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



MEDIA MONITORING

8 August 2014

UN Envoy: Security in eastern Congo much improved

Source: Associated Press

United Nations, August 07, 2014 - The top U.N. envoy in Congo says security in the eastern part of the country has vastly improved in the last year but conflict persists and the situation is still fragile.

Martin Kobler told the U.N. Security Council on Thursday that in August 2013, the M23 rebel group was "knocking at the gates" of Goma, the biggest city in the east, and attacks by other rebel groups were on the rise.

Today, he said, the M23 "is no more" and a Uganda-based rebel group is "a shadow of its former self."

Kobler said the U.N. peacekeeping mission's top priority now is to end the fighting by the estimated 1,500 remaining combatants from the FDLR, which was formed by extremist Rwandan Hutus who took part in the 1994 Rwanda genocide.

UN tells D. R. Congo rebels to disarm or face military action

Source: AFP World News

United Nations, United States, Aug 07, 2014 - The UN mission chief in the Democratic Republic of Congo on Thursday warned the last remaining rebel group in the east to lay down arms or face military action.

The FDLR, a Rwandan Hutu militia that includes perpetrators of the 1994 genocide of Tutsis, has been given a six-month deadline to disarm and to hand over those wanted for war crimes, Martin Kobler told the UN Security Council.

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"To the FDLR: Seize this last opportunity and move forward with this process. All combatants, including leaders, must disarm now," said Kobler.

"I suggest joint military actions against those FDLR factions not willing to disarm."

Disarming the FDLR, of which only 1,500 combatants remain, took on added urgency following the defeat of the mainly Tutsi M23 rebels in the eastern DR Congo late last year.

FDLR military commander Sylvestre Mudacumura is wanted by the International Criminal Court for war crimes, including torture, in connection with a murderous rampage in North and South Kivu in 2009 and 2010.

In May, the Kinshasa government presented a plan to resettle the remaining FDLR fighters outside the country, giving them 22 days to turn up at two camps from where they were to be taken to a third site for their relocation.

A total of 186 combatants and 430 dependents took the government's offer but the plan has since stalled.

Several UN, Kinshasa and other regional envoys have sought to convince the FDLR leaders to move forward, but they are refusing to give the order to move to the third site, according to Kobler.

- Slow progress -

Angolan Defence Minister Joao Manuel Goncalves Lourenco, whose country wields influence in the region, said he was "concerned by the slow progress of the voluntary surrender of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda."

Angola is due to host a summit next week that is expected to see leaders decide on a tougher stance to disarm the FDLR.

The US special envoy to Africa's Great Lakes region, Russ Feingold, called for flushing out the FDLR during a US-Africa summit in Washington this week.

Feingold said the United States believes there is "no justification" for the FDLR's demand for a political negotiation, and that the group should demobilize "no later than the end of the year."

Two FDLR leaders, Ignace Murwanashyaka and his deputy Straton Musoni, went on trial in Germany in 2011, charged with mass killings and rape in the eastern DR Congo. A verdict has yet to be handed down.

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China calls for support for common development in Great Lakes region

Source: Xinhua

Editor: Gao Yinan Bianji

8 August 2014 - The international community should help the countries in the Great Lakes region to realize common development, a Chinese envoy to the United Nations said Thursday.

"The Great Lake region is endowed with rich resources and an enormous development potential," Liu Jieyi, China's permanent representative to the UN told a Security Council meeting, noting that the international community should concretely help the countries in the region to realize development and resolve conflict root causes, such as poverty.

Liu said that since the beginning of this year, the situation in eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has experienced continued improvement, with the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Eastern DRC and the Region gradually implemented.

Africa's Great Lakes sub-region has been plagued by decades of political instability and armed conflicts, porous borders and humanitarian crisis, along with tensions over natural resources and other destabilizing factors.

In February 2013, the UN-brokered accord, the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework was reached, with the aim to bring peace and stability to the eastern DRC and the region.

"At present, the Great Lake region has a good opportunity to put an end to its long-term turmoil," he said.

To help the region achieve sustainable peace, stability and development, Liu said that the international community should also stick to the common security of the region, and policy of cooperation for win-win.

"In the Great Lakes region, the international community should encourage countries concerned to resolve their differences and disputes through dialogues and consultations," he said.

The envoy said China attaches great importance to its tie with Africa and firmly supports the continent to resolve its issues through its own ways. "We will implement the Initiative on China-Africa Cooperative Partnership for Peace and Security in an in- depth manner and increase our support for the construction of collective security mechanism in Africa," he said.

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U.N: Military threat key to push FDLR rebels in Congo to disarm

Source: Reuters World Service

Reporting by Michelle Nichols; Editing by Jonathan Oatis

United Nations, August 7 - Rwandan rebels in Democratic Republic of Congo believe an extended deadline to disarm allows them to stall, a top U.N. official said on Thursday, suggesting military action against factions which do not comply or commit human rights abuses.

Rwandan FDLR rebels, who seek to overthrow the Rwandan government and who include former soldiers and Hutu militia held responsible for Rwanda's 1994 genocide, announced in April they would disarm, and some began doing so in May.

The Congolese government presented a 22-day plan for the group to disarm in May, but since then, the United Nations said, only 186 rebels have voluntarily disarmed out an estimated 1,500. So, African nations agreed in early July to extend for six months the deadline for the FDLR to disarm.

"The FDLR interpreted this decision as a call to stall the process," the U.N. special envoy to Congo, Martin Kobler, told the U.N. Security Council. "In addition, the perceived absence of military pressure has thrown the process into a freezer."

He said FDLR leaders have largely ignored U.N. and Congolese attempts to persuade the group to continue disarming, describing it as "a serious sign of non-cooperation."

"Experience has shown that only a combination of political and military pressure has led to disarmament and demobilization," Kobler told the Security Council.

Congolese Foreign Minister Raymond Tshibanda told the council that after the extension of the disarmament deadline, Congolese authorities had made clear to the FDLR that "the military option was still on the table and it could take place at any time if their behavior ... lacked credibility."

Kobler said the United Nations, which has a 22,000-strong peacekeeping force in the country, and the Congolese government need to agree on criteria for assessing the disarmament process and what action to take if compliance was insufficient.

Kobler's suggestions included assessing the number and quality of surrendering combatants, immediate cessation of human rights violations, disengagement from illicit economic activities and an end to recruitment.

"Meanwhile, I suggest joint military action against those FDLR factions not willing to disarm and act against those who continue to commit human rights violations," he said.

The U.N. peacekeeping mission received a boost last year with the unprecedented deployments of unarmed surveillance drones and a U.N. Intervention Brigade of 3,000 troops, which helped Congolese forces defeat the M23 rebel group.

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Rwanda's U.N. ambassador, Eugene Gasana, said "military pressure seems to be the only viable option" for disarming the FDLR. "Despite its claims of readiness to disarm, the FDLR continues to recruit and train combatants, including children," he said.

The U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Samantha Power, backed Kobler's suggestion, saying military pressure on the FDLR should not be suspended during the demobilization process.

"Given the FDLR's track record of committing atrocities at the same time that it claims to be demobilizing, this would put even more innocent civilians at risk and undercut broader efforts to establish peace and stability," Power said.

FDLR finally gets the message: TIME IS UP

Source: New Times (Rwanda)

7 August 2014 - THE SUN could finally set on the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) militia and usher in a new era of hope and peace for the population of Eastern DRC.

The international community has in the past decade or so made little attempts to fully deal with the menace, and the little threats they made were just that, threats. They were not accompanied by any meaningful attempts to act on them.

The inaction emboldened the FDLR to the extent that they carved a niche in the Congolese society, and in some places, supplanted local authorities. They were free to mete out terror on the local population despite the presence of over 20,000 UN peacekeepers.

Now, if the stern message from the US Special Envoy to the Great Lakes Region is something to write home about, FDLR and its godfathers should by now be dancing the final serenade. The no-nonsense ultimatum by Ambassador Russ Feingold could be the best thing the population in eastern DRC has heard in a long time.

Monusco, the UN peacekeeping force in the Congo, had in the past given lame excuses as to why they could not go after the militia. It will be interesting to see how the force will deal with the latest chapter; will it bite the hand that feeds it?

UN mission in D. R. Congo denounces acquittal of top army officer without probe

Text of report by DR Congo's UN-sponsored Radio Okapi on 6 August

[Presenter] Regarding the acquittal and reinstatement of Maj-Gen Gabriel Amisi Kumba, better known as Tango Fort, the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the DR Congo [Monusco] has denounced the fact that no judicial investigation has been opened against the Congolese army

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officer. Scott Campbell, in charge of human rights issues at the UN Mission in DR Congo said it on Wednesday 6 August during the UN weekly press conference simultaneously held in Goma and Kinshasa through video conference.

[Campbell] Monusco noted that on 1 August, the higher defence council acquitted and reinstated Gen Amisi Kumba back in office. It will be recalled that following his suspension in February 2013, the UN wrote to the DR Congo government about the need to initiate forensic investigations on allegations of grave violations of human rights and the international humanitarian law, which Gen Amisi Kumba is allegedly involved in either directly or indirectly in his capacity as army commander. This also includes serious human rights violations committed in Kisangani, Orientale Province in May 2002 and which were the subject of two public reports addressed to the UN Security Council in July 2002 and February 2003. So Monusco is worried by the fact that up-to-date no forensic investigations has been opened against Gen Amisi Kumba.

[Presenter] It will be recalled that Maj-Gen Gabriel Amisi Kumba was suspended in 2012 following charges contained in a report by UN experts. He was accused of selling and illegally trafficking weapons with armed groups. On 1 August, he was acquitted by the superior defence council of DR Congo's commission due to alleged lack of evidence.

DRC, Rwanda to delimit common border

Source: APA via StarAfrica.com

7 August 2014 - The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Rwanda, have agreed to demarcate their common land border at the end of a three-day meeting of experts from 4 to 6 August in Goma, source told APA on Thursday.

The two parties also decided to put in place a joint technical team to identify the boundary stones starting from stone 6 to stone 22, based on the data from the draft agreement signed on June 25, 1911 between Belgium and Germany, the two colonizing powers of the DRC and Rwanda, respectively.

The joint technical team, whose mission is expected to run from 25 to 30 August, will use a location form, GPS data based on the three-meter WGS 84 reference and pictures of the stone, the source said citing the minutes of the Goma meeting.

The team will also have compasses, GPS navigation receptors, digital cameras, as well as vehicles, the source added.

Another source contacted by APA revealed that only five of the 22 boundary stones have so far been identified.

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US congressmen write to Obama over Kony

Source: New Vision (Uganda)

By David Lumu and Raymond Baguma

7 August 2014 - 76 members of the U.S House of Representatives have forwarded a letter to US President Barack Obama expressing their continued support for the country's efforts aimed at ending the violence perpetuated by the Joseph Kony led Lord's Resistance Army.

The letter was sent to Obama on August 1, days before the first-ever U.S-Africa summit where 50 heads of state from the second largest continent discussed critical issues, including security and trade.

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Congo's Presidential Entourage Investigated for Beating Protesters in U.S.

Source: Time

By: Michael Scherer

The incident was allegedly captured on video and posted on YouTube

The U.S. State Department has taken steps to seek the prosecution of a members of the President of the Democratic Republic of Congo's entourage, who were allegedly captured on video Thursday beating a protester in the streets of Washington, D.C.

A video posted on YouTube shows a man in a dark suit kicking the head of a protester as he lays on the ground near a member of D.C.'s Metropolitan Police Department, who appeared to be trying to defuse the situation.

[Learn more here>>](#)

Update on sanctions related to the Democratic Republic of the Congo

By: Hogan Lovells

Jeanne s. Archibald, Anthony V. Capobianco, Lourdes Catrain, Alexei Dudko, Aleksandar Dukic and Ajay Kuntamukkala

6 August 2014 - In response to recent violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the United States has taken steps to expand the sanctions that were initially imposed against

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targeted persons in the DRC in October 2006. While these sanctions do not target the geographic territory (i.e., the DRC as a whole is not subject to sanctions), they do prohibit transactions with certain designated persons. These actions reflect the continued trend of the U.S. government to utilize such measures to penalize actors contributing to severe instability and violence.

[Learn more>>](#)

Rwanda : le nouveau PM présente les priorités de son gouvernement

Source : Xinhua

5 August 2014 - Augmenter les exportations agricoles traditionnelles (café, thé, pyrèthre) de 10% chaque année et non traditionnelles (fruits, légumes, fleurs) de 30%, accroître la fabrication de 12% annuellement, faire vivre 30% de la population en ville, tels sont des objectifs que le nouveau Premier ministre rwandais Anastase Murekezi s'est fixé.

En présentant lundi au Parlement les priorités de son gouvernement pour les trois années à venir, M. Murekezi a promis que le gouvernement faciliterait l'accès des agriculteurs aux prêts en faisant passer de 4% à 18% le pourcentage des prêts accordés aux projets agricoles.

La contribution du secteur industriel au PIB devrait être augmentée de 15% à 20%, a-t-il affirmé.

L'objectif du gouvernement pour la production d'électricité, selon M. Murekezi, est d'atteindre 563 MW d'ici trois, contre 119 MW d'aujourd'hui.

Trois routes macadamisées seront construites pour relier les différentes provinces et certain nombre d'autres routes seront rénovées.

Le Premier ministre rwandais a aussi promis de réduire le taux de mortalité maternelle et infantile.

Il a souligné que tous ces objectifs ont été établis dans le cadre "Vision 2020", qui vise à faire du Rwanda un pays à revenu moyen en faisant passer le PIB de 644 à 1.240 USD en 2020.

Central African Republic: French Troops Kill Ex-Seleka Militiamen

Source: RFI via AllAfrica.com

5 August 2014 - Ex-Seleka members were killed during gunfights with French troops on Monday.

French troops of Operation Sangaris killed several ex-Seleka militiamen in Batangafo in the North of the Central African Republic, on Monday.

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The incident took place when French troops came under fire from the former rebel group when they entered Batangafo, a city located about 300 kilometres north of the capital Bangui.

The gun battle lasted for hours, according to a member of the African peacekeeping force (MISCA).

Several ex-Seleka were killed, and many were injured. Two MISCA peacekeepers from the Democratic Republic of the Congo died. The French troops suffered no casualties.

The ex-Seleka forces denounced the confrontation as a "violation of the ceasefire established in Brazzaville".

On July 23rd an agreement between the Muslim-majority ex-Seleka, and the anti-balaka, led by Christians was reached in Brazzaville, and a ceasefire was declared.

On Wednesday last week at least 22 people were killed during renewed fighting between the different armed groups in the country.

South Sudan on the brink of humanitarian tragedy: UN official

Source: Sudan Tribune

Juba, 7 August 2014 - A senior United Nations official has told the Security Council that South Sudan is on the brink of humanitarian catastrophe, calling for international pressure on the country's warring parties to end the almost eight-month-long conflict.

The deputy U.N. peacekeeping chief Edmond Mulet on Wednesday briefed the Security Council on the situation in South Sudan after a recent surge in violence between the government and rebel forces in Upper Nile and Northern Bahr el-Ghazal states, and the resumption of the slow moving peace talks in Addis Ababa.

"After three years of independence, South Sudan is on the brink of a humanitarian catastrophe and a protracted internal conflict," Mulet told the 15-member body.

"This is a man-made crisis, and those responsible for it have been slow in resolving it. Both sides continue to believe that they can achieve more through the pursuit of a military option," he stressed.

He further said the humanitarian operation in South Sudan is now "constitutes the biggest aid operation inside any single country", adding the funding however falls short in comparison with the needs.

UN agencies estimate that some 3.9 million persons are facing alarming levels of food insecurity. The violence which erupted in December 2013, displaced 1.1 million people as 434,000 fled to the neighbouring countries.

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Over 50,000 children are at risk of dying as a consequence of acute malnutrition while 115 people died from cholera in the recent weeks as the epidemic disease continues to grow, with more than 5,300 cases.

CALL FOR INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE

The UN assistant secretary-general for peacekeeping operations, on the other hand told the Council members that the parties in the peace talks which resumed on 4 August, are now discussing the implementation of the cessation of hostilities agreement.

“There is an urgent need for the international community to speak with one voice to incentivise the parties on a meaningful participation in the peace talks, but more importantly, caution them with one voice on the consequences of impeding the peace process as well as on the futility of pursuing the military option,” he stressed.

Mullet said a peace agreement must be reached without further delay on how to end the conflict and engage in the reconciliation process.

He also said that all the UN institutions and member states implicated in the implementation of the four objectives included in the new mandate of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) as per resolution no 2155 (2014).

On 29 May, the Security Council extended the UNMISS mandate for another year and tasked the peacekeeping mission with the protection of civilians, promotion of human rights and accountability, facilitation of humanitarian assistance, and support for the cessation of hostilities.

MAN-MADE SITUATION

A South Sudanese civil society entity described the humanitarian situation in the country as "man-made", saying it strongly welcomes the UN official position on the matter.

"The delay in reaching a peace deal for settling the current political crisis in the country is mainly caused by the warring parties of South Sudan. They are mainly interested in negotiating for political gains at the expense of the suffering population," Community Empowerment for Progress Organisation (CEPO) said in a statement issued Thursday.

"IGAD should push for an end to the peace talks without delays for the sake our citizens, mostly women, children and the elderly persons in the country," it added.

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IGAD leaders prepare to take action against S. Sudan rivals

Source: Sudan Tribune

Addis Ababa, 7 August 2014 - Leaders from the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) are due to meet soon in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, to decide on what specific measures should be taken against South Sudan's rival factions.

IGAD leaders held a consultative meeting with US secretary of state John Kerry in Washington on Tuesday to discuss the current situation in South Sudan.

The meeting, which was held on the side lines of the US-African leaders' summit in Washington, was attended by the presidents of Ethiopia, Djibouti, Kenya and Uganda.

IGAD, the regional bloc mediating the two warring parties, has given both factions a 10 August deadline to agree on a transitional government and implement ceasefire agreements.

The South Sudanese government and rebel forces loyal to former vice-president Riek Machar have been engaged in an armed struggle since mid-December last year when a political split in the ruling SPLM turned violent.

The fifth round of peace talks got underway in Addis Ababa on Monday in a bid to end the almost eight-month-long conflict in the world's youngest nation.

However, Machar's SPLM in Opposition failed to show up at the talks, instead demanding direct negotiations with the government.

The rebel faction has called for peace talks to be restricted to the two parties directly involved, saying other stakeholders, including former political detainees, civil society organisations and faith-based groups should only participate in a consultative manner.

During the meeting with Kerry, IGAD chairperson and Ethiopian prime minister Hailemariam Desalegn said that there was unanimous agreement among regional mediators that the war in South Sudan "must end and must end now".

He further warned the region would take strong and punitive action immediately after convening the next meeting of IGAD heads of state and government, due to be held in Addis Ababa soon.

Desalegn has accused rebel forces of violating the ceasefire agreement signed by both sides in January and recommitted to in May.

At the opening of talks on Monday, the head of South Sudan's government delegation, Nhial Deng Nhial, also accused rebels of launching fresh attacks.

"Riek Machar and the SPLM/A in Opposition should not waste any more time over military campaigns," said Nhial.

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He called upon the IGAD to take punitive measures against the side which violates the cessation of hostilities agreement.

During Tuesday's meeting, Kerry said the United States was fully supportive of the IGAD-led proposal aimed at ending the crisis.

He also pledged his government's strong commitment to averting further human suffering, saying "the threat of starvation for 50,000 children, the continued threat to life, the tribal series of attacks on both sides, were all simply unacceptable".

Kerry said United Nations Security Council (UNSC) would send a delegation to South Sudan next week to "underline that there is no other alternative than the IGAD plan that is now on the table".

He also lauded IGAD's initiative to find an African solution to the political crisis in South Sudan.

Since the conflict in South Sudan erupted in December last year, tens of thousands of people have been killed since the conflict erupted, while more than 1.5 million people have been displaced from their homes.

International aid organisations have described the humanitarian situation in South Sudan as one of the worst on a global scale, warning of an imminent outbreak of famine if fighting continues.

Central African leader appeals for ceasefire as talks open in Congo

Source: Reuters via defenceWeb

6 August 2014 - Central African Republic's interim president appealed on Monday to Muslim Seleka rebels and 'anti-balaka' Christian militia to agree a ceasefire at the start of talks in the neighbouring Congo Republic.

The three-day forum in Brazzaville, mediated by Congolese President Denis Sassou Nguesso, aims to reach terms for a halt to hostilities and disarmament but will not address negotiations for a longer-term peace deal in the former French colony.

"This forum which opens today is a major step in the political dialogue and reconciliation between the sons and daughters of Central African Republic," Interim President Catherine Samba Panza said at the opening of the talks.

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