

The following information was gathered during the period of April 1-11, 2010 from: AFP, The new Times, <http://rwanda.unfpa.org>, allafrica.org and Africa Press agency.

City grenade attack again

One person died and 4 others sustained minor injuries during two separate grenade attacks in Kigali on Saturday night. (April 10, 2010) The simultaneous blasts, one in Nyabugogo Taxi Park and the other at Cyahafi, near Kigali Central Prison, took place between 6:30 p.m. and 8 p.m. respectively.

Police spokesperson, Eric Kayiranga, confirmed the attacks and said that investigations have begun.

“We are still working on the evidence collected and we shall compare with previous attacks and come up with an analysis which we shall communicate,” Kayiranga said.

Saturday’s grenade attack is the third to rock Kigali in less than two months. On February 19, two people were killed and several others wounded in two grenade attacks and on 4 March, two near-simultaneous grenade explosions occurred in the capital injuring 16 people.

In memory of the victims of the 1994 Genocide

Hundreds of Rwandans and foreigners gathered at Amahoro National Stadium in Kigali Wednesday (7 April) to officially start a week-long national 16th commemoration of the 1994 genocide.

The 16th Genocide commemoration is centered on managing trauma cases. “Over 20% of all Rwandans bear signs of trauma, 50% of whom are in extreme depression due to the effects of the 1994 genocide”, revealed Dr Naasson Munyendamutsa, a researcher at the Rwanda National University.

Kagame ridicules political opponents as hooligans

Rwandan President Paul Kagame on Wednesday (7 April) accused foreign critics of trying to impose values on Rwanda as well as preferring his political opponents whom he described as mere ‘hooligans’ to govern the country.

In his address to hundreds of mourners at ceremonies to mark the 16th anniversary of the 1994 Rwandan Genocide, Kagame accused the opposition – specifically naming his rival Victoire Ingabire in person, of “political hooliganism”. The President also accused the critics of “abusing me” in the name of freedom of expression,” but said he is “not bothered at all”.

Solitary Confinement punishment abolished

The Chamber of Deputies (Lower House of Parliament) passed a bill to expunge solitary confinement as a punitive measure for people sentenced to “Life Imprisonment with Special provisions”.

The sentence applies to individuals convicted of Genocide, crimes against humanity, murder, torture resulting into death, performing derogatory acts on a dead body, child sexual abuse, and sexual torture.

Studies have shown that human beings are inherently social. Prolonged isolation from the rest of humanity has a negative impact on one’s ability to live a normal life.

Major changes in the military

President Paul Kagame carried out changes in the military and named General James Kabarebe as the new Minister of Defence replacing Gen. Marcel Gatsinzi.

Kabarebe has been the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) of the Rwanda Defence Forces (RDF).

Former Army Chief of Staff, Lt. Gen. Charles Kayonga is now the new CDS and will be replaced as head of the land forces by Maj. Gen. Caesar Kayizari.

Air Force Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Charles Muhire was made the Commander of Reserve Force while Maj. Joseph Damari was promoted to Colonel and appointed acting Air Force Chief of Staff.

Lt. Col. Dan Munyuza was promoted to Colonel and is now the J 2 of the RDF, whereas Maj. Gatete Karuranga was promoted to Lt. Col. and appointed Director General External Intelligence.

People with Disabilities Left Out of Condom Campaign

Rwanda’s recent national condom awareness campaign failed to include messages designed for people with disabilities, something experts say is a mistake, as they are often equally at risk of HIV as the rest of the population.

“The fact that the mass mobilization campaign on condom use did not focus on blind and deaf persons would not only jeopardize efforts to combat HIV/AIDS but behaviour change among the general public,” Jacques Sindayigaya, coordinator of the HIV programme for the NGO, Handicap International. “Many disabled people are sexually active and this situation does not exclude them from having unprotected sex.”

Breaking silence on menstruation

Ministers, grassroots and international organizations, businesses, and school girls and boys on Friday (March 26) led a national march and discussion to kick-off the year-long campaign called “Breaking the Silence on Menstruation.”

The goal of the campaign is to encourage a dialogue on the taboo subject of menstruation and issues surrounding it so that resources, namely health and hygiene education and affordable sanitary pads, can be more widely available.

Currently, millions of girls and women in Rwanda and other countries miss school or work, up to 50 days per year, because sanitary pads are too expensive.

UN observes global day of remembrance for genocide victims

Securing justice for the victims of genocide and preventing future atrocities are the best ways to honor the hundreds of thousands of people slaughtered in Rwanda 16 years ago, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stressed on Wednesday, as the UN observes a global day of remembrance for the tragedy.

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