

Delegation Named to Funeral of Ethiopian Prime Minister

President Obama announced in late August that UN Ambassador Susan Rice would lead the American delegation to the State Funeral of Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi on September 2. Meles died on August 20.

Obama spoke with Acting Ethiopian Prime Hailemariam Desalegn on August 23, conveying condolences to the people of Ethiopia for the country's loss and encouraging a continued partnership between the two nations in pursuit of development, democracy, human rights and regional security.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton also issued a statement of condolence upon the prime minister's death. Other members of the funeral delegation were U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia Donald Booth; Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Johnnie Carson; and Gayle Smith, Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director of the National Security staff.

Horn of Africa Refugees Flow Across Perilous Seas at Record-Setting Pace

The flow of refugees and migrants from the Horn of Africa across the perilous high seas to Yemen hit a record total of more than 63,800 in the first seven months of the year, according to a late-August report from UNHCR.

The January to July figure was up 30 per cent over the 48,700 recorded in the same period for 2011, which was itself a record year for crossings. Last year, more than 103,000 refugees and migrants crossed the Gulf of Aden or the Red Sea on smugglers boats, the highest total since 2006 when UNHCR started collecting data on this route.

Once data for August is compiled, another spike in arrivals in Yemen is expected. Migrants who go to Yemen in the hope of reaching the Gulf states, usually try to depart during the fasting month of Ramadan because they think patrols on the border between Yemen and Saudi Arabia are more lax during

this time.

Meanwhile, the figures for this year show a significant change in the composition of those making the crossing, with more Ethiopians risking the trip with help from smugglers operating along the shores of Somalia and Djibouti. More than 51,000 have crossed this year.

In previous years, Somali refugees have constituted between a quarter and a third of all arrivals to Yemen, but from January to July this year only one-in-six of those arriving were Somali nationals, who are automatically recognized as refugees in neighboring countries due to the turmoil in their homeland.

A UNHCR spokesperson said the refugee agency's "primary concern is for those fleeing conflict and persecution and who are forced to resort to any available means to reach safety in neighboring countries—in this case, meaning taking

[Continued on page 4]

Deferred Deportation Initiative Prompts Action by Young Hopefuls

As the Department of Homeland Security began accepting applications in mid-August for deferred deportation from unauthorized immigrants who were brought to the United States as children, thousands of hopeful people lined up at USCIS offices across the nation seeking access to an Obama Administration initiative that could affect as many as 1.76 million people under the age of 31.

Reporting on the response from Chicago, New York Times reporter Julia Preston described how people began lining up Tuesday evening at Navy Pier for a counseling session about the program that was organized by an immigrants' rights group.

"By midmorning Wednesday, the line wound down the long pier, through a park and along an expressway, with young people holding sheafs of documents that they hoped would prove that they qualified for the program," she

wrote. "By noon, event organizers said, 11,500 people had attended briefings, and more than 2,000 people had been turned away because there was not enough time or staff to deal with them."

While the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) initiative does not provide lawful status or a pathway to permanent residence or citizenship, individuals whose cases are deferred as part of this process will not be removed from the United States for a two-year period, subject to renewal, and may also apply for employment authorization, according to a USCIS statement.

"USCIS has developed a rigorous review process for deferred action requests under guidelines issued by Secretary Napolitano," said USCIS Director Alejandro Mayorkas. "Childhood arrivals who meet the guidelines and whose cases are deferred will now be able to live without fear of removal, and be able

to more fully contribute their talents to our great nation."

An estimated 1.26 million of the 1.76 million potential beneficiaries are 15 or older and thus immediately meet the age requirement to apply for deferred action, according to a comprehensive Fact Sheet prepared by the Migration Policy Institute. Titled "Relief from Deportation: Demographic Profile of the DREAMers Potentially Eligible under the Deferred Action Policy," the MPI document indicates that nearly three in four (or 1.3 million) prospective beneficiaries were born in Mexico or Central America. Another 11 percent (more than 180,000) came from the rest of Latin America, 9 percent (about 170,000) from Asia and 6 percent (about 110,000) from other parts of the world. (The "DREAMers" term, MPI explains, is a reference to the Development, Relief, and Education for

[Continued on page 2]

In My Opinion...

“The Essential Thing”

Altogether too soon did the uplifting and hopeful scenes of the London Olympic games give way to the more mundane and depressing images of conflict that are commonly the focus of media attention. Replacing the celebrations of unity amid diversity on display during the opening and closing ceremonies as teams from 204 countries gathered in the Olympic stadium have been reports of refugees fleeing fear and abuse, too often simply *because* of their differences in nationality, faith or culture. Instead of watching strong and gifted athletes competing to be faster, higher and stronger, we read about weak and “different” young people being bullied into despair and desperation. Yet many of the highlights of the 30th Olympiad will long endure, some as historic changes in national cultures, others as memorable examples of individual courage and triumph. Both were evident in the first ever



Tsehaye Teferra, Ph.D.
President, ECDC

participation of women athletes from Saudi Arabia, if not signaling a long overdue change in that country’s treatment of women, most surely a courageous act by track runner Sarah Attar and judo contestant Wojdan Shaherkhani.

Thanks to their bravery and the support of the International Olympic Committee and human rights organizations, all countries participating in the Olympics included women as part of their delegations, wrote Eman Al Nafjan of The Guardian newspaper.

Few of us will ever forget the bravery and courage of “Blade Runner” Oscar Pistorius, the South African double-amputee who participated in the men’s 400 meter race and as a member of the nation’s 4 x 400 relay team. Described as “the fastest man on no legs,” he has developed his physical and mental strengths to such a degree that some competitors have charged that his carbon fiber prostheses give him an unfair advantage over able-bodied runners. He is also participating in the 2012 Summer Paralympics, entered in the 100, 200 and 400 meter races, events for which he already holds world records.

Of particular interest to me was the participation of Lopez Lomong, one of the “Lost Boys of Sudan” who “has been running and defying odds nearly all of his life, according to a profile on CNN’s *African Voices*. His experience in running began not as a sport but as a matter of survival when he escaped a prison with other captive children when he was only six years old. After spending ten years in an African refugee camp, he was among some 4,000 of the “Lost Boys” resettled in America in 2001. He was adopted by a family in upstate New York, where he went to high school and first started thinking of running as a career.

He became a U.S. citizen in July 2007 and one year later he made the national Olympics team and was chosen by his fellow athletes to be the flag bearer for Team USA. In the Beijing Olympics, he ran in the 1,500-meter race but failed to make the finals. He again qualified for the 2012 games in London and advanced to the 5,000-meter finals, finishing in 10th place. He has established a foundation to help people in South Sudan. He has written a book, called *Running for My Life: One Lost Boy’s Journey from the Killing Fields of Sudan to the Olympic Games*. He wants to share his inspiring story with the world so that people know where he comes from and understand why he is running, says the CNN profile.

What Attar and Shaherkhani, Lomong and Pistorius, and all of the other Olympians remind us of is the challenge and goals expressed in the Olympic Creed: “The most important thing in the Olympic Games is not to win but to take part, just as the most important thing in life is not the triumph but the struggle. The essential thing is not to have conquered but to have fought well.”

‘DREAMers’ Respond Promptly to Apply for Deferred Deportation

[Continued from page 1]

Alien Minors (DREAM Act), which has been introduced in Congress in various forms since 2001.)

MPI also estimates that 58 percent of the prospective beneficiaries ages 15 and older are in the labor force. “Beyond the relief from deportation, the grant of a work authorization document to those who can demonstrate an economic necessity is likely to improve their chances for decent employment conditions and wages, especially for those who have higher levels of education,” said Doris Meissner, who directs MPI’s U.S. Immigration Policy program.

About 80,000 of the potentially eligible beneficiaries have an associate’s degree or higher. Among that group, 44 percent have a bachelor’s degree and another 8 percent hold an advanced degree.

Prepared by Jeanne Batalova and Michelle Mittelstadt, the Fact Sheet is available at: www.migrationpolicy.org.

Ten ICE Agents File Lawsuit To Stop Differed Deportation

A lawsuit funded by Numbers USA and led by Kris Kobach, the Kansas secretary of state and an informal adviser to Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney, was filed in a Dallas Federal court in mid-August seeking to stop implementation of the deferred deportation initiative.

Filed on behalf of ten Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents, the suit claims that the Obama administration initiative forces them to break the law by not arresting certain illegal immigrants, according to press reports.

Numbers USA is a Virginia-based organization which advocates for lower immigration rates. Kobach is credited with playing a significant role in drafting the strict anti-immigration laws in Arizona and Alabama and serves as legal counsel with the Immigration Law Reform Institute.

Former Congo Refugee Treks Through Europe on Behalf of Refugees

John Mpaliza recently passed through Geneva, a third of the way through an epic walk across Europe to draw attention to the hundreds of thousands of people displaced by conflict in eastern Congo, which he himself left almost two decades ago.

The charismatic 40-year-old, accompanied by fellow walkers, reached Geneva, headquarters of the UN refugee agency in late August after setting out from the northern Italian city of Reggio Emilia on July 29. He met senior officials of the refugee agency's Africa Bureau to discuss his walk and learn more about UNHCR's work.

Mpaliza, an information technology expert who works for the municipality in Reggio Emilia, trained for months in preparation for the 1,000-mile journey, which took him to the northern Italian cities of Milan and Turin, before crossing the Alps to the French lakeside town of Annecy and then up to Geneva.

He will now pass through Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands before ending his mission late September in Brussels, where he hopes to meet officials of major international institutions, including the European Union.

He travels about 40 miles a day, stopping to spread

awareness among officials and the public about the political situation and the continuing violence and suffering in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, where hundreds of thousands of people are forcibly displaced almost a decade after the civil war officially ended. Mpaliza is calling for a lasting solution. But he and his companions are also having fun in between the walking,

speeches and meetings.

Along the route they have put on performances, attracting artists, dance troupes, intellectuals, writers, students, refugees and curious citizens. A documentary is being produced and the walk has been getting good media coverage.

Some people have joined the walk spontaneously, drawn by the enthusiasm of Mpaliza and his core group of supporters, including an Italian priest, Silvio Turazzi, who has been living for many years in Goma, capital of Congo's North Kivu province, where tens of

thousands of people have fled fighting this year between government troops and the M23 group of defectors.

Mpaliza was born in the South Kivu province, where security situation remains fragile and many have been displaced by fighting between armed groups. He fled Bukavu, at the age of 22 and ended up in Italy, where he has lived ever since.



John Mpaliza and some of his team at UNHCR building in Geneva.

Posing with adult counselors Konjit Edward and Philippos Melaku, center, are students who completed in mid-August an eight-lesson program sponsored by ECDC's African Community Center in Arlington. The MAMBO program address such issues as developing self-esteem, good health habits and social skills, communications, problem-solving, assertiveness and stress-management. Edwards is an ACC Refugee Family Enrichment Specialist and Melaku is a Youth Counselor with the Charles Barrett Recreation Center in Alexandria.



New Arrivals Surpass Capacity of Kenya's Camp Kakuma

With the arrival of more than 12,000 new refugees—most fleeing violence and conflict in the new nation of South Sudan—the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya surpassed its capacity of 100,000 residents in early August.

Significant numbers have also arrived this year from Burundi, Ethiopia, Somalia, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, according to a report from UNHCR's Emmanuel Nuyabera from the camp.

Guy Avognon, head of UNHCR's sub-office in Kakuma said he is concerned about possible tension between camp residents and members of the local community due to the limited water and other resources in the area. The provision of

life-saving assistance and important services is becoming increasingly difficult due to limited funding to cater for the growing population, particularly in the shelter, sanitation, education, and healthcare sectors.

"The sustained rate of new arrivals to the camp has already depleted all available land in the new settlement areas, and despite serious overcrowding in many parts of the camp, UNHCR and its partners are working to identify available space to settle new arrivals within existing settlements," Avognon said.

Unless new sources of water are identified, the boundaries of the camp cannot be extended further. Since the beginning of the year efforts to supply sufficient

quantities of clean, safe drinking water have become a critical challenge, with refugees now receiving less than the standard 5.2 gallons of water per person per day.

UNHCR's year-long discussions with the Kenyan government to establish a second camp have been futile, although a potential site has been identified some 20 miles from Kakuma. UNHCR is optimistic the discussions will be successful and additional land will be made available before the end of the year.

Refugee Flow to Yemen...

[Continued from page 1]

boats operated by smugglers."

Some of the Ethiopians who reach Yemen decide to seek asylum. Most cite a lack of prospects and a difficult economic situation. To avoid detention and deportation, they attempt to evade contact with the Yemeni authorities. Reports of serious abuses of Ethiopians at the hands of smugglers have been increasing.

"We are also seeing disturbing trends in the way that boat crossings are being done. In addition to growth in the number of daily boat departures to Yemen from Djibouti, the smuggling process has now become so organized that those deciding to make this dangerous journey are using established money transfer systems to pay smugglers rather than risk carrying cash, the spokesperson said.

The vast majority are crossing the Red Sea from Obock, Djibouti, with the remainder crossing the Gulf of Aden from Somaliland and Puntland.

HHS Announces Public Health Service Grants

To strengthen the nation's public health programs, HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius announced grants totaling \$46 million in late August.

Of that total, the Department of Health Resources and Services Administration is awarding \$23 million to 37 Public Health Training Centers to provide training to current and future public health workers in key public health issues such as nutrition and epidemiology, and to enhance the workforce's basic public health skills.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is providing \$25 million to support fellowship programs, similar to

medical residencies, and placement of fellows in state and local public health departments, as well as expanding training programs for existing public health workers, focusing on e-learning.

This includes funding for 227 new fellows in contract and field positions providing necessary screening services and community education, as well as critical assistance with ongoing public health challenges.

"These investments are part of our work to promote public health and they will help strengthen our efforts to fight disease and illness before they happen," Secretary Sebelius said.

FY 2011 African Refugee Admissions

As of July 31, 2012 • Ceiling for FY 2012 is 12,000

Country of Origin	Refugees	Country of Origin	Refugees
Burundi	145	Niger	4
Cameroon	1	Nigeria	2
Central African Republic	136	Rwanda	145
Chad	12	Senegal	5
Congo	98	Sierra Leone	1
Dem. Rep. Congo	1,477	Somalia	3,818
Eritrea	1,011	South Africa	1
Ethiopia	524	Sudan	867
Gabon	1	Tanzania	2
Gambia	2	Togo	26
Ivory Coast	33	Uganda	18
Kenya	13	Zimbabwe	1
Liberia	56	TOTAL	8,402

Source: U.S. Department of State, PRM

African Refugee NETWORK

Vol. 20, No. 5

August 2012

The African Refugee NETWORK is produced bimonthly by the ECDC Center for African Refugees and Immigrants (ECDC-CARI). Opinions presented do not necessarily reflect official viewpoints and you should not assume endorsement by ECDC. Material appearing in the newsletter may be reproduced with credit. For additional information, contact:

African Refugee NETWORK

901 S. Highland St • Arlington, VA 22204

Phone: (703) 685-0510 Fax: (703) 685-0529

Email: info@ecdc-cari.org

Website: www.ecdcus.org