



News Bulletin

■GLOBAL

UNITED NATIONS Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon appointed Costa Rican Attorney General Francisco Dall'Anese Ruiz as the new head of the UN's International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala on Wednesday. Dall'Anese replaces Carlos Castresana, who resigned in June over concerns Guatemalan authorities were making insufficient efforts to support the commission's efforts on corruption and politically motivated violence.

HEALTH - HIV/AIDS infections are growing across the Middle East and North Africa, according to a study by researchers in Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. The authors found several countries have high infection rates within specific high-risk groups but have yet to experience generalized epidemics. Researchers, who compiled existing data from across the region in an attempt to provide a comprehensive picture of infection trends, warned there is a general dearth of available data in the region.

■AFRICA

D.R. CONGO - Public health and women's rights advocates warn the prevalence of sexual assault as a weapon of war in the Democratic Republic of Congo over the past decade is translating into higher occurrences of civilian rape. A recent study showed a 17-fold increase in the incidence of rapes between 2004 and 2008, prompting many observers to caution sexual assault has gained a disturbing level of social acceptance in DR Congo.

DRC / RWANDA - Tens of thousands of Congolese Tutsi refugees living in Rwanda for more than a decade are preparing to return to North Kivu province. But longstanding and unresolved tensions over land threaten to upset their homecoming.

LIBERIA - Liberian efforts to enact economic and governance reforms came to a head Tuesday as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund announced they were supporting 4.6 billion dollars of debt relief for the West African country.

■ASIA

AFGHANISTAN - A consortium of 31 NGOs working in Afghanistan have expressed their "deep concern" over the ability of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to carry out its mission in the country because of low staffing levels.

INDIA's Environment Ministry is launching a new investigation into the potential impacts of a planned bauxite mine on local indigenous people and wildlife in the eastern state of Orissa.

■MIDDLE EAST

YEMEN - The Yemeni government has announced a new "reconciliation deal" with Houthi-led Shia rebels in the northern governorate of Saada in a bid to bolster the February 2010 ceasefire and encourage the return of hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs).

■LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

BRAZIL - While the Brazilian authorities tally the death toll and the economic losses caused by recent torrential rains in the northeast, activists warn that a legislative bill to modify the Forestry Code will only worsen the effects of extreme weather, which is increasingly frequent in the context of climate change.

GUYANA - Indigenous people in Guyana have accused the government of taking over their traditional lands for a rainforest preservation scheme. News agency reported that leaders of Amerindian communities - which represent 10 per cent of Guyana's population - claim poor planning and demarcation of land by authorities are affecting many of their communities. The Guyanese government has been seeking financial support from international partners to protect its 15 million hectares of rainforest. The World Bank has already given the country 3.6 million US dollars to prepare a plan for a United Nations project to slow deforestation. In 2009 Norway agreed to invest 250 million US dollars over five years to preserve Guyana's forests.

HONDURAS - The biodiversity of Capiro Calentura National Park, on the northern coast of Honduras, could disappear as a result of tourism, agricultural expansion and drug trafficking.

URUGUAY - Unregulated population growth along Uruguay's southern coast has hurt the Río de la Plata (River Plate) along an extensive stretch where the freshwater mixes with the Atlantic's salty seas, warn scientists.

WFWO's Communications Team