

Kenya Domestic Media, February 28th 2011 (Covering Feb 22nd – Feb 28th)

By Fatima Arkin, MIGS Reporter for Kenya

State Owned Media

KBC Online text website, Nairobi, in English 26 Feb 2011

“Kenya denies involvement in border fighting” by Carol Gakii

Defence Minister Yusuf Haji dismissed allegations that Kenya was assisting Ethiopia to fight Somali militia groups along the Kenya-Somali border. Haji also dismissed reports that flights to Mandera had been diverted to the Takaba airstrip. A woman was killed and 10 others seriously injured when suspected Al-Shabab militia launched an attack on Somali troops returning from training in Ethiopia. Stray bullets hit the Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) offices during the altercation. On Wednesday a mortar bomb thrown by Al-Shabab militias landed near the Mandera District hospital.

KBC Online text website, Nairobi, in English 25 Feb 2011

“PM rubbishes KKK alliance” by Stella Kalekye

Speaking at a political rally at Kamukunji Constituency, Prime Minister Odinga once again strongly opposed the KKK alliance, terming it as a tribal outfit. Odinga said the country needs unity and highly criticized those behind the alliance.

KBC Online text website, Nairobi, in English 23 Feb 2011

“Kenyans in Libya safe as violence escalates” by Margaret Kalekye

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs assured members of the public that about 60 Kenyans living in Libya are safe. In a statement, the government said that the Kenyan embassy in Libya is making arrangements to evacuate the families of home-based staff.

“Kenya police chief denies mercenary claims”

Police Commissioner Mathew Iteere said investigations were conducted and found that no Israeli nationals were booked at the Whitesands hotel while the PM was there. Top security is being provided and any person who becomes aware of a potential threat should notify Iteere’s security detail so immediate action can be taken. Other alleged targets include Speaker Kenneth Marende, MP Alago Aluoch and Justice and Legal affairs committee chair Ababu Namwamba.

Private Media

Daily Nation website, Nairobi, in English 28 Feb 2011

“Iran seeks to double its credit to Kenya” by Juma Namlola

Visiting Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Ramin Mehmanparast said his country is willing to double its credit to Kenya, but is monitoring the credibility of Kenya's projects. Mehmanparast didn't provide details on specific projects, but said economic relations will focus more on technological empowerment, particularly gas and oil. Iran is also committed to increasing imports of tea.

“Al-Shabaab warns of Kenya terror attack” by Abdulkadir Khalif, Dominic Wabala, Issa Hussein and Hassan Huka

Shaykh Ali Mahmud Rage alias Shaykh Ali Dhere, spokesman of the radical Islamist group Al-Shabab, accused Kenya of aiding the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in Somalia. Kenyan military instigated an amber alert and warned parents living along the Kenya/Somalia border to be vigilant as Al-Shabab is recruiting young fighters. Somali soldiers training in Kenya are awaiting deployment as Kenyan government officials Mohamed Elmi and Mohammed Mohamud warn of a potential humanitarian crisis.

“Kenyans evacuated from Libya arrive home”

A plane carrying 80 Kenyans from Libya lands in Nairobi.

KTN TV, Nairobi, in English 1000 gmt 27 Feb 2011

“Kenya beefs up security along border as Somali, Ethiopian troops fight Al-Shabab”

Kenya is said to be on the highest alert experienced in recent times as fighting with Somalia rages for the fifth day in Mandera town. Ethiopian troops fight Al-Shabab militants in the Somali town of Buulo Xaawo with clashes threatening to spill over to Kenyan soil. Refugee registration is set to start as the Kenyan Red Cross gains access to a few villages.

“Kenyans evacuated from Libya expected home 28 February”

Kenya Airways evacuated 80 Kenyans and 116 other African nationalities from Libya. The rescue plane was delayed in Egypt to give passengers and crew time to rest, but is expected to land in Nairobi on February 28.

Daily Nation website, Nairobi, in English 27 Feb 11

“Iran's charm offensive in high gear” by Enoch Wambua

Political scientist Frank Matanga warns of an emerging politico-religious cold war between Iran and the US that may partially unfold in Kenya. A delegation composed of Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Ramin Mehmanparast and senior editors from leading Iranian media houses was sent to Kenya to propose structured exchange programmes between media houses in the two countries. However, earlier attempts at cooperation have not moved beyond the signing of documents.

The People, Nairobi, in English 26 Feb 2011

“Security top brass meet over war in Mandera” by Hudson Gumbihi and Mwaniki Munuhe

Kenyan security chiefs held a "crisis meeting" at the Department of Defence (DoD) headquarters to review an anticipatory strategy implemented last August. Civic life came to a standstill Friday as all government offices remained closed and businesses were shut. Al-Shabab fighters injured eight Kenyans after an ambush on TFG soldiers backfired. Tereri Ward councillor Hassan Noor Abdullahi said the the Al-Shabab are in town looking for the soldiers. Military spokesman Bogita Ongeru claims to not be aware of the matter.

Daily Nation website, Nairobi, in English 26 Feb 2011

“The scramble for top jobs” by Peter Leftie and Samwel Kumba

The new constitution gives the executive and parliament until the end of this year to appoint the heads and members of crucial commissions and other independent offices. The high-profile positions include those of central bank governor and chief justice, whose terms expire within the next six days. The reappointment of Michael Gichangi as National Security Intelligence Service Director General is being contested in court as politicians continue to argue over who should fill top positions. Justice Minister Mutula Kilonzo repeatedly states that positions shouldn't be filled on the basis of political or ethnic alliances.

Capital FM radio, Nairobi, in English 1000 gmt 25 Feb 2011

“Thousands flee fighting near Kenya-Somalia border town”

A councillor said that although no physical attacks have occurred in Mandera, residents are fleeing the town due to concerns over stray ammunition. Yesterday morning eight people were struck by bullets from fights in Somalia. Fourteen AU soldiers flown from Mogadishu are still receiving treatment at a Mombasa hospital.

Daily Nation website, Nairobi, in English 25 Feb 2011

“Kenyan 'dogs of war' fighting for Al-Qadhafi” by Bernard Namunane and Caroline Wafula

Al-Qadhafi's former Chief of Protocol Nuri al-Mismari confirmed that Kenyan mercenaries are among foreign soldiers helping the besieged Libyan leader Mu'ammar al-Qadhafi fight off an uprising. Al-Mismari clarified that the mercenaries weren't sent officially by governments, but were privately recruited ex-soldiers and officers. Acting Foreign Affairs Minister George Saitoti, Foreign Affairs Assistant Minister Richard Onyonka and Government Spokesman Alfred Mutua denied any knowledge of Kenyan mercenaries fighting on the side of Al-Qadhafi. However, Mutua conceded that there're dozens of retired soldiers and police officers who are employed by private companies to provide security in war zones that may be mistaken for mercenaries.

“You're safe, Saitoti tells MPs”

Internal Security Minister George Saitoti denies presence of "Israeli mercenaries" in the country commenting that police investigated the claims and found no cause for worry. Saitoti said the Israeli woman who checked out of a hotel where the alleged "hit men" were staying was an employee of an international organization. Juja MP William Kabogo expressed fears after his bodyguard was withdrawn for two days last week. The officer was later reinstated on the minister's orders.

“Crackdown nets 120 Ethiopian rebels”

Upper Eastern Deputy Provincial Commissioner Wenslas Ong'wayo said crackdowns will continue following reports that some rebels acquired Kenyan citizenship illegally. He named the most affected areas to be Bandatelo, Sololo, Moyale and Korondille. Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) members were also thought to be hiding in Nairobi.

“Ngilu wins libel suit against Kiss FM and the ‘Weekly Citizen’”

Water Minister Charity Ngilu won a defamation case against media house Radio Africa Limited and weekly publication Headlink Publishers Limited. Entering judgment against the media house, weekly publication, politician Wanguhu Ng'ang'a and Kiss FM employees Caroline Mutoko and Carol Radull, presiding Judge Hatari Waweru said "they failed to present defences with triable issues". They also defamed Ngilu who has a high public standing as a mother, grandmother and a cabinet minister.

Daily Nation website, Nairobi, in English 24 Feb 2011

“Blast at Mandera hospital as border clashes rage” by Fred Mukinda and Hassan Huka

The explosion did not cause casualties, said North Eastern Provincial Commissioner James ole Serian, but four Kenyans were treated for bullet wounds. Two Kenyan soldiers were also

expected to be airlifted to Nairobi after suffering injuries from a motor vehicle accident. The Kenyan military is on standby. Another security team comprising of Kenya Army's Rangers and Special Forces detachments, as well as the [paramilitary] General Service Unit and Administration Police is patrolling the vast border.

“Ivorian stalemate worries PM Odinga”

Prime Minister Odinga said that military chiefs from the economic community of West African countries started preparing to oust Gbagbo from power if sanctions and peace talks fail. Presidents Jacob Zuma of South Africa, Idriss Deby of Chad, Jakaya Kikwete of Tanzania and Mohamed Ould Abdelaziz of Mauritania are in Cote d'Ivoire to find a solution by February 28th.

“Kenya: MP cites his worries over Libyan ‘dogs of war’”

MP Gitobu Imanyara said he was aware of some Kenyans who went to Libya to train as religious teachers, but were instead trained as soldiers. Immigration and Registration of Persons Minister Otieno Kajwang', who was standing in for Professor Saitoti, said the issue of mercenaries would be investigated. He asked that Professor Saitoti be given more time to respond to the queries. Imanyara also asked acting Foreign Affairs minister George Saitoti if the Kenyan ambassador and staff in the Maghreb country were safe and when they would be flown back to Kenya.

Capital FM radio, Nairobi, in English 1200 gmt 23 Feb 2011

“US government releases funds to empower youths in Kenya”

The US government released 3.5 billion shillings in support of the economic and political empowerment of youths across the country. US ambassador to Kenya Michael Ranneberger said youth organizations will be required to write proposals to the embassy to ask for the funds.

“Kenyan premier upbeat about resolution of Cote d'Ivoire's political crisis”

Prime Minister Odinga is optimistic that the political standoff between rival governments in Cote d'Ivoire will be resolved soon as the effects of economic sanctions continue to be felt in the country. Odinga said that a mission consisting of West African heads of state is due to give its report on efforts to end the stalemate. He reiterated that should the talks fail there will be no other option, but to resort to force.

“Kenyan police probe alleged presence of ‘Israeli mercenaries’”

Internal Security Assistant Minister Orwa Ojode said the government is concerned because the alleged presence of Israeli mercenaries borders on national security and threatens peace. However, Ojode said none of the accusers formally reported the matter to the police. Odinga said that he received information about the mercenaries and will meet the Israeli ambassador in Nairobi to discuss the matter.

Daily Nation website, Nairobi, in English 23 Feb 2011

“Second court order blocks Kibaki nominees” by Eunice Machuhi

Justice Mohammed Ibrahim forbade the Judicial Service Commission (JSC) and the inconsistent attorney general from implementing Kibaki’s appointments. The matter was referred to the constitutional court and the chief justice. Director of the National Security Intelligence Service (NSIS) Michael Gichangi will remain in office until a full hearing is conducted. Muslim for Human Rights (Muhuri), Khelef Khalifa and Ndung’u Wainaina sought a conservatory order removing Gichangi as NSIS director pending the outcome of a hearing. They also wanted an order to prevent the publication of Kibaki’s nominees.

“Navy steps up anti-piracy patrols”

Department of Defence Spokesman Bogita Ongeru confirmed that patrols were intensified to encourage shipping companies to continue using Mombasa port. Two large speedboats were offloaded to reinforce smaller vessels patrolling the waters. More soldiers were sent to border points and better equipment acquired for them. The British military brought in new equipment and is training Kenyan security forces at their camp in Nanyuki.

The Standard website, Nairobi, in English 23 Feb 2011

“Team formed to investigate mercenaries claims” by Cyrus Ombati

A team of detectives was formed to investigate mercenary claims. Nominated MP Millie Odhiambo said the mercenaries met with high level government officials and were shown the residences and the cars of the five people targeted. She believes that Prime Minister Odinga, National Assembly Speaker Kenneth Marende, MP Olago Aluoch, Namwamba and herself were chosen based on their rejection of Kibaki's nominations. Israeli ambassador to Kenya was scheduled to discuss the issue with Odinga on Wednesday.

“Journalist's ICC application to bar Ocampo dismissed” by Cyrus Ombati

ICC judges dismiss radio journalist Joshua Kirwa arap Sang’s application both to disqualify Ocampo and to address the court in the Kalenjin language. The judges warned Kenyans against filing applications on matters they have already ruled upon as Sang's application was similar to that of former Police Commissioner Ali and MP Ruto, which were both dismissed.

The People, Nairobi, in English 23 Feb 2011

“Kibaki outwits PM on nominees row”

President Kibaki withdrew his controversial nominations, foiling Prime Minister Odinga's plans to call general elections within three months. The prime minister’s press conference was delayed as Odinga was forced to change his statement following the "latest developments", but insisted he was late coming back from a funeral. Inside sources told *The People* there was a general

feeling amongst Kibaki supporters that Odinga took advantage of the stalemate and stole attention away from the president with regards to constitutional reforms.

KTN TV, Nairobi, in English 1357 gmt 22 Feb 2011

“Kenya premier lauds president's statement on judicial nominations”

Prime Minister Odinga congratulates Kibaki for withdrawing the controversial nominations. He views Kibaki's agreement to seek a consensus driven process for the appointments as a victory and the only way to achieve the promise of the new constitution. Nominations for the positions of director of public prosecutions and controller of budget will be conducted by competent panels with the Public Service Commission providing the secretarial services.

NTV, Nairobi, in English 1245 gmt 22 Feb 2011

“Kenyan president backs down on controversial judicial nominations”

President Kibaki announced that he's withdrawing names of nominees to constitutional offices. Kibaki said the next chief justice will be nominated by the Judicial Service Commission and that he'll "hold consultations" with Prime Minister Odinga over the nomination of a new attorney general. The government will advertise the positions of director of public prosecutions and controller of the budget.

Daily Nation website, Nairobi, in English 22 Feb 2011

“Nation goes live in Dar es Salaam Stock Exchange” by Samuel Kamndanya

Kenya's Nation Media Group (NMG) cross listed shares at the Tanzanian Dar es Salaam Stock Exchange, making NMG shares available in all the partner states of the East African Community (EAC). Tanzanian Minister Emmanuel Nchimbi applauded NMG for endeavouring to raise the standards of journalism in Tanzania.

“Ministry denies settlement plans as protests sweep through coast” by Galgalo Bocha and Jonathan Manyindo

The Special Programmes Ministry denied plans to settle thousands of internally displaced people (IDP) in the coast region. However, protests continued as people accused the government of planning to relocate IDPs secretly. The National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) dispatched a team to meet government officials in Lamu West District and quell tensions in the area. Residents and civil rights organizations accused the government of fuelling pre-existing land conflicts by moving IDPs to Mpeketoni, Witu and Hindi divisions. MP Danson Mungatana said there were plans to resettle "refugees" in parts of Tana River County. However, Ecumenical Centre for Peace and Justice Coordinator for Tana River and Lamu counties Julius Kimotho called the presence of IDPs in the area speculation.

“Fishing vessels used in hi-tech piracy” by Gitonga Marete and Githua Kihara

The use of hijacked vessels as mother ships complicates matters for navies operating in the Indian Ocean. Kenya Ports Authority (KPA) Assistant Harbour Master Captain Adnan Banafa said pirates use hijacked fishing trawlers as staging posts for further attacks in the ocean. They operate small skiffs with powerful engines that can be pulled up to the beach. The use of fishing vessels increases the range necessary to mount successful attacks. Pirates also use the Automatic Identification System to find their target and locate naval ships patrolling the waters. Coronel Victor Gamor, military advisor at the United Nations Political Office of Somali (UNOPS) said that Somalis in the Diaspora may be funding the sophisticated weapons used in attacks. Commercial ships are now required to stay at least 200 nautical miles off the coastline to ensure their safety.

“Four in piracy case query court's power”

Suspected Somali pirates Abdirahman Isse, Mohammed Osman, Feisal Abdi and Noor Ali claim the Kenyan court lacks jurisdiction to try their case. Senior state counsel Alexander Muteti called such claims misconceived and with no basis in law. Muteti said the court has the jurisdiction, but only the High Court can provide the location of the trial if necessary.

“Annan urges Kibaki, PM to unite”

Chief mediator Kofi Annan wrote to Kibaki and Odinga, urging them to show unity over judicial appointments. Annan urged the Kenyan leaders to guard gains made on the reform front.

The Star, Nairobi, in English 22 Feb 2011

“Corridors of Power: Political gossip”

Kenyan parties use "harsh" SMS messages in row over judicial nominees and the ICC trials. Text messages from the PNU talk about the irreversible operation 112 in which 50% of MPs plus one member is needed to remove Odinga from office. SMS from the ODM align Kibaki with KANU and the Ocampo six.

The Standard website, Nairobi, in English 22 Feb 2011

“Pressure builds up on Kibaki, Raila to compromise”

Envoys, media owners and civil societies urge Kenyan leaders to defuse rising political tension. Officials from International Centre for Jurists, Civil Rights Education and Democratic Organisation, Federation of Women Lawyers, Transparency International, and Kenya Human Rights Commission warned the president and prime minister to be ready for Kenyans' wrath if the stalemate persists. Namwamba, chair of the Justice and Legal Affairs House Committee, was concerned that some MPs opposed to the constitution were regrouping to derail its process.