is 'safe to state that most of Africa suffers from the delusion of being independent', argues Hama Tuma. 'Colonialism played many tricks on gullible Africans,' writes Tuma, 'and its most damaging joke has been to declare that it has left...while actually rushing back in through the back door.'

Read more: <http://www.pambazuka.org/en/category/comment/63896>

GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA

AFRICA LOST £1TN IN ILLEGAL FLOWS OF MONEY, RESEARCHERS SAY

More than £1tn may have flowed out of Africa illegally over the last four decades, most of it to western financial institutions, according to a new report. Even using conservative estimates, the continent lost about \$1.8tn (£1.18tn) – meaning Africans living at the end of 2008 had each been deprived of an average of \$989 (£649) since 1970, according to the US-based research body Global Financial Integrity (GFI).

Read more: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/apr/01/africa-illegal-money-lost>

GROWTH DOWN, UNEMPLOYMENT UP

Due to the global economic and financial crisis, growth on the African continent dropped to an average of 1.6 percent in 2009, compared to 4.5 percent in 2008. These figures were announced by Abdoulie Janneh, executive secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), at a joint annual conference of the African Union and UNECA in Malawi's capital of Lilongwe.

Read more: <http://www.ipsnews.net/africa/nota.asp?idnews=50866>

ANGOLA: OIL WEALTH ELUDES NATION'S POOR

The government of Angola has not done enough to combat pervasive corruption and mismanagement, Human Rights Watch has said in a report. Even though the oil-rich country's gross domestic product has increased by more than 400 percent in the last six years, Angolans are not seeing their lives improve accordingly, Human Rights Watch said.

Read more: <http://tinyurl.com/ya3s4zf>

ANGOLA: UNPRECEDENTED VICTORIES ACHIEVED BY CIVIL SOCIETY

Civil society organisations in Angola gave a lesson of citizenship, courageously marching to say “Don't

Push Down My House”. The demonstration finally and peacefully took place in the coastal city of Benguela. Despite of the ban announced by the provincial government, the march managed to break the silence and voice the protest against the brutal house demolitions and forced land evictions that have become a regular occurrence in Angola in the last years.

Read more: <http://www.pambazuka.org/en/category/socialmovements/63739>

NIGERIA: THE FAILURES OF NIGERIAN DEMOCRACY

There's an assumption that despite multiple deprivations, Nigerians can 'take solace in the knowledge' that they have democracy, writes Moses Ochonu. But the kind of democracy practised by Abuja has delivered neither improved standards of living nor abstract benefits such as press freedom or human rights, instead providing the perfect cover for 'massive corruption', says Ochonu.

Read more: <http://www.pambazuka.org/en/category/features/63116>

SUDAN: PEACE TALK TO CONTINUE

In the statement, Mr. Bassolé and Mr. Al-Mahmoud welcomed the Framework Agreement signed between the Sudanese Government and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) in late February in Doha, Qatar. They also welcomed the Framework Agreement and Ceasefire Agreement between the Government and another rebel group, the Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM), signed last month. The signing of the agreements represents a "quantum leap" and a "crucial phase of the ongoing Doha peace process," the statement noted.

Read more: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201004080903.html>

SUDAN: VIOLENCE MARS LAST DAY OF VOTE

Sudan's ruling party has said that the southern army had killed nine people, including at least five of its officials, stoking tensions during voting in the first open elections in 24 years. Oil producing Sudan entered the last of five days of presidential and legislative polls that mark a key test of stability for Africa's largest country, emerging from decades of civil war and preparing for a 2011 southern referendum on independence.

Read more: <http://tinyurl.com/y7bevno>

SUDAN: NINE KILLED AS POLLS END

Nine people were killed, including a member of President Omar al-Beshir's National Congress Party, as violence broke out on Thursday that was unrelated to nationwide elections, according to the southern Sudan army. The country held its first national election in 24 years.

Read more: <http://tinyurl.com/y2og5bk>

SUDAN: PRESIDENT ASKS OPPOSITION TO JOIN GOVERNMENT

Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir has asked opposition parties to join his government if he wins landmark elections currently under way. With polling due to end on Thursday, Mr Bashir has extended an offer to other parties to join his ruling National Congress Party (NCP).

Read more: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8621332.stm>

D.R.CONGO:A STALLED DEMOCRATIC AGENDA

The International Crisis Group, examines the failure of the leaders elected in 2006 to radically change governance and to fulfill the democratic aspirations of their citizens. Nearly four years after Joseph Kabila won the presidency in elections hailed as a milestone in the peace process, power is being centralised at the presidential office, checks and balances barely exist, and civil liberties are regularly undermined, despite growing signs that the regime is unable to manage local conflicts.

Read more: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=6614&l=1>

RWANDA: ATTACKS ON OPPOSITIONS

Opposition party members are facing increasing threats, attacks, and harassment in advance of Rwanda's August 2010 presidential election, Human Rights Watch said today. Human Rights Watch urged the government to investigate all such incidents and to ensure that opposition activists are able to go about their legitimate activities without fear

Read more: <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2010/02/10/rwanda-end-attacks-opposition-parties>

RWANDA: RESTRICTIONS ON FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

The Rwandan government's decision to deny a work visa to Human Rights Watch's representative in Kigali demonstrates a pattern of increasing restrictions on free expression in Rwanda ahead of August's presidential elections, Human Rights Watch said today. Human Rights Watch will appeal the decision and continue working on human rights issues in Rwanda. "In the last few weeks, we've seen a real crackdown on critics," said Georgette Gagnon, Africa director at Human Rights Watch. "The Rwandan government is doing everything it can to silence independent voices before the elections."

Read more: <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2010/04/23/rwanda-allow-human-rights-watch-work>

BOB GELDOF AND RECENT BBC REPORT!

Sir Bob Geldof may not wish to believe recent BBC reports alleging the misuse of famine relief funds in Ethiopia in 1984, but, writes Alemayehu G. Mariam, he needs to 'face the truth' that 'aid is stolen and diverted for...corrupt purposes in Africa everyday'. The famine that needs to be cured, argues Mariam, is the 'famine of democracy, justice, accountability, transparency, rule of law and human rights.'

Read more: <http://www.pambazuka.org/en/category/features/63118>

If you have any suggestions for future items to include in this bulletin, please email us at the following addresses:

office@ukwilpf.org.uk or voaw@ukwilpf.org.uk

THANK YOU

IN PEACE AND SOLIDARITY

UK WILPF VOICES OF AFRICAN WOMEN CAMPAIGN

UK WILPF
52-54 Featherstone Street
London EC1Y 8RT
+44 (0)20 7250 1968

URL: <http://www.ukwilpf.org.uk>

Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/ukwilpf>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/UKWILPF>

Blog: <http://ukwilpf.blogspot.com>