



News Bulletin

■GLOBAL

UNITED NATIONS - A new UN plan would have the world body gradually withdraw its 22,000-member strong peacekeeping force called MONUC from the Democratic Republic of Congo over a period of three years. DR Congo President has asked the UN to plan a withdrawal, but UN assessments warn that DR Congo police and army are not yet prepared to quell violence in the country's eastern provinces.

HUMAN RIGHTS - NGO Watch documented the extrajudicial killings of 300 alleged Taliban fighters and supporters by the Pakistani army after the successful military offensive in the Swat Valley, potentially jeopardizing U.S. support for Pakistan. Financial and strategic aid from the U.S. depends on Pakistan's adherence to human-rights laws, which the Obama administration has worked to certify. Analysts suggest that the violence is the result of score settling between Pakistani security agents and Taliban fighters.

DEVELOPMENT AID - Towards an aid quality index - Donors regularly make grandiose claims and promises, but measuring whether or not they live up to them requires clear aid quality measurement indicators.

■AFRICA

D.R. CONGO - With large donor projects winding up and little bilateral support for HIV programmes in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the country is facing the possibility of ARV shortages and rising HIV mortality, say aid workers.

TANZANIA - Too much work, too little school - Malindi fish market in Zanzibar's Stonetown is a bustle of economic activity, but the prospect of a quick buck attracts too many children who should be in school, say activists.

■ASIA

BANGLADESH - Cyclone Aila survivors take another hit - Thousands of Cyclone Aila survivors hit by the May 2009 storm in southwestern Bangladesh have been hit again - this time by flooding and swollen rivers after embankments were breached by high tides.

INDIA - More than 70 Indian soldiers are dead after a series of attacks on convoys in the central Indian state of Chhattisgarh by Maoist rebels. Indian authorities launched an offensive against the rebels last year across several Indian states.

SRI LANKA - Residents in conflict-affected northern Sri Lanka, still reeling from the effects of more than 25 years of war, are taking small but significant steps on the country's long road to recovery.

■MIDDLE EAST

IRAQ - Baghdad was rocked by a third day of insurgent strikes that killed at least 28 people. The insurgents are reportedly looking to reignite Iraq's sectarian warfare in the climate of political confusion after the March 7 elections.

■LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

Latin America Region - Trade with the European Union has not significantly improved the situation of workers in Latin America, in spite of its volume having doubled between 1990 and 2007, according to a study by two Chilean academics.

BRAZIL - Scores of people have died in the Brazilian state of Rio de Janeiro this week after the heaviest rainfall in decades triggered massive flooding and landslides. Local authorities estimated on Wednesday that 102 had died so far, but the number may rise as the rain continues to fall. More than 2,000 people have been left homeless in the city of Rio de Janeiro alone, where many houses in hillside slums were buried by mudslides. The mayor Eduardo Paes has urged slum residents to leave their homes, while others in safe areas are urged to stay indoors. The government has declared a state of emergency and most schools in the region were closed on Wednesday for the second consecutive day.

ECUADOR registers refugees - More than 27,000 Colombian refugees living in remote areas of northern Ecuador have been registered as part of a project by the Ecuadorean government and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

WFWO's Communications Team