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



MEDIA MONITORING

28 April 2015

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Processus électoral : face-à-face opposition-Céni

Source: Agence d'Information d'Afrique centrale (<http://adiac-congo.com/content/processus-electoral-face-face-opposition-ceni-31477>)

Par Jeannot Kayuba

Les échanges entre les deux parties n'ont permis aucune avancée significative.

27 Avril 2015 - Congo : le gouvernement interdit le port du voile par les musulmanes

Source: Xinhua

28 avril 2015 - Le gouvernement congolais a décidé d'interdire le port du voile par les musulmanes vivant au Congo, a appris Xinhua lundi à Brazzaville de source proche du ministère de l'Intérieur.

Le ministre congolais de l'intérieur Zéphirin Mboulou l'a fait savoir au président du Conseil islamique du Congo, El Hadj Dibril Abdoulaye Bopaka qui, à son tour, a relayé l'information aux imams du Congo.

Selon M. Bopaka, les musulmanes ont un délai de 15 jours pour s'exécuter.

Dans les lieux publics, les musulmanes pourront se couvrir uniquement la tête comme l'exige l'islam, et mettre leur voile, chez elles, à domicile.

Par ailleurs, il est désormais interdit de loger des musulmans dans les mosquées qui sont plutôt des lieux de prière.

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Ces mesures vont permettre aux autorités congolaises de mieux identifier les étrangers et les étrangères qui séjournent au Congo et prévenir d'éventuels actes terroristes sur fond d'afflux massif des réfugiés, notamment des Centrafricains installés surtout dans le Département de la Likouala (nord-est).

Le Congo est un pays à dominance chrétienne et les musulmans ne représentent que moins de 5% de la population.

News Analysis: DR Congo, UN mission in talks over cooperation in peacekeeping

Source: Xinhua

Kinshaha, 27 April 2015 - The Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo) and the UN Mission for Stabilization of Congo (MONUSCO) continued with their talks that began several weeks ago, to agree on the mode of cooperation between the UN peacekeepers and the Congolese army.

MONUSCO suspended its support for the Congolese army in operations to pursue the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) following the refusal by the Congolese government to meet its demand on suspension from the operation of generals Sikabwe Fall and Bruno Mandefu. The two commanders are suspected of having committed human rights violations in the past.

On Feb. 26, 2015, DR Congo's Foreign Minister Raymond Tshibanda said the UN was the first to suspend its support to the Congolese army. "It is after this that we responded," he said.

Speaking on March 11 this year, MONUSCO boss Martin Kobler admitted that "relations between the UN mission and the Congolese government were going through rough times."

The statement raised diverse interpretations, with a diplomatic source saying this pointed to a complete breakdown of relations between the peacekeepers and the Congolese army.

However, Kobler denied information that the two parties had ceased cooperating, adding that "the two parties were collaborating to track down Ugandan rebels, Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) in the east of the country."

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"Against the ADF, its real cooperation, nothing has so far changed," he affirmed when he addressed the press in Kinshasa.

The differences between the two sides were increased on March 26 when the UN Security Council meeting in New York voted to extend MONUSCO's mandate for one year until March 31, 2016 through Resolution 2211 of 2015.

In the resolution that was adopted unanimously, "the Council urged for cooperation between the Congolese government and MONUSCO in carrying out the operations, to ensure total neutralization of FDLR."

According to the Resolution, only 2,000 peacekeepers were to be withdrawn from this UN mission, yet DR Congo government had called for withdrawal of at least 5,000 peacekeepers.

The UN peacekeeping mission in DR Congo remains the largest in the world, with its current figure standing at 20,000 officers and an annual budget of 1.4 billion U.S. dollars.

However, the Resolution gave the Security Council a window for ordering further reductions of the officers, although this was preconditioned on the mission helping to "stabilize and democratize the country."

One of the proposals that angered Kinshasa was that of withdrawal of UN's rapid intervention brigade of 3,000 officers which has been the backbone of the UN force.

Due to disagreements over several issues, the UN mission and Congolese authorities opened negotiations in Kinshasa, attended by high ranking officials from both sides.

The strategic dialogue over the future of UN mission saw DR Congo's Foreign Minister Tshabanda meeting with UN's Under- Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Herve Ladsous, who made an official visit to Kinshasa on April 22, 2015.

Speaking after the meeting, Ladsous said he had recommended that MONUSCO should implement Security Council's Resolution 2211.

"It is by doing this that we shall find a balance between MONUSCO's objectives set by the Security Council and the legitimate concerns of the Congolese government," he said, adding that "negotiations were still ongoing."

Asked about the reduction of MONUSCO numbers, Ladsous remained formal: "Everybody agrees on the need to reduce the number of MONUSCO soldiers, the question is to determine by how many."

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"The number of UN peacekeepers in DR Congo will be reduced without weakening the mission," he reiterated.

Although he expressed optimism for a positive outcome from the ongoing talks, the UN official warned that "the negotiations may take longer due to vested interests."

RDC: les leaders politiques oeuvrent pour la paix au Sud-Kivu

Source: RFI

27 Avril 2015 - C'est une initiative peu commune en République démocratique du Congo. Dans la région du Sud-Kivu, dans l'est du pays, les tensions sont récurrentes entre les différentes communautés ethniques, mais des leaders politiques ont décidé de dépasser ce conflit latent. Sous l'égide de l'ONG Initiative pour un leadership cohésif, ils ont entrepris un voyage dans toute la région à la rencontre de ces communautés. Une idée née il y a près de dix ans, mais qui n'a pris forme que cette année.

"On a attendu patiemment des années qu'une dynamique revienne et que tout le monde se rende compte que rien n'avait avancé ici," Michel Nourredine Kassa coordinateur de cette initiative

Congo-Kinshasa: Elections provinciales - Les candidats ne se bousculent pas à Kinshasa

Source: RFI

27 Avril 2015 - Lancée depuis plus d'une semaine, l'opération de dépôt des candidatures pour les élections provinciales se poursuit timidement à Kinshasa.

Les candidats ne s'empressent pas. Au bureau de réception et de traitement des candidatures de la place YMCA à la commune de Kalamu par exemple, la première candidature a été enregistrée dimanche 26 avril.

Le premier dossier déposé dimanche à Kalamu est celui d'un membre du parti Républicain chrétien (PARC), une formation politique membre de la Majorité présidentielle. Il a fallu attendre onze jours après le lancement de l'opération de dépôt des candidatures pour voir le dossier enregistré sous le numéro oo1 dans ce bureau de la Place YMCA.

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«Dans ce bureau, on n'a pas trouvé un autre dossier avant nous. Nous sommes le premier à déposer. PARC était organisé pour ça. Je pense que c'est ce que les autres partis sont en train de faire. A partir de demain, il y aura certainement un deuxième dossier, un troisième dossier et ainsi de suite», explique Arthur Sedea, le président du PARC.

D'après les agents de la Ceni trouvés sur place, les partis politiques se sont attelés les dix premiers jours de cette opération à retirer les formulaires des candidatures.

«Tout ce que je peux dire par expérience, les Congolais aiment arriver en retard et se bousculer à la fin. Je pense que la Ceni sera en mesure d'accueillir tout le monde dans de bonnes conditions», espère Arthur Sedea.

A neuf jours de la clôture du dépôt des candidatures, de nombreux partis politiques de l'opposition continuent de conditionner leur participation aux élections provinciales, municipales et locales.

Ils posent un certain nombre de préalables notamment: le réaménagement du calendrier électoral, le décaissement des fonds nécessaires pour organiser les élections et une enquête internationale et indépendante sur l'affaire fosse commune de Maluku.

Le Congrès national congolais, un parti de la Majorité présidentielle, avait qualifié cette demande d'anticonstitutionnelle et d'anti-démocratique estimant que le calendrier électoral est une prérogative exclusive de la Ceni.

Nord-Kivu : une maladie non identifiée fait environ 576 cas

Source: Radio Okapi

Par Lucien Dianzenza

L'affection qui s'apparente, selon des sources sanitaires, au paludisme a comme signes cliniques de fortes fièvres et l'anémie.

27 Avril 2015 - Radio Okapi qui a donné l'information a indiqué que cette maladie s'apparente au paludisme et a fait environ cinq cent soixante-seize cas, en quatre mois, dans la zone de santé de Kayna, territoire de Lubero, au Nord-Kivu. Mais, la radio onusienne n'a pas pu donner le nombre de personnes déjà décédées de cette affection, étant donné que ces chiffres ne lui ont pas été révélés.

La source a, par ailleurs, fait écho du cri d'alarme lancé par la société civile de ce coin de la province du Nord-Kivu, qui appelle les autorités sanitaires à enquêter le plus tôt

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possible sur cette maladie. À en croire ce média, la maladie a fait plus de cas dans les localités de Nunama, Kataro, Buhenge, Luofu et Lusuli qui vivent à côté des étangs piscicoles. Selon la société civile du groupement Tama et Itala cité par la radio onusienne, les centres de santé de Loufu et Miriki sont débordés vu le nombre de malades. Par conséquent, certaines familles préfèrent se déplacer dans d'autres contrées pour faire soigner leurs membres ou proches.

Armed Men from Uganda Reported in DRC

Source: VOA

27 April 2015 - Authorities in the Democratic Republic of Congo say armed men have crossed into the country from Uganda and set up bases in Beni territory. A local community leader told VOA they may be Congolese rebels, part of the same movement reported to have crossed the Rwandan border into the DRC last week.

An official in Beni territory told VOA he could confirm a report by civil society groups in Beni there has been an incursion of armed men from Uganda entering the territory since last week.

Teddy Kataliko, president of Beni's civil society group, said the latest information he has is that since April 21, more than 300 men have crossed into the DRC from the Kasese and Bundibugyo districts in Uganda.

He said 280 of these armed men crossed the frontier via the Ruwenzori mountain range and the Kalehaleha locality before arriving at a former base of the Ugandan rebel group ADF, at Mumbiri, where they set up camp.

Another smaller group of armed men has also crossed the Ruwenzori from Uganda via Kalindera, and then headed for the Semliki valley to the south, near the confluence of the Nzelube and Semliki rivers, according to Kataliko.

He suggested they are probably former members of the M23, a rebel movement consisting mainly of Kinyarwanda speakers from Congo and Rwanda that was launched in 2012 and finally driven out of the country in late 2013. He said local witnesses reported the armed men took off their Ugandan uniforms at Mumbiri and entered the forest dressed in civilian clothing.

Another group of about 100 armed men, said by the Congolese government to be Rwandan troops, crossed into the DRC last week from Rwanda, and exchanged fire

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with Congolese troops in Nyiragongo territory near the North Kivu provincial capital, Goma. One Congolese soldier was lightly wounded.

Rwandan authorities have denied their troops crossed into Congo, with Rwanda's deputy ambassador to the United Nations describing the allegation as "baloney."

The governor of North Kivu, Julien Paluku, last Friday linked the incursion to what he said is an attempt by the M23 to relaunch their movement under a new name, the Christian Movement for the Reconstruction of the Congo (MCRC).

The U.N. stabilization mission in Congo has confirmed armed men in military uniform crossed into the country from Rwanda last week.

Local radio reports the Congolese army has deployed combat patrols to the villages in Beni territory where the armed infiltrators were sighted, with orders to defend the country against all foreign forces.

Congo: le gouvernement interdit le port du voile par les musulmanes

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Ces mesures vont permettre aux autorités congolaises de mieux identifier les étrangers et les étrangères qui séjournent au Congo et prévenir d'éventuels actes terroristes sur fond d'afflux massif des réfugiés, notamment des Centrafricains installés surtout dans le Département de la Likouala (nord-est).

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Le Congo est un pays à dominance chrétienne et les musulmans ne représentent que moins de 5% de la population.

Etats Généraux of the Justice System in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Please click here to read this report: <http://www.hrw.org/news/2015/04/27/etats-generaux-justice-system-democratic-republic-congo>

BURUNDI

Hundreds march in Burundi against president's bid for third term

Source: Reuters World Service

By Patrick Nduwimana (Writing by Edith Honan; Editing by Andrew Heavens)

Bujumbura, 28 April 2015 - Hundreds of people marched in the outskirts of Burundi's capital on Tuesday in a third day of protests against President Pierre Nkurunziza's decision to run for a third term, a move critics say violates the constitution and a key peace deal.

Crowds started gathering early in the morning, chanting: "We accepted the first term for Nkurunziza, we have also accepted the second one, but we will never accept the third one."

Nkurunziza's announcement on Saturday that he would run in the June 26 elections has triggered the worst political crisis in the east African country since it emerged from civil war a decade ago.

Activists say he is breaking two-term limits set out in constitution and the Arusha peace agreement that ended the war and has been credited with containing Burundi's ethnic rifts.

The president's supporters say his first term does not count as he was picked by lawmakers, not elected. Nkurunziza's spokesman has called the protests an "insurrection."

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Burundi's civil war pitted the army, then dominated by the ethnic Tutsi minority, against rebel groups mostly made up of majority Hutus, one of them led by Nkurunziza. The army now includes both ethnic groups.

The prospect of a fresh build-up of ethnic strife will sound alarm bells across a region still scarred by the 1994 genocide in Burundi's neighbor Rwanda, where more than 800,000 people were killed, most of them Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

Authorities say more than 20,000 people have fled from Burundi to Rwanda, and thousands more over the border to the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Burundi authorities shut down main independent radio station

Source: AFP World News

27 April 2015 - Authorities in Burundi on Monday shut down the central African nation's main independent radio station following an upsurge in protests over a bid by the president to stay in office for a third term, the station said.

"The radio is off the air after a decision by the authorities," said Gilbert Niyonkuru, head of programming at the influential African Public Radio (RPA), which has for months been reporting on government intimidation of opponents.

EAC should defuse violence in Burundi

Source: Daily Nation (Kenya)

27 April 2015 - The violence that has rocked Burundi since Sunday as opposition activists protest at the ruling party's declaration that President Pierre Nkurunziza will run for a third term is worrying.

Unless checked, the protests may escalate into full-blown civil strife and throw Burundi back to the path of self-destruction. Even before the violence broke out, there were reports that more than 11,000 Burundians had fled to neighbouring Rwanda.

Burundi, like Rwanda, has a long history of political violence, which reached monstrous proportions in 1994 when thousands of people were killed. The two countries have since become stable and have embarked on the path towards economic growth and political maturity.

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However, the violence that has erupted in Burundi illustrates that the peace that has prevailed is only skin-deep and that it can take just a small trigger to set the country on fire.

FEEL BETRAYED

The people feel betrayed and that their constitution is being bastardised. The constitution decrees that a president only serve for two terms, a provision in all modern states to guard against longevity and the strongman syndrome that has been the bane of Africa's leadership.

In seeking a third term, President Nkurunziza is opening a Pandora's Box.

He is creating an environment for chaos as citizens' resort to militancy to create the change that they cannot achieve through the law.

Burundi's neighbours, who are fellow members of the East African Community, should intervene to forestall mayhem in that nation and in the region.

If need be, the international community should also come in. Pressure must be brought to bear on President Nkurunziza to respect the law and save his country from the path of immolation. The era of tin gods is long gone; the wishes of the people must be respected.

Number of Burundian refugees soar to 20,000

Source: The New Times (Rwanda)

27 April 2015 - Some Rwandans have approached the Rwandan Embassy in Burundi seeking papers to facilitate their return home following the unrest that has for the past few weeks rocked the country, according to the diplomatic mission.

Speaking to The New Times, yesterday, Rwanda's ambassador to Burundi, Amandin Rugira, said Rwandans mainly approached the embassy ahead of the congress by the ruling party CNDD/FDD, which convened on Saturday, and confirmed President Pierre Nkurunziza as its flag bearer.

"So far, we do not have any Rwandan case in trouble except some calls that have come through from people who need travel documents to be able to go to Rwanda," said Amb. Rugira.

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According to Rugira, there is an estimated 6,000 documented Rwandans living in Burundi.

Riots rocked the country, yesterday, with video footage showing police in running battles with rioters. A rioter and a police officer were shot dead, media reports said.

Refugees soar

Following the unrest that escalated over the weekend, the number of refugees that have crossed into Rwanda has since increased to over 20,000, according to the Ministry of Disaster Management and Refugee Affairs.

Fredric Nyawukuriyayo, the communications officer at the ministry, told this newspaper that by Saturday evening, they had registered over 17,700, while yesterday at least 3,000 new arrivals were reported in Bugesera District but the counting was still underway.

“On Saturday, 852 refugees were relocated from Nyanza and Bugesera to Mahama Camp in Kirehe District,” Ntawukuriyayo said.

Several top government officials met yesterday to consider how to manage the increasing refugee influx, he said, adding that the meeting was under the auspices of the national disaster management executive committee.

The national disaster management executive committee comprises the Ministries of Disaster Management and Refugee Affairs, Local Government, Health, Defence, Agriculture, East African Community (EAC) Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Infrastructure, and Finance, with the military and Police institutions joining in.

Refugee status

On Friday, government announced a decision granting the Burundian refugees a prima facie refugee status, citing standard procedure in case of massive refugee ‘invasions’ as per the Rwandan law relating to refugees and the 1951 Convention relating to refugees.

The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees is the key legal international document in defining who is a refugee, their rights and the legal obligations of states.

The Minister for Disaster Management and Refugee Affairs, Seraphine Mukantabana, said the decision to grant the Burundians prima facie status was taken considering the overwhelming number of Burundians who continue to trek into the country seeking refuge.

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The government and the UNHCR are reportedly increasing the capacity to evacuate big numbers from the transit centres to the new permanent base of Mahama, in Kirehe.

Mahama camp, which is on a 50-hectare surface, can accommodate 50,000 people, according to officials from the ministry.

It is located about 160 kilometres from the Rwanda-Burundi border.

Mukantabana said given the continuing influx, government asked partners such as UNHCR to be prepared should the numbers close to 50,000 which would be beyond Rwanda's holding capacity.

Martina Pomeroy, UNHCR-Rwanda external relations officer, on Saturday, said that given the nature of the current "emergency situation," contingency planning is not on the cards anymore.

"A contingency plan is really not the issue anymore. Now, it is about taking action," Pomeroy said.

Over 3,000 Burundian refugees have reportedly gone into the DR Congo.

Rwanda is already home to more than 73,000 Congolese refugees settled in five camps in various parts of the country.

Over 2,000 Burundian refugees registered in eastern DR Congo

Source: Radio Okapi (DRC)

27 April 2015

[Presenter] More than 2,800 Burundian refugees have been registered by the National Refugee Council in Uvira and Fizi territories in Sud Kivu Province, eastern DR Congo.

These people, who have been crossing the border since end of March, are said to be fleeing enforced recruitment into an alleged [Burundian] government militia. DR Congo border services continued to register them.

Fiston Ngoma Mayabala filed the following report.

[Mayabala] Uvira's territorial Security Council this morning met in a bid to come up with a contingency plan on the influx of Burundian citizens crossing the DR Congo border.

The police, migration services and other security services were advised to proceed to the registration of refugee at the border.

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The same services said that most of the refugees were children, women and young men who arrived with their luggage. The deputy head of repatriation operations at the national refugee council in Uvira said that more than 2,800 refugees had been registered since Friday [24 April]. Some of them who had travel documents and who came from Bubanza and Tshibikote provinces in Burundi were located in the Ruzizi plain. Others who came from Makamba, Bururi, Nyanza Lac, crossed Lake Tanganyika in dugout canoes to reach Fizi territory.

Our source said the Burundian refugees mentioned fear and insecurity ahead of the elections in their country, as well as the enforced enrolment into a Burundi government militia. After registration operations, other arrangements could be considered by the UNHCR [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees] and the DR Congo government, said Frederick Salumu, a national refugee council official in Uvira.

Burundi : le climat de tensions se poursuit

Source: Agence d'Information d'Afrique centrale (<http://www.adiac-congo.com/content/burundi-le-climat-de-tensions-se-poursuit-31450>)

Par Nestor N'Gampoula

27 Avril 2015 - Depuis l'annonce de la candidature de Pierre Nkurunziza pour un troisième mandat à l'élection présidentielle de juin prochain, le climat politique reste tendu dans le pays. L'opposition et la société civile qui jugent que cette candidature va à l'encontre de la Constitution ont appelé à manifester de manière discontinue dès dimanche.

Cette situation a conduit les Burundais qui se sentent menacés par Imbonerakure - les membres de la ligue des jeunes du parti au pouvoir -, à quitter leur pays par crainte de violence pour se réfugier dans les États voisins et principalement au Rwanda voisin. Le Haut-commissariat aux réfugiés indique que leur nombre ne cesse d'augmenter. Il est passé de 500 au début du mois d'avril à 17 000 aujourd'hui rien que pour ceux qui se sont rendus au Rwanda alors même que ce pays accueille déjà près de 75 000 réfugiés congolais.

Tant à Bujumbura que dans d'autres villes du pays, la population craint une répétition des violences de la part des Imbonerakure. Ces jeunes sont accusés par l'ONU d'être une milice qui multiplie des intimidations et exactions à l'approche des élections. Ils ne cachent d'ailleurs pas leur intention d'en découdre si l'on empêchait leur candidat de se représenter. Et selon des témoins, avant même l'annonce de la candidature du

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président sortant, ces jeunes du parti au pouvoir chantaient « on va voter pour Pierre Nkurunziza ; Pierre Nkurunziza est notre candidat ». Ils ont même annoncé sa victoire à la présidentielle du 26 juin.

Les grandes manifestations qui ont lieu à Bujumbura la capitale se sont déjà soldées par la mort de manifestants. Selon des sources concordantes, deux personnes ont été tuées par balle dimanche lors des heurts entre la police et les opposants à la candidature du président sortant pour un troisième mandat. L'opposition déplore « des mesures musclées pour mater des manifestations qui étaient pacifiques ».

Sur le plan des médias, les émetteurs relais des trois principales radios indépendantes burundaises, accusées de pousser la population « au soulèvement », ont déjà été coupés par les autorités. Ce qui empêche la réception des émissions en province.

D'après l'accord de paix signé par les leaders politiques burundais en 2000 à Arusha, en Tanzanie, aucun président ne doit diriger le pays pendant plus de 10 ans. L'actuel président sortant avait été élu en 2005 et réélu en 2010.

Depuis plusieurs mois, la communauté internationale a multiplié des gestes pour réclamer à Pierre Nkurunziza de ne pas se présenter pour un nouveau mandat. Le président américain Barack Obama par exemple, a regretté la candidature de Pierre Nkurunziza à un troisième mandat pour la future présidentielle. Il l'a d'ailleurs prévenu que cela allait inéluctablement « accentuer les risques d'une confrontation avec l'opposition burundaise ».

« Les États-Unis tiendront pour responsables les personnes qui participent, programment ou ordonnent des violences contre la population civile (...). La violence n'a pas de place dans des élections démocratiques », a souligné Marie Harf, porte-parole du département d'Etat américain dans un communiqué.

Burundi Red Cross: 6 killed in anti-president protests

Source: AP

27 April 2015 - At least six people have been killed in clashes between police and civilians demonstrating against the Burundian president's bid for a third term, a spokesman for the Burundi Red Cross said on Monday, as hundreds continued to protest in the capital despite a heavy military presence.

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Three people were killed in clashes with the police on Sunday and three others died of their injuries overnight, Alexis Manirakiza told The Associated Press by phone from Bujumbura, Burundi's capital.

Seven more people had been wounded, he said.

The security forces are using tear gas, water cannon and gun shot to break up any gatherings in Bujumbura, said Carina Tertsakian, a Rwanda researcher for Human Rights Watch. The military has prevented protesters from getting to the city center. The independent radio station known as RPA was closed on Monday, she said.

Rights activist Pierre Claver Mbonimpa was arrested and "roughed up," said Tertsakian.

Bujumbura has been hit by protests since Sunday after the ruling party nominated President Pierre Nkurunziza for another term, which many say is unconstitutional.

Hundreds of demonstrators erected barricades and set tires alight on Monday. The military was deployed after violent clashes on Sunday.

Presidential elections are scheduled for June 26 and political tensions have been rising since January.

"I will stop coming to the road when the president says he has abandoned (the third term bid)," said demonstrator Flaurice Nkurunziza.

More than 250,000 people died in Burundi's civil war between Hutu rebels and a Tutsi-dominated army. The war ended in 2003.

Those who oppose Nkurunziza, an ethnic Hutu, running for a third term include members of his own party, lawmakers, the clergy, student groups and civil society.

More than 20,000 Burundians have fled to neighboring Rwanda, alleging pressure to support Nkurunziza's party and violence by the party's youth wing, known as Imbonerakure. Another 4,000 Burundians are sheltering in Congo, according to the U.N. refugee agency.

Human Rights Watch has accused the Imbonerakure of committing serious rights abuses.

Burundi: AU Calls for Restraint in Burundi

26 April 2015

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PRESS RELEASE

The Chairperson of the African Union Commission Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma is following very closely the situation in Burundi, particularly following the nomination, on 25 April 2015, of H.E. Pierre Nkurunziza as the ruling party's candidate for the upcoming Presidential elections planned for May 2015 in Burundi.

The AU Commission Chairperson calls on the authorities in Burundi to exercise the highest restraints and protect the population in its reaction to the third-term candidacy announcement. She urges those protesting to conduct their demonstrations in a peaceful and orderly manner within the confines of the laws of Burundi. The Chairperson calls for the political actors to use appropriate channels to seek redress in any grievances, including disputes around elections.

Dr. Dlamini Zuma reiterates the call she made on 27 March 2015, during her working visit to Burundi, in which she called on all stakeholders to strictly respect the 2000 Arusha Agreement, the Constitution and the Electoral Law.

Concerned about the reported deaths as she follows the situation on the ground, the AU Commission Chairperson insists on the need for everyone to work toward preserving Burundi's hard-earned peace, enhancing reconciliation, respecting human rights and promoting shared prosperity, as Burundi holds a series of elections in 2015.

REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Congo: le fils du président pour une modification de la Constitution

Source: RFI

Au Congo-Brazzaville, le fils du président Denis Sassou-Nguesso, Denis Christel prend fait et cause pour la réforme de la Constitution. Une réforme qui permettrait au chef de l'Etat de se présenter pour un nouveau mandat en 2016. Le fils du président s'est exprimé, ce dimanche, à l'occasion d'un meeting d'associations de la majorité à Pointe-Noire.

27 Avril 2015 - A Pointe-Noire, le meeting a démarré sous des applaudissements nourris. Les membres de la Dynamique pour l'émergence d'une nouvelle République, des jeunes et des femmes, ont ensuite lu tour à tour des messages et signé un engagement dans lequel ils appellent tous au changement de la Constitution.

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Denis-Christel Sassou-Nguesso a pris acte de l'engagement et a promis de le transmettre à qui de droit : « Je partage intégralement cet engagement, c'est pourquoi dès mon retour à Brazzaville, je me ferai l'agréable devoir de transmettre l'option consignée dans votre déclaration, à son Excellence monsieur Denis Sassou-Nguesso, président de la République du Congo ».

Le meeting s'est déroulé place de la République, plus connue sous le nom du rond-point Lumumba. Sous un grand soleil et sous une grande protection sécuritaire, assurée par les éléments de la police et de la gendarmerie.

ANGOLA

Opposition says 1,000 killed in Angola clash with religious sect

Source: Reuters

27 April 2015 - Angolan opposition party UNITA said on Monday more than 1,000 civilians were killed when Angolan police clashed with members of a Christian sect last week, rather than the 13 reported by police.

There has been no comment from any independent groups on the possible death toll, while government and police officials declined to comment by telephone on Monday.

Reuters has been unable to verify the number of deaths as the area around the incident has been cordoned off, making it difficult to speak to any witnesses or officials in person.

Angola's government has branded the more than 3,000 member religious group, which predicts the world will end on Dec. 31 and encourages its members to live in seclusion, an illegal organization.

Angolan police say 13 members of the Light of the World sect were killed by police during the raid, and that they were snipers belonging to the sect's leader Jose Kalupeteka. Nine police were also killed, police said.

"The information that we have ... point to an interim balance of 1,080 civilians killed. Men, women, old people and children," said Raul Danda, parliamentary leader of UNITA (the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola), in a statement.

Police spokesman Paulo Gaspar Almeida, who last week gave the civilian death toll of 13, could not be reached for comment on Monday.

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UNITA has denied any role in the violence in Huambo province, one of the party's strongholds, after provincial leaders of President Jose Eduardo dos Santos's ruling MPLA party accused the opposition - his old civil war foes - of being behind the unrest.

Kalupeteka was captured in the raid remains under police custody in an unknown location, according to his lawyer David Mendes, who told Reuters local government officials had refused him contact with his client since the arrest last Wednesday.

L'opposition dénonce la mort d'un millier de civils en Angola

Source: Reuters

Par Herculano Coroado; Jean-Stéphane Brosse

Luanda, 27 avril 2015 - L'opposition angolaise a affirmé lundi que plus de mille civils avaient été tués lors d'une opération menée la semaine dernière par la police contre les membres d'une secte chrétienne interdite, alors que les forces de l'ordre font état de 22 morts.

Les responsables du gouvernement comme ceux de la police joints par téléphone n'ont pas souhaité faire de commentaire et le bilan n'a pu être confirmé par des ONG indépendantes.

La zone où se sont déroulés les affrontements, dans la province de Huambo (centre), a été bouclée par les autorités.

Selon la police angolaise, 13 membres armés de la secte "Lumière du monde" dirigée par Jose Kalupeteka et neuf policiers ont été tués lors de l'opération.

La secte millénariste, qui prédit la fin du monde le 31 décembre et invite ses membres à vivre dans l'isolement, a été déclarée illégale par les autorités.

"Les informations que nous avons (...) font état d'un bilan provisoire de 1.080 civils tués. Des hommes, des femmes, des vieillards et des enfants", a déclaré le président du groupe parlementaire de l'Unita (Union nationale pour l'indépendance totale de l'Angola, opposition) Raul Danda dans un communiqué.

L'Unita, dont la province de Huambo est l'un des bastions, est accusée par les représentants locaux du MPLA, le parti du président José Eduardo dos Santos, d'encourager les violences en coulisses.

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José Kalupeteka a été arrêté mercredi dernier et se trouve en détention dans un lieu tenu secret, a déclaré son avocat qui n'a pas pu entrer en contact avec lui.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Le HCR appelle à ne pas oublier la très grave crise humanitaire en République centrafricaine

Source: Xinhua

28 Avril 2015 - Responsable d'environ 900.000 déplacements de personnes depuis décembre 2013, le conflit en République centrafricaine est rapidement devenu "la plus grande crise humanitaire oubliée de notre temps", a déploré lundi le Haut-Commissariat pour les réfugiés (HCR).

"Il y a plus de 460.000 réfugiés centrafricains dans les pays voisins et près de 436.000 personnes sont déplacées à l'intérieur du pays. Au total, en République centrafricaine, 2,7 millions de personnes ont besoin d'aide humanitaire", a déclaré l'agence de l'ONU dans un communiqué de presse.

En dépit de ces chiffres alarmants, le HCR a constaté que les programmes d'assistance humanitaire et le Plan de gestion régionale de la situation des réfugiés manquent "cruellement" de financement -- seuls 14% et 9% de leurs besoins respectifs ont été financés.

"Nous devons empêcher la République centrafricaine de se transformer en crise oubliée", a déclaré la Coordinatrice humanitaire de l'ONU dans le pays, Claire Bourgeois. "Le financement actuel de la réponse humanitaire ne nous permet pas d'assurer la protection de toutes ces personnes déplacées ou de fournir le minimum nécessaire pour répondre à leurs énormes besoins humanitaires".

Alors que la violence entre différents groupes armés continue de sévir, en particulier dans la partie centrale du pays, empêchant de nombreuses personnes de rentrer chez elles, les autorités de transition, qui bénéficient de l'appui de la communauté internationale, ont du mal à rétablir la loi et l'ordre.

"Il est essentiel que la communauté internationale n'oublie pas la République centrafricaine", a déclaré de son côté la Coordinatrice régionale du HCR, Liz Ahua, précisant que deux rendez-vous imminents détermineront l'avenir de l'ensemble du processus de paix.

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"Le premier sera le Forum de Bangui sur la réconciliation nationale, réunissant toutes les parties en mai pour aborder les questions politiques et de sécurité qui sont au centre de la crise. Le deuxième sera l'organisation des élections nationales prévues en août. La participation des personnes déplacées et des réfugiés dans les deux processus sera cruciale pour leur succès", a conclu Mme Ahua.

République Centrafricaine : catholiques et musulmans reconstruisent une mosquée

Source: ajib.fr (<http://www.ajib.fr/2015/04/republique-centrafricaine-catholiques-et-musulmans-reconstruisent-une-mosquee/>)

Quand diversité rime avec solidarité. Des jeunes centrafricains de confession catholique et musulmane se sont rassemblés dans le but de reconstruire une mosquée à Bangui, détruite en mai 2014. Les musulmans de la ville représentant une minorité, les chrétiens se sont montrés solidaires afin de leur permettre d'avoir un lieu de culte. C'est ainsi que [...]

28 Avril 2015 - Les musulmans de la ville représentant une minorité, les chrétiens se sont montrés solidaires afin de leur permettre d'avoir un lieu de culte. C'est ainsi que vendredi, cette association de jeunes s'est lancée dans la rénovation d'une mosquée de Bangui. Cette action de solidarité a notamment été relayée par rfi. La finalité de cette opération était de « renouer le dialogue entre les communautés » et en même temps, de « faciliter la liberté de culte pour chaque citoyen sans considération ».

Christian Aime Ndotah, à la tête de ce projet a fait part de sa fierté face à l'engagement de la communauté chrétienne : « Nous avons réalisé cette oeuvre de manière volontaire. C'est notre contribution à cet état d'esprit de réconciliation ». Les jeunes catholiques étaient près d'une quinzaine à participer au nettoyage de la mosquée. N'ayant pas d'autre lieu de culte que celui-ci, les musulmans des alentours pourront désormais bénéficier d'une mosquée rénovée et propre.

Cette action menée au sein de la mosquée de Bangui est un bel exemple de cohésion sociale et de solidarité entre les différentes communautés. Il y a quelques mois, nous évoquions l'initiative d'un dialogue interreligieux pour la paix en Centrafrique. Bien que les violences en Centrafrique ont diminué, il n'empêche qu'une partie de la communauté musulmane demeure éprouvée.

Qu'Allah assiste nos frères éprouvés. Qu'Il les préserve dans la Guidée.

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UN sounds alarm over 'forgotten' C. Africa crisis

Source: AFP

27 April 2015 - The United Nations warned Monday it had received only a fraction of the funds needed to address strife-torn Central African Republic's towering humanitarian crisis, forcing it to cut desperately needed aid.

"We must prevent the Central African Republic from becoming a forgotten crisis," said Claire Bourgeois, the UN humanitarian coordinator for the country.

CAR is struggling to recover from the coup that ousted President Francois Bozize in March 2013 and triggered a wave of deadly sectarian violence between the country's Christian and Muslim populations.

Now, a transitional government faces the uphill task of rebuilding a shattered administration. But it is almost entirely dependent on foreign funds, and the economy is in ruins.

About half the population of 4.6 million people live in severe poverty and need humanitarian aid, while 1.5 million are considered food insecure, according to the UN.

Lawlessness meanwhile continues to affect many of the country's regions, with continuing violence forcing some 50,000 people to flee to neighbouring countries since last December and displacing more than 20,000 more inside the country.

Since December 2013, nearly 900,000 people have been displaced, including more than 460,000 who have become refugees -- a full 10 percent of CAR's population.

Yet despite the massive crisis, the UN humanitarian agency OCHA has so far received only 14 percent of the \$613 million it says it needs to address the crisis inside CAR this year.

The UN refugee agency UNHCR has meanwhile pulled in only nine percent of the \$331.2 million it has appealed for to help refugees and host communities in neighbouring countries in 2015.

"We are making a strong plea to the donors," Liz Ahua, the UN refugee agency's regional coordinator, told reporters in Geneva.

The lack of funds means that UN agencies are unable to address all of the numerous needs.

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CAR refugees in Chad are for instance receiving just half food rations, meaning they are living on half the calories deemed necessary to stay healthy, Ahua said.

The lack of funds this year has been compounded by years of underfunding.

"If the country has so many humanitarian needs, it is because it has been forgotten for years before, and crisis after crisis has just (left) this country more in the dark," Bourgeois told reporters.

SOUTH SUDAN

South Sudanese military spending “highest” in the region

Source: Sudan Tribune (Paris)

Juba, 27 April 2015 - South Sudan tops the region with military spending as civil war has been raging on for the past 15 months, hurting other key sectors such as health, education and infrastructure, an independent report has revealed.

A report released last week by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) revealed a steady rise in South Sudan's military spending from \$982m in 2013 to \$1.08bn in 2014, making it the biggest spender in the region.

South Sudan solely depends on oil revenue by 98% of its revenue of which the gross oil income is \$3.38bn. After deducting \$884m in payments to Sudan for the usage of the pipeline and other fees and another deduction of \$781m repayments of loan to donors and international financiers, Juba remains only with \$1.715bn from oil revenues.

The government therefore spends 60% of its overall net oil revenues on military to fight the opposition faction of the ruling Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement (SPLM-IO) led by the country's former vice-president, Riek Machar.

This has increased from the budget announced last year to have been allocated to the security sector. In July last year during a budget presentation, former finance minister Aggrey Tisa Sabuni said a 41% of the budget was allocated to the security sector.

"I have allocated \$737.8 million to the national army and \$262.9 million to the police, prison and fire services," he revealed.

"We expect that oil revenue will contribute about 80 per cent of this year's budget," further explained Sabuni, who was later sacked by President Salva Kiir.

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The government last year purchased close to 100 Ukrainian T-72 tanks and other heavy weaponry from China; part of which was delivered through Mombasa, Kenya.

South Sudanese rebels also claim that Juba has been paying foreign troops deployed in South Sudan by neighbouring Uganda to help the regime fight against the rebels.

They also blamed government's violations of the cessation of hostilities agreement signed on 23 January 2014 on refusal by Uganda to withdraw its troops from South Sudan as per the agreement. But the war between the two rival armies and their allies has been dragging on for 15 months as no side scores a final military victory.

Observers, however, say the war is diverting resources which would have been used to provide basic services to South Sudan's suffering population and has stopped plans for development of the young country.

They also registered worries of economic collapse in Juba as both local and hard currencies are running out of stock. A dollar has sharply risen from 4 SSP when the war started in December 2013 to 10 SSP this year in South Sudan's local markets.

UN vows to continue development projects in South Sudan

Source: Sudan Tribune (Paris)

Juba, 27 April 2015 - The United Nations said it will continue to support the implementation of development projects in South Sudan despite facing difficulties in securing funds from donor communities

"Since independence the United Nations and its agencies, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), have worked in support of the people of South Sudan and key institutions of the world's youngest country. Our work has continued throughout the crisis which has enveloped the nation since December 2013, UN development programme resident representative Toby Lanzer said in a statement.

While the country's ongoing conflict over the past 16 months had affected funding flows from development partners and donor communities, the UN said it has continued to work in key areas such as economic planning and finance, law and reconciliation.

He cited provision of technical support to the aid coordination office in the ministry of finance to better account for humanitarian funding flowing into South Sudan.

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Other development projects undertaken during the year include the completion of the construction of Juba University's college of law, training for key personnel in criminal justice and case management, as well as the provision of legal texts.

In addition, the agency has provided financial, organisational and management support to the national Pplatform for peace and reconciliation to carry out its crucial work to reduce tensions between key communities.

In coming months the UN will work towards the acceleration of engagement with the ministry of labour and key institutions in seven states to match civil servants from neighbouring countries with their counterparts, as well as the expansion of its collaboration with the Global Fund against AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

"Other agencies in the United Nations family here in South Sudan continue to work on important development initiatives, in particular in the crucial areas of agriculture, education and health," Lanzer said.

Key UN agencies such as the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the World Health Organisation (WHO) among others would continue to spearhead development work in South Sudan, he added.

Juba denies Sudan's claims its backing Darfur rebels

Source: Turkish Weekly

27 April 2015 - The South Sudanese army has dismissed recent accusations by Sudan that it is providing support to rebels in Sudan's western Darfur province.

"These accusations are groundless," army spokesman Philip Aguer told reporters on Monday.

The Sudanese military on Sunday accused Juba of supporting Darfurian rebel groups following clashes in the troubled region.

The army asserted that the rebel Justice and Equality Movement was using South Sudan's Bahr al-Ghazal region as a jumping-off point to enter Darfur.

"The government of South Sudan has continued harboring and supporting the terrorists," military spokesman Col. Al-Sawarmy Khaled Saad said in a statement.

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Since 2003, Darfur has been the scene of a ferocious war between the Sudanese government and three rebel movements. The conflict has left some 300,000 people dead and 2.5 million displaced, according to UN figures.

In 2009, the Darfur conflict prompted the International Criminal Court (ICC) to issue an arrest warrant for Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir amid allegations that Sudanese troops and allied militias had committed atrocities in the troubled region.

Aguer argued that Sudan's accusations were "an attempt by Khartoum to justify support for the rebellion of [South Sudan's sacked vice president] Riek Machar."

South Sudan – which seceded from Sudan in 2011 – has been shaken by violence since late 2013, when President Salva Kiir accused Machar of leading a failed coup attempt against his regime.

Tens of thousands have reportedly been killed in subsequent violence, with some 2 million uprooted from their homes and 2.5 million at risk of starvation, according to recent UN estimates.

SUDAN

Sudan urges UNAMID to abide by rules of engagement

Source: Suna news agency website (Sudan)

26 April 2015 - The ministry of foreign affairs has called on the United Nations to take necessary measures to force UNAMID mission in Darfur to abide by the rules of engagement and respect laws and regulations that govern its presence in Sudan.

In a press statement issued today in the evening (26 April), the ministry stressed that the government would take measures it deems fit to protect the rights of its citizens and safeguard their lives in the event the UN fails in that regard. It expressed its deep concern over the incidents which took place in Kas area, South Darfur state.

"UNAMID forces which were pursuing the group that hijacked (UNAMID vehicle) opened fire on a group of Faz'a, (clan of Zaghawa tribe) and killed five citizens among them an elderly 65 year-old man" the statement reads. It went on to say that on the same day of 23 April a large number of citizens gathered near the UNAMID compound to protest against the killing of the citizen by members of UNAMID but again the mission forces

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opened fire on the citizens killing one person and injuring several others, some of whom are in critical condition.

"The following morning, Friday 24 April 15 at 0800 (0500gmt) UNAMID forces from Nyala moved to Kas town to enforce its forces in there despite prior agreement between the mission and South Darfur government not to move the force from Nyala to prevent escalation and provoking citizens. As the force arrived the mission camp in As town, they found a gathering of citizens whom the As locality commissioner, commander of [Sudan army] 61st Infantry brigade and a number of locality security officials as well as some of traditional leader were in their company who had moved in to contain the situation and the UNAMID force from Nyala opened fire indiscriminately which led to the killing of a citizen and the injury of others" the statement reads, adding that the presidency of the republic has issued a decree to constitute a federal committee chaired by the justice minister to investigate the incidents that took place in Kas town.

The foreign ministry confirmed that the UNAMID mission forces had committed a number of mistakes and violations since the incidents took place, saying such violations are:

“- Use of indiscriminate and disproportionate force.

- Lack of respect of rules of engagement and procedures set out in the agreement on the deployment of forces which the Sudanese government, UN and AU signed as the UNAMID forces intentionally opened fire on civilians with the intention to kill and not to restrain.

- UNAMID forces provoked citizens by opening fire on them

- UNAMID mission did not abide by the agreement which the mission reached with South Darfur state on not to move forces Kas to avoid escalation. It started to come up with illogical excuses that the mission did not manage to contact the commander of UNAMID force which moved from Niyala to Kas

- UNAMID mission did not follow legal and criminal procedure set to act upon in the event killing incidents take place"

The statement by the ministry said that "all that is mentioned in the statement UNAMID issued regarding the incidents is untrue and has avoided facts and the truth, which calls for strong and genuine questioning on the intentions of UNAMID as it coincides with [ongoing] arrangements on preparation and implementation of strategic exit of the mission from Sudan"

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UN's Ban Concerned by Attacks on Peacekeepers in Sudan's Darfur

Source: Bloomberg

27 April 2015 - United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon expressed concern at an increase in attacks on peacekeepers serving in Sudan's Darfur region and the "limited cooperation" given by the North African nation's government.

Ban condemned two assaults by unidentified gunmen in Kass, South Darfur on April 23-24, his spokesman said Monday in a website statement. Six peacekeepers from the joint UN-African Union mission were wounded repelling attacks while four assailants were killed, he said. Sudan's foreign ministry on April 26 accused the mission of killing seven civilians after its peacekeepers were attacked by the armed men.

The Sudanese government should bring the unidentified assailants to justice and take steps to prevent further threats to peacekeepers, Ban said. The UN and Sudan's government both said they're investigating the incidents.

Insurgents in Darfur took up arms in 2003, accusing President Umar al-Bashir's government of neglecting the western Sudanese region.

The International Criminal Court has indicted al-Bashir for alleged war crimes in the area. The conflict has led to the deaths of as many as 300,000 people, mainly due to illness and starvation, with about 2.4 million people currently displaced, according to UN estimates.

Sudan denied UN request to evacuate Darfur peacekeeper

Source: AFP

28 April 2015 - Sudan denied a UN request for the emergency evacuation of a wounded Ethiopian peacekeeper who later died of his injuries in Darfur, the UN chief said Monday.

Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said he "deeply regrets" that Khartoum turned down the request on Sunday and offered condolences to the peacekeeper's family.

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Ban said in a statement that he was deeply concerned about the rise in attacks on peacekeepers serving in the joint United Nations-African Union UNAMID mission in Darfur and the "limited cooperation" provided by Sudan.

He cited two attacks on peacekeepers in the town of Kass in South Darfur over the weekend in which six troops were wounded.

The Ethiopian peacekeeper was injured in Mujkar in West Darfur but no details were given on the circumstances of his death.

Tensions have been rising between Sudan and the United Nations over the peace mission deployed in Darfur since 2007.

The United Nations has announced plans to reduce the mission and negotiate an exit strategy.

Sudan accuses U.N. peacekeepers of killing seven civilians in Darfur

Source: Reuters

27 April 2015 - Sudan has accused a peacekeeping force in Darfur of killing seven civilians in three separate incidents last week, threatening to exacerbate the government's strained relations with the international mission.

The African Union-United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) denied the allegations, saying the peacekeepers had responded in self-defense to two attacks on April 23 and 24, which it said had left four assailants dead and six peacekeepers wounded.

UNAMID has been deployed in Darfur since 2007 with a mandate to stem violence against civilians in a conflict that has seen the International Criminal Court issue an arrest warrant for Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir on charges of war crimes and genocide.

Sudan asked UNAMID late last year to prepare to leave amid a dispute over attempts by the mission to investigate an alleged mass rape by Sudanese soldiers in the Darfur town of Tabit. The government denies any wrongdoing by the soldiers.

The foreign ministry said in a statement that peacekeepers in Kass, 85 km (50 miles) northwest of Nyala, killed five tribesmen pursuing bandits who had stolen one of their vehicles on April 23.

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The statement said the mission fired on civilians twice more an hour later and the next morning, killing two more people.

UNAMID had earlier released statements saying its troops did not initiate any shooting but had returned fire from assailants carrying assault rifles and riding horses and camels. It mentioned only one attack on April 23 and another on April 24.

UNAMID says 61 peacekeepers have been killed in Darfur since the joint force, one of the world's largest such operations, was deployed in 2007.

Law and order have collapsed in much of Darfur, where mainly non-Arab rebels took up arms in 2003 against the Arab-led government in Khartoum, accusing it of discrimination.