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Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes in Africa



MEDIA MONITORING

19 August 2014

SECRETARY-GENERAL ANNOUNCES THIRD MEMBER OF CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC COMMISSION OF INQUIRY TO INVESTIGATE EVENTS SINCE 1 JANUARY 2013

The Security Council, in its resolution 2127(2013) of 5 December 2013, requested the Secretary-General to rapidly establish an international commission of inquiry for an initial period of one year, including experts in both international humanitarian law and human rights law, in order to immediately investigate reports of violations of international humanitarian law, international human rights law and abuses of human rights in the Central African Republic by all parties since 1 January 2013, to compile information, to help identify the perpetrators of such violations and abuses, point to their possible criminal responsibility and to help ensure that those responsible are held accountable. The Security Council called on all parties to cooperate fully with such a commission.

In January 2014, Mr. Bernard Acho Muna of Cameroon, Ms. Fatimata M'Baye of Mauritania and Mr. Jorge Castañeda of Mexico were appointed as members of the Commission. Mr. Muna serves as the Chairperson of the Commission. Mr. Philip G. Alston of Australia has been appointed as the third member of the Commission to succeed Mr. Jorge Castañeda who stepped down for personal reasons in March 2014.

Following the resignation of the third member of the Commissioner, Mr. Jorge Castañeda of Mexico, Mr. Philip G. Alston of Australia has been appointed as the third member of the Commission.

Mr. Alston is an international law scholar and human rights practitioner. He is John Norton Pomeroy Professor of Law at New York University School of Law, and co-Chair of the law school's its Center for Human Rights and Global Justice. In human rights law, Mr. Alston has held a range of senior United Nations appointments in the field of human rights for over two decades, including United Nations Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, a position he held from August 2004 to July 2010. Prof. Alston also served as an expert member

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on the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights from 1987 to 1991, and as its Chairperson from 1991 to 1998.

The Commission recently submitted a report on its preliminary findings to the Security Council (S/2014/373) and is expected to submit another report within one year of the adoption of the resolution 2127 of on 5 December 2013. The Commission is supported by a Secretariat based in Bangui, established by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Africa Leaders Urge UN to Help Relocate Rwandan Hutu Rebels

Source: VOA

By Sebastian Mhofu

August 18, 2014 - Leaders of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) want the United Nations to assist in removing members of a Rwandan rebel group from eastern Congo.

The 15-member bloc made the appeal at the end of a two-day summit in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe.

The leaders of southern African countries also resolved to speed up the industrialization of their countries to fight poverty.

They said the region was “generally peaceful and stable,” but appealed to the United Nations to help address the situation in the Great Lakes region.

The Democratic Republic of Congo, a Southern African Development Community member, is hoping to rid its eastern provinces of rebel groups that have kept the region in the grips of chaos and violence for years.

"On the Democratic Republic of Congo, [the] summit also called upon the United Nations in co-operation with the African Union, to play its role in repatriating the FDLR elements that have voluntarily surrendered and disarmed or provide them with temporary resettlement in third countries outside the Great Lakes Region," said Stergomena Lawrence-Tax, SADC executive secretary.

FDLR refers to the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda, a Rwandan Hutu rebel group, comprised in part of men who took part in Rwanda's genocide in 1994.

The region's leaders noted “humanitarian assistance and malnutrition still remain a challenge” and they endorsed a 10-year regional food and nutrition security strategy to improve food security.

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The leaders were silent on issues of human rights abuses and poverty, which civic organizations had wanted them to address at the summit.

ICGLR should not waste the opportunity to pacify region

Source: The New Times (Rwanda)

18 August 2014 - Over the last one month, the United Nations and Western capitals have expressed strong support for peace efforts in the Great Lakes Region of Africa.

The international community finally seems to be realising that the single most important factor behind the cycle of insecurity and human rights abuses that have dogged the Great Lakes region for the last two decades, shattering hopes and dreams of millions of civilians, is genocide ideology and those that represent it.

The flight into the Congo by thousands of militiamen responsible for the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda served as a launch pad for years of suffering, conflicts and tensions that have gripped the region, with varied levels of involvement by countries and other actors near and far.

The Congo became the battlefield with hundreds of thousands of ordinary Congolese and other ordinary folks bearing the brunt of ensuing high-level politicking and inaction that have characterised discussions about the active presence of a militia group whose cardinal objective is to complete the genocide it set in motion two decades ago.

To disguise its identity and hoodwink an unsuspecting and naive world, these genocidal forces have, over the years, adopted new names, sometimes baptising themselves with attractive names such as the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR).

Nonetheless, their mission and actions have remained chillingly intact, as they continued to recruit and indoctrinate underage fighters, who represent continuity in the eyes of their elderly genocidaires.

A few months ago, these terrorists, in a last-ditch effort to avoid military action by UN peacekeepers whose principal reason d'être was to dismantle FDLR, lied to the whole world that they had started voluntary disarmament, only to send a few dozens of frail and elderly fighters to assembly points.

Now the world seems to have realised it was being duped after all.

Indeed strong statements from international actors urging expedited military action to disarm the genocidal outfit are a welcome departure from usual indifference.

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For the last few years, regional leaders under the auspices of the International Conference for the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), have sought to pacify the Congo. Yet during last week's mini-summit in Luanda, Angola, the ICGLR made decisions that fell short of making the most of increased international goodwill to finally eliminate this inherently brutal genocidal militia.

FDLR has had 20 years to lay down arms and return home peacefully – indeed more than 11,000 combatants have denounced the genocidal ideology and returned home and have since been re-integrated in society.

Those that remain in the Congo preying on ordinary folks do not need more time, but to be forcibly dismantled as soon as yesterday, as allowing them to buy time is playing in their hands and endangering the lives of all those in their vicinity.

Japan to boost effort to reform UNSC

Source: NHK (Japan)

18 August 2014 - Japan will increase its effort to join the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council ahead of the 70th anniversary of the UN's foundation next year.

Japan, Brazil, Germany and India have been aiming to gain permanent membership. In 2005, they played a central role in compiling a draft resolution calling for the council membership to be expanded.

But their attempt failed due to lack of support among UN member states. Since then, no major campaign has emerged to reform the council.

Now Japan plans to collaborate with the 3 nations again to revive the reform bid. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe will speak at the UN General Assembly next month in New York to stress the need to reform the council.

The 4 countries will also hold a meeting of their foreign ministers to confirm their cooperation.

The adoption of any council reform resolution requires support from two thirds or more of the UN member nations.

Japan will seek to work with African countries, which are also urging the council be reformed.

Tokyo will also seek support from Caribbean nations that Abe visited late last month.

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Obama Will Personally Chair U.N. Security Council Meeting

Source: Think Progress (US).

By Hayes Brown

18 August 2014 - President Barack Obama will preside over a meeting of the United Nations Security Council during his attendance of the U.N.'s annual General Assembly, ThinkProgress has learned, marking the second time in history that a U.S. president has done so.

The last time the U.S. was president of the Council during the weeklong opening of the U.N. General Assembly (UNGA) was 2009, the year that President Obama assumed office. Then the meeting was convened to discuss the spread of nuclear weapons and material, and Obama's presence ensured it was a widely attended event that led to the unanimous passage of a resolution meant to strengthen safeguards against nuclear proliferation. According to a draft schedule for this year's UNGA week, seen by ThinkProgress, the current plan is to have President Obama take advantage of the Council's presidency once again, this time to discuss counterterrorism.

Specifically the meeting will cover the phenomenon of foreign fighters travelling to conflict zones and joining terrorist organizations, as seen in the surge in foreigners joining ranks with such groups as Jabhat al-Nusra in Syria. "Certainly the problem of terrorists traveling to foreign conflicts is not new, but the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters has become even more acute," a U.S. Mission to the U.N. official told ThinkProgress when asked about the meeting. "The internet and social media have given terrorist groups unprecedented new ways to promote their hateful ideology and inspire recruits. The conflicts in Syria and Iraq have highlighted this threat, with an estimated 12,000 foreign terrorist fighters joining that conflict."

Currently the plan is to have a U.S.-drafted resolution to address the phenomenon negotiated and ready to pass during the September meeting. During the last time Obama chaired the Council, the leaders of Russia, the United Kingdom, France, and China — the other permanent members of the Council — were all in attendance. This time, the audience is not guaranteed to be quite so lustrous. France's mission to the United Nations told ThinkProgress that French president Francois Hollande should be attending the General Assembly but would not confirm whether he would be attending the Security Council meeting. A spokesperson for the British mission said that plans were still being finalized for that week, but "will take into account" President Obama chairing the meeting. Neither China nor Russia's missions responded to queries from ThinkProgress, but Russian president Vladimir Putin has proven himself an infrequent attendee at the annual General Assembly meeting.

Every month, the presidency of the Security Council rotates between the 15 member body, giving them the chance to set the agenda and lead meetings of the body. September, the next time that the U.S. is slated to hold the gavel, is also when the General Assembly — which comprises all 193 member-states — holds its annual meeting at U.N. headquarters. World leaders and other

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high-level dignitaries flock to New York and diplomatic meetings on the sidelines often produce results, including last year when the U.S. and Iran spoke direct at the highest level since 1979. Obama's presence will make the upcoming meeting the first Head of Government-level Security Council session since 2009.

"When President Obama first chaired a Security Council meeting, the question of the US relationship with the organization was much more salient than it is today," David Bosco, an assistant professor at American University and author of a book on the workings of the Security Council, told ThinkProgress in an email. "Obama's first time in the chair was an opportunity to very visibly distance himself from what was perceived—not always fairly—as the hostility of the Bush administration to the UN's work. The US/UN relationship has now become much less fraught. There are plenty of frictions, but there's no sense of hostility from Washington."

Richard Gowan, associate director at New York University's Center for International Cooperation, agreed that Obama's first time at the U.N. was a success, noting that the president "didn't just chair the Security Council but gave an expansive speech to the General Assembly about common interests and convened a special meeting with other leaders on UN peacekeeping." While this drew a line under the Bush years, Gowan continued in his email to ThinkProgress, "this was a prelude to repeated multilateral setbacks like the 2009 Copenhagen climate summit mess, the Syrian horror story and the South Sudan debacle."

"Counterterrorism is a smart topic for a top-level Security Council debate," Gowan wrote, pointing to the fact that such disparate Council members as France, China, Nigeria, and Russia would all want to discuss the issue because of their relationship with Mali, worries over the Xinjiang province, the rise of Boko Haram, and unrest in the Caucasus respectively.

"But there may be blowback too," Gowan cautioned. "This being the UN, someone inside or outside the Council will equate Israel's behaviour in Gaza with terrorism. The Russians may well talk about the 'terrorists' that overthrew the government in Kiev, while Western governments could push back and accuse Russia of supporting terrorists in eastern Ukraine. Perhaps everyone will be on good behaviour and show President Obama due deference, but at a minimum there will be a lot of barely-suppressed political tensions around the Security Council table."

FDLR : un défi inextricable !

Source: Le Potentiel (DRC)

16 août 2014 - A regarder les choses de près, les Forces démocratiques pour la libération du Rwanda (FDLR) apparaissent en fait comme un défi, à tout le moins, inextricable. Aussi bien pour le gouvernement de la République que pour la Monusco.

Et même s'il n'en serait pas tellement le cas, les ex-rebelles hutus rwandais n'en donnent pas moins l'impression de continuer soit à défier soit à narguer les deux parties, engagées depuis

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quelques temps dans le processus de désarmement ou de reddition des ex-combattants rwandais.

Tellement qu'ils ne s'en laissent pratiquement pas conter, ces derniers font tout pour ne pas se mettre au pas. Et depuis lors, la rengaine semble leur porter bonheur : de fois, par des subterfuges qu'ils manipulent tant bien que mal, ces ex-rebelles sont quand même parvenus à repousser les différents ultimatums qui leur avaient été donnés non seulement par les autorités du pays, mais aussi par la force onusienne. Et de fois, c'est à coups de « montages » sous forme de prétextes ou d'exigences, ou même d'alibis, qu'ils le faisaient, pour gagner du temps.

En fin de compte, ni la reddition de ces combattants, pourtant annoncée, ni leur transfert, du Sud-Kivu notamment, vers le camp de transit à Kisangani, rien de tout cela n'a connu un début d'exécution. Peut-être un timide commencement qui n'a vécu que l'espace d'un matin...

Dans tous les cas, on s'attendait à ce que l'on avait déjà considéré comme un départ manqué. Un départ qui ne semble pas avoir tenu ses promesses. Du moins jusque-là. Et s'il y a lieu de se poser une quelconque question quant à l'évolution de la situation des FDLR sur place, il faut noter, et souligner en même temps, que ce groupe armé vient, par la voix de son président intérimaire, de radicaliser sa position officielle : pas question, pour les ex-combattants FDLR, regroupés au camp de transit de la Monusco de Kanyabayonga, au Nord-Kivu, en partance pour la ville de Kisangani, de quitter ce site. Mêmement pour ceux du Sud-Kivu.

La hiérarchie des FDLR, qui a livré cette information à la presse, n'a donné aucune raison justifiant la radicalisation de leurs positions pour un désarmement volontaire conformément aux engagements pris devant la communauté internationale.

Il faudra rappeler que c'est seulement 200 combattants qui se sont présentés au programme de reddition sur les quelque 1.500 éléments qui constituent à ce jour cette force. Il y a deux semaines, Victor Biringiro, le président a.i. des FDLR, avait posé la question de savoir comment « ses hommes iront à Kisangani, là où tout le monde est contre leur arrivée au chef-lieu de la Province Orientale... »

Tout compte fait, l'on se trouve devant un défi de taille. Par quel bout va-t-on prendre la suite du processus de désarmement ou de délocalisation des FDLR ? La question reste posée...

Les Fdlr demandent à la Monusco de « peser sur le Rwanda » pour « retourner directement faire la politique chez eux »

Source : Le Potentiel (DRC)

18 août 2014 - Le chef de bureau de la Monusco à l'Est de la RD Congo a dévoilé le week-end dernier à Goma que les Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (Fdlr) ont demandé à la

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mission onusienne de « peser sur le Rwanda afin qu'ils retournent directement faire la politique chez eux ».

« La Monusco a dépensé, depuis le 30 mai 2014, plus d'un million de dollars pour les Fdlr qui se sont fait désarmer. Quand les Fdlr demandent (à la Monusco) de peser sur le Rwanda afin qu'ils retournent directement faire la politique chez eux, c'est une chose qui ne figure pas dans les missions de la Monusco », a déclaré Ray Virgilio Torres à Radio Kivu1, le vendredi 15 août 2014.

Il a insisté sur le fait que « la Monusco ne négocie pas avec les groupes armés, le rôle de la Monusco est de les désarmer ».

Refus d'être considéré comme « des prisonniers de guerre »

Selon Radio Kivu 1, « le commissaire à l'Information et porte-parole des Fdlr, La Forge-Fils Bazeye, accuse certains officiels de la Monusco de tenter de saboter le processus de leur désarmement volontaire ».

« Ces combattants Hutus-Rwandais exigent que la communauté internationale les aide à retourner chez eux et commencer une lutte politique. La forge-Fils Bazeye, qui s'est refusé de citer un nom des officiels qui veulent +saboter+ leur désarmement en transformant ce processus en +reddition+, a insisté sur leur refus de se faire déplacer à Kisangani comme +des prisonniers de guerre+ », souligne-t-elle.

C'est depuis ce « refus des Fdlr de rejoindre le camp de transit érigé à Kisangani » en province Orientale par la Monusco avec l'autorisation du gouvernement de la RDC « pour les accueillir avec leurs dépendants dans le cadre de leur désarmement » que les partenaires au processus de Désarmement, démobilisation, rapatriement, réintégration et réinstallation (DDRRR) se disent « déçus ».

« Nous n'irons pas à Kisangani, nous allons rester ici (Kanyabayonga) où nous sommes. Nous avons exprimé au gouvernement rd- congolais notre volonté de désarmer. Pourquoi il veut nous traiter comme des petits enfants alors que nous avons à faire avec le gouvernement rwandais ? », a déclaré à Xinhua un haut cadre des Fflr.

« Ce refus est une violation manifeste de la volonté exprimée par les même combattants à mettre fin à la lutte armée. C'est quelque chose de très important parce que s'il n'y a pas des mouvements de Kanyabayonga vers Kisangani. Il ne peut pas y avoir d'autres combattants qui rendront leurs armes et ça sera la lutte armée », a répliqué le chef de bureau de la Monusco à l'Est de la RDC, Ray Virgilio Torres.

Depuis juin dernier, environ 200 combattants Fdlr et 400 de leurs dépendants vivent à Kanyabayonga (Nord-Kivu). Leur délocalisation vers la ville de Kisangani a été vivement rejetée par la population et des Ong locales.

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« La délocalisation des FDLR n'est pas négociable », a réagi le porte-parole du gouvernement rd-congolais, le ministre des Médias Lambert Mende qui s'est rendu récemment à Kisangani à cet effet.

A en croire l'analyste politique Pascal Cikuru, chercheur dans la région des Grands Lacs, « le désarmement des FDLR est un problème complexe, l'engagement du Rwanda dans ce processus est très important ».

« Tant que le Rwanda classera ces rebelles comme des génocidaires, il n'y aura pas la paix durable dans cette région. Le Rwanda a le devoir d'ouvrir un dialogue de réconciliation avec les Fdlr, comme la RDC a fait avec les rebelles du Mouvement du 23 mars (M23) », a-t-il recommandé.

Les chefs d'Etat et de gouvernement des pays membres de la Conférence internationale sur la région des Grands Lacs (CIRGL), réunis à deux reprises à Luanda en Angola (25 mars et 14 août 2014), ont accordé ont adressé aux Fdlr un ultimatum de « désarmer pour ne pas être désarmés avec la force au 31 décembre 2014) ».

Congo rebel leader accuses government of executions

Source: dpa Deutsche Presse-Agentur GmbH

Kigali, 18 August 2014 - A leader of the disbanded Congolese M23 rebel movement on Monday accused the government of having ordered summary executions of about 100 of its combatants captured during the country's 2012-13 conflict.

The accusation threatens to undermine a peace deal signed last year, with rebels now saying they will not implement its terms.

Observers say the charge could ignite fresh fighting between M23 fighters and President Joseph Kabila's government.

Bertrand Bisiimwa said the fighters were executed in prisons between July and August 2014, and that the killings are ongoing.

Some of the executed had headed military units in Goma and other eastern towns, Bisiimwa said in the Ugandan capital, Kampala.

A Congolese army spokesman in Goma declined to comment.

Short for the Movement of March 23, the group was formed in early 2012 when nearly 300 Congolese soldiers turned against the government, citing poor conditions in the army and

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accusing it of reneging on a 2009 peace deal with the National Congress for the Defence of the People, a militia active in the east of the country.

Many M23 members are Tutsis with links to the Rwandan government, headed by Tutsi President Paul Kagame. Rwanda has been accused of playing a part in the unrest in Congo over the years, a charge it denies.

In late 2013, the Congolese army defeated M23 with the backing a United Nations intervention brigade and a peace deal was signed, foreseeing an amnesty for the rebels and their integration into the army.

Ex-rebels accuse DR Congo army of executing PoWs

Source: AFP

Kinshasa, 18 August 2014 - Former rebels beaten last November by government and UN troops in the Democratic Republic of Congo on Monday accused the army of executing 10 prisoners of war.

"We are completely distressed, stunned, frustrated" to learn of "the summary execution of the prisoners of war by the DRC's military intelligence service in Kinshasa ... between the months of July and August 2014," political chief, Bertrand Bisimwa, of the Movement of March 23 (M23) said in a statement.

The government has denied the allegation.

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SA to champion peace, security in Africa again

Source: SABC

Monday 18 August 2014 - Government says the respect and confidence that SADC accords to South Africa and its abilities to mediate in conflict situation have once again led to its election to lead the SADC Troika on Defence Politics and Security.

Pretoria has officially been appointed to chair the all-important organ of the regional body for next 12 months. This has been confirmed at the SADC Summit which ends at the Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe on Monday evening.

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Lesotho was scheduled to take over the leadership of the security organ from Namibia, but because of Lesotho's internal political upheavals, SADC has handed the post to South Africa. Lesotho's Foreign Affairs Minister, Mohlabi Tsekoa, says it was a unanimous decision.

South Africa is once again given the responsibility to champion peace and security on the continent. Previously it had succeeded in its mediation role in Zimbabwe - a country that is stable and now given the responsibility to chair the SADC region.

It has also been instrumental in finding solution to troubles in some parts of the Great Lakes Region with the latest being having to help in disarming the last remaining rebel group in the eastern DRC - the FDLR which participated in the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

The 34th Session of the SADC Summit in Zimbabwe has unanimously elected South Africa to lead the troika.

International Relations Minister, Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, says an overwhelming decision by SADC leaders to allow South Africa to lead the region's all-important organ is a testimony of the respect that regional body accords the country.

Nkoana-Mashabane says they are humbled by this election - insisting that they will continue to champion South Africa's agenda on foreign policy.

Mugabe snipes at Zuma over SADC trade protocol

Source: Mail & Guardian

18 August 2014 - Robert Mugabe has said Jacob Zuma should cooperate with other SADC countries instead of trying to turn the region into a market for SA's products.

South African President Jacob Zuma and Namibian President Hifikepuye Pohamba declined to sign the Protocol on Trade in Services at the close of the SADC summit in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, on Sunday despite regional heads putting pressure on them during deliberations.

Zuma, elected chairperson of the SADC troika on politics, defence and security during the summit, was immediately criticised by SADC chairperson President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe.

Mugabe said Zuma should cooperate with other countries instead of seeking to turn the region into a market for South Africa's products.

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3 000 DRC sex victims in 6 months

Source: AFP via News24

Kinshasa, 18 August 2014 - A medical group working in the restive east of the Democratic Republic of Congo reported on Monday that there were nearly 3 000 victims of sexual violence in the region during the first half of this year.

Heal Africa, which works with victims, mostly women, in the North Kivu and Maniema provinces, said it had identified 2 829 survivors of sexual violence and had treated 1 573 of them since January.

The group, which runs a hospital in the North Kivu capital of Goma specialising in treating sexual assault victims, said many of the women had been raped and had come to them for medical care and treatment to prevent HIV infection.

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Policymakers seek investors for fragile African states

Source: Oxford Analytica (UK)

18 August 2014

Africa hosts most of the states categorised as fragile, conflict-affected and violent (FCV) within the policy frameworks of major development institutions. FCV countries and areas are often most in need of economic revitalisation, yet struggle to attract investment precisely because of their instability. The global development agenda increasingly prioritises FCV themes, and encourages engagement with the private sector in meeting development goals. There is subsequently greater focus on public policy initiatives to encourage private investment in areas of perceived high conflict risk.

Impact

- Donor attention has continued shifting from a focus on post-conflict areas to the wider category of fragile states.
- Institutional 'fragile state' lists and criteria will remain problematic; listed states get more donor attention but less investor interest.
- Such lists remain blunt investment analysis tools: some parts of 'non-fragile' African states are more unstable than parts of listed states.

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What**next**

Development policymakers will emphasise the design of novel financial arrangements that might encourage private investment in FCV areas. Yet such policy tools are unlikely to attract or reassure many reputable firms across sectors, while some firms will tend to operate in these areas regardless of whether official support is available. The potential for major projects to become catalysts of instability will undermine the prevailing policy assumption that promoting new investment activity helps reduce fragility.

Analysis

Africa accounts for just over half (18 of 32) of states or territories on the World Bank's current 'Harmonised List of Fragile Situations'. Those listed either fall below a certain low average score (3.2) on the Bank's 16-criterion Country Policy and Institutional Assessment framework, or have hosted a United Nations and/or regional peace mission in the past three years (the Bank frequently acknowledges the limitations of these classifications).

Special treatment

No FCV-affected country has achieved any of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). Recognition of the particular needs within MDG areas has led both to a greater emphasis on FCV issues within development activity and debate generally, and to special development assistance practices tailored to the peculiar problems seen as common to the otherwise very diverse FCV countries.

A manifestation of this trend came in 2010, when 19 FCV countries formed the G7+ group. This led to the 2011 'New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States' under the rubric of the global aid effectiveness conferences.

Supporting the private sector

The assumption that investment will provide a 'peace dividend' is often misplaced

FCV-affected countries are hardly vacuums of private, for-profit enterprise. Many formal actors -- local and foreign -- have found ways to manage risk in some sectors. However, donors are showing interest in engaging larger foreign firms in meeting job-creation and other policy objectives in FCV countries, including by developing the local, smaller-scale, private sector.

This interest comes partly from the experience of donors and multilateral agencies in post-conflict settings over the past two decades. This has persuaded them that political peace and conflict prevention initiatives are only viable where accompanied by economic growth that provides people with a tangible form of 'peace dividend'. This is consistent with wider policy moves towards engaging business in the development agenda more generally.

Yet policymakers must attract foreign investment to FCV situations before they can contemplate engaging business in developmental activities. Consensus suggests the principal policy challenge

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is to provide solutions for the problems firms tend to encounter in approaching high-risk settings, in particular the costs of borrowing and insuring for proposed projects.

The April high-level summit on global partnerships for effective development cooperation emphasised encouraging donors, governments and firms to explore innovative public-private finance, export credit and guarantee mechanisms that help incentivise investment by "sharing risks while maximising financial returns alongside development impact." Such statements themselves illustrate the challenge of finding approaches that combine such ideals.

Promoting private investment

Competition for strategic resources and donors' greater focus on the potential development impact of private business activity is likely to increase the profile -- in donors' suites of FCV assistance measures -- of state-backed development finance and insurance mechanisms.

In African settings the International Finance Corporation (IFC) will remain a key 'anchor' partner for such initiatives. In the last ten years it has increased its FCV-country activities, which now account for over 5% of total IFC investment financing and about 15% of advisory spending. In FCV projects it has displayed flexibility with its normal investment criteria. Its portfolio performance is similar to comparable IFC projects in non-FCV countries.

Systematic disincentives

FCV states face market-based regulation that will limit investment

Policy measures for incentivising investment in more peripheral or conflict-risky areas may help to ensure some projects go ahead. However, as a class, FCV countries face parallel market-based regulations which produce strong disincentives to greater investment flow.

The high risk rating almost inevitably ascribed to such markets in the internal risk management and external regulatory compliance procedures of major private sector lending institutions will remain a major inhibitor of generalised increased investment in FCV states.

In particular, given the raft of money laundering, terrorist financing and other regulations and filters that apply -- at least in Western financial centres -- it is difficult to conceive of a measure that could enable local banks in FCV countries to contribute to local business growth by tapping into the global financial system.

Linking fragility and economic activity

Initiatives aiming to foster investment in fragile states and areas belie the paucity of success stories and the difficulty of such interventions. Moreover, the underlying premise is based on an assumption that under-investment is part of the reason for the fragility of FCV areas, along with related unemployment and lack of economic opportunities. This is not necessarily well-founded.

The prevailing approach thus assumes that FCV areas need injections of economic activity and that this will mitigate conflict and foster greater social cohesion. Yet the causes of fragility and

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violence are highly complex and context-specific. Even where supported by public organisations and with careful attention to social impact issues, new major investment activity can often serve to raise the stakes of pre-existing conflicts and so exacerbate, not reduce, conflict drivers.

An investment moratorium?

Acknowledgement of the potential negative link between new economic activity and conflict risk, and the preparedness of some firms to operate in high-risk settings, has prompted some (mainly academic) observers to argue that a temporary official foreign investment moratorium might somehow and sometimes be declared in some areas of exceptional fragility.

However, any blanket moratorium might offend the New Deal prescription for greater local control over FCV development. It would also require considerable political consensus: most states will remain wary of creating any precedent for external multilateral measures that constrain sovereign control over the nature and pace of economic and investment activity.

3,000 victims of sexual violence in two DRC provinces: charity

Source: Agence France Presse

Kinshasa, 18 August 2014 - A medical group working in the restive east of the Democratic Republic of Congo reported Monday that there were nearly 3,000 victims of sexual violence in the region during the first half of this year.

Heal Africa, which works with victims, mostly women, in the North Kivu and Maniema provinces, said it had identified 2,829 survivors of sexual violence and had treated 1,573 of them since January.

The group, which runs a hospital in the North Kivu capital of Goma specialising in treating sexual assault victims, said many of the women had been raped and had come to them for medical care and treatment to prevent HIV infection.

The violence had been carried out both by "armed men and civilians," Heal Africa said in a statement.

Spokesman Ferdinand Mugisho said the group had not been able to help all the women included in their figures because some lived "too far away, and others are prevented from coming by their families if their injuries are not too serious."

North Kivu has long been a zone of intense conflict between rival armed groups, with fighting over its mineral resources and its proximity to an unstable border.

Heal Africa's Dr Jonathan Kasereka Muhindo Lusi, who took part in a recent summit in London that sought to draw attention to the problem of sexual violence around the world, called for more to be done to bring those responsible to justice.

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"Our legal system partners should increase their efforts in the fight against sexual violence as it is deplorable that out of 440 cases followed by our legal clinics, only 98 judgements were delivered in two provinces," he said.

In the past, non-governmental organisations and the United Nations have accused Congolese rebels, foreign fighters and army soldiers of committing sex attacks on the local population.

At the end of April diplomats at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva said that while the DR Congo had made strides in ridding the country of rampant sexual violence, more needed to be done.

The London summit in June saw representatives from 123 countries and the Hollywood actress Angelina Jolie meet to discuss sexual violence in conflict zones around the world.

US Secretary of State John Kerry said it was time to banish sexual violence "to the dark ages and history books where it belongs".

Al Bashir to chair Sudan's National Dialogue

Source: Radio Dabanga

Khartoum, 18 August 2014 - The National Dialogue Committee on Saturday officially announced its roadmap. The Committee has identified 50 "prominent national figures" to participate in the dialogue. It selected President Omar Al Bashir to chair the dialogue.

Assistant to the President, Dr Ibrahim Ghandour, stressed at a press conference held at the Friendship Hall on Saturday that the National Dialogue will "definitely start, and will not wait for anyone".

"The dialogue will be convened in Khartoum, and will not wait for any signatories from abroad", Ghandour said, referring to the Paris Declaration signed between the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF, an alliance of the main rebel movements) and the National Umma Party.

The National Dialogue Committee, known as 7+7, consists of seven government and seven opposition parties. The roadmap, endorsed by the Committee, does not include an agreement on the 2015 elections. The Committee was divided on the issue, and referred it to the National Dialogue conference that will take place within the next two days.

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