



News Bulletin

■GLOBAL

UNITED NATIONS - Six UN human-rights experts released a statement challenging that a widely criticized immigration law passed in Arizona, saying that the sweeping law may violate binding international standards on human rights. The experts - a group comprising experts from Kenya, Mexico, Pakistan and the U.S. - say that international law requires that detention be used only as an "exceptional measure, justified, narrowly tailored and proportional in each individual case.

BIODIVERSITY - We can live without oil, but not without flora and Fauna - The policies and deals that contributed to the massive oil spill under way in the Gulf of Mexico are also jeopardising the Earth's vital biological infrastructure, according to the Global Biodiversity Outlook 3.

■AFRICA

D.R. CONGO - Security is improving in Democratic Republic of Congo's Equateur province, where an insurgency rooted in a resource conflict pushed some 200,000 people in the marginalized region to flee their homes last year. But it will require more than an end to the violence for the trickle of returnees to turn into a torrent.

SOMALIA - Mobile phones in Somalia enable residents to bank by phone, securely transferring cash and avoiding robberies. Though business is still fraught with hazards and setbacks in this troubled, divided country, telecom companies "became the economic enablers in Somalia," expert says.

SUDAN - The removal of landmines and other explosive remnants of war (ERW) in Sudan will grind to a halt next month unless money is found to keep operations going, especially around Malakal in Upper Nile State and Kassala in the east, says an official.

SWAZILAND - Mobile clinics for HIV patients have been benefiting entire communities in rural Swaziland, but tight budgets have scuppered plans to expand the project, or even sustain a fleet of just two vehicles.

UGANDA - Minister's turnaround on HIV bill raises concern - Ugandan AIDS activists have expressed concern over a decision by the Ministry of Health to back an HIV/AIDS bill that would criminalize the deliberate transmission of HIV.

■ASIA

AFGHANISTAN - The Afghan authorities have cancelled the operating licences of 152 national and 20 international NGOs, accusing them of not being accountable.

CHINA's nonprofit sector has reported increased - but subtle - harassment from the Chinese government, coming in the form of legal challenges, tax investigation and restrictions on receiving aid from abroad. Though Chinese officials have previously viewed NGOs as necessary in helping with efforts such as aid after the earthquake in Qinghai, China's civil sector is now subject to a crackdown that lawyers and activists describe as more serious than ever.

MYANMAR - Aid workers have expressed concern that recovery work in cyclone-affected Myanmar may be hampered by the disbandment of a coordinating group set up to oversee aid efforts.

TAJIKISTAN will be making a formal appeal for international aid after "catastrophic" floods and mudslides in the south killed over 20 and left hundreds homeless, according to Tajik President Imomali Rakhmon.

■LATIN AMERICA

HAITI - More than 1,000 Haitians took on the streets of the capital Port-au-Prince on Monday to demand the resignation of President Rene Preval. The demonstration was called by nearly 40 political parties and opposition groups. It turned violent when police used tear gas and warning shots to disperse the angry crowd which had gathered around Haiti's national palace. The protesters claim Preval is using the country's emergency situation following the 12 January earthquake which killed up to 300,000 people to remain in power beyond his legal term. Haiti's parliament approved a measure on Monday allowing Preval to remain in office for a further 96 days if a poll cannot be held by the February deadline. There are also concerns that elections may be delayed because of records lost in the earthquake.

WFWO's Communications Team