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



MEDIA MONITORING

1 July 2015

DRC

RDC: découper pour gouverner

OPINION

Source: Jeune Afrique (France)

Par François Soudan

30 Juin 2015 - Pour ses détracteurs - et ils sont nombreux -, la cause est entendue: le nouveau découpage de la RDC en 26 provinces censé entrer en vigueur le 30 juin est une mauvaise action politique.

Précipitée, improvisée et par-dessus tout suspecte car destinée essentiellement à réduire, si ce n'est annihiler, l'influence grandissante d'une poignée de politiciens locaux – et, par conséquent, à y rétablir celle du président Kabila – dans cet État dans l'État qu'était devenue la plus riche de toutes : le Katanga. Diviser pour mieux régner, en quelque sorte, voilà à quoi se résumerait le démembrement de l'ex-Shaba de Mobutu en quatre baronnies distinctes. Développé non sans arguments dans les pages qui suivent, ce réquisitoire mérite cependant d'être fortement nuancé.

Techniquement, ce découpage n'est pas le premier. La RD Congo en a déjà connu quatre depuis 1924, passant de 4 à 6 provinces en 1935, à 21 en 1963, puis à 8 en 1966 et, enfin, à 11 « régions » en 1988 (qui reprirent le nom de « provinces » en 1997). La Conférence nationale souveraine du début des années 1990 avait même un moment caressé une option à... 46 provinces, avant de l'abandonner. À l'époque,

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comme lors de la commission constitutionnelle de Luluabourg, en 1964, sous la houlette du tandem Kasavubu-Tshombé, l'idée était la même qu'aujourd'hui: déléguer le pouvoir décisionnel au pays profond et faciliter la participation des populations rurales à la gouvernance du pays.

Pas de surprise

Rien de très nouveau sous le soleil, donc. Encore moins d'effet de surprise : l'actuel découpage figure en toutes lettres dans la Constitution adoptée par référendum en décembre 2005, il y a près de dix ans, et les circonscriptions électorales des sénateurs élus en 2007 sont directement issues des 26 nouvelles provinces, lesquelles existent donc déjà de jure si ce n'est de facto.

Enfin, l'accélération du programme de décentralisation est l'une des recommandations clés de l'accord-cadre d'Addis-Abeba de février 2013, dont toute la classe politique congolaise réclame l'application. Quant au déficit d'infrastructures d'accueil pour les nouvelles autorités provinciales, c'est à la fois un problème réel et un faux problème. Lors du redécoupage du Kivu en trois entités il y a vingt-sept ans, la même question s'était posée, et le mouvement s'est, depuis, fait en marchant.

Reste l'argument de fond, celui qui veut que le Katanga et son très emblématique ex-gouverneur Moïse Katumbi soient la cible unique et inavouée de ce grand déménagement. Lequel, soit dit en passant, concerne d'autres poids lourds comme l'Équateur, la Province-Orientale, les deux Kasais et le Bandundu, sans pour autant déclencher les mêmes cris d'orfraie.

S'il n'est pas exclu, loin de là, que la mise en place du découpage serve les intérêts de ceux pour qui Katumbi tendait à devenir une sorte d'ovni incontrôlable – saisir les opportunités n'est pas la moindre des manœuvres en politique -, prétendre que le ver était dans le fruit dès l'origine ne résiste pas à l'examen des faits. En décembre 2005, lors du référendum constitutionnel approuvé par 84 % des Congolais et décisif pour l'adoption du projet des 26 provinces, Moïse Katumbi fut l'un des fervents propagandistes du « oui », et nul n'imaginait encore qu'il allait être, treize mois plus tard, élu gouverneur. Ici comme ailleurs, l'Histoire ne repasse jamais les mêmes plats...

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Dialogue: les chances d'une médiation Internationale s'éloignent

ANALYSE

Source: Agence d'Information d'Afrique centrale

Dans son adresse à la nation diffusée lundi à la RTNC, Joseph Kabila a invité tous les Congolais à « s'inscrire dans la voie du règlement pacifique de toutes les divergences politiques conformément à la tradition congolaise de prévention, de gestion et de résolution des conflits ».

30 Juin 2015 - Comme d'aucuns l'attendaient, le chef de l'État a effectivement prononcé son discours à la nation à l'occasion de la célébration du cinquante-cinquième anniversaire de l'accession du pays à la souveraineté internationale. Le message de Joseph Kabila était diffusé lundi soir sur les antennes de la Radio télévision nationale congolaise (RTNC), juste à la veille du défilé militaire et civil qu'allait abriter la ville de Matadi, chef-lieu de la province du Kongo central. L'occasion était donnée au chef de l'État de dresser une sorte de pré bilan de ses consultations initiées pendant près de trois semaines avec les forces politiques et sociales du pays.

En attendant l'issue des dites consultations qui se poursuivent encore dans le Congo profond par le biais des échanges que les gouverneurs des provinces ont avec leurs administrés, Joseph Kabila a, dans son speech, mis en relief le rejet par la population congolaise d'une médiation étrangère. Il s'est dégagé à la lumière des échanges que, dans leur écrasante majorité, les Congolais souhaitent à ce que le dialogue soit mené sans ingérence extérieure et qu'il soit de courte durée avec un nombre limité des participants, a-t-il fait savoir. Quant au contenu du dialogue, Joseph Kabila préfère rester ouvert étant entendu que d'autres matières non inscrites à l'ordre du jour des consultations telles que la réforme de la territoriale et l'installation de nouvelles provinces ont été au menu des discussions et ont reçu une large adhésion. Sans nul doute que ces deux matières s'inviteront également au dialogue au regard de l'intérêt leur porté par les différents interlocuteurs du chef de l'État.

Joseph Kabila a, par ailleurs, déclaré que très bientôt, il mettra fin aux consultations et qu'il prendra des dispositions qui s'imposent en vue de matérialiser la vision commune du peuple congolais tout en sauvegardant ce qui lui est chère, à savoir, la paix, la stabilité et l'unité du pays. Il espère qu'interpellées par ces nobles objectifs, les forces politiques et sociales dans leur diversité, y compris celles qui hésitent encore, répondront présentes à ce « moment historique » pour donner une chance à la jeune démocratie congolaise de se consolider davantage à travers la troisième expérience électorale que la RDC s'apprête à vivre.

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Enumérant les obstacles qui entravent justement la tenue de cette troisième série d'élections générales au pays pour lesquels l'opposition, la majorité et la société civile s'attèleront à surmonter par le biais du dialogue, Joseph Kabila a indiqué qu'ils sont liés notamment au calendrier électoral global, au financement du processus électoral, à la participation au scrutin 2015 d'anciens mineurs et à l'impératif de la sécurisation des élections. Quant au financement des élections, il a précisé que l'organisation de ce scrutin est évaluée à environ 1 milliard de dollars américains, alors que le budget pour l'ensemble des besoins de l'Etat a été arrêté à 9 milliards USD.

D'où, a-t-il conclu, l'impératif du dialogue demeure un cadre idéal où la majorité, l'opposition et la société civile pourront lever des options consensuelles susceptibles de régler les défis majeurs du processus électoral en cours. Et d'ajouter: « Ne pas régler ces questions en temps voulu et de manière consensuelle, pourrait plonger le processus électoral dans l'impasse et créer, de ce fait, des malaises politiques de tout genre ».

Opposition: Etienne Tshisekedi se dit favorable au dialogue

ARTICLE

Source: Agence d'Information d'Afrique central

Par Alain Diasso

À l'instar des êtres humains, a-t-il fait savoir dans un message publié à l'occasion de la célébration de la fête de l'indépendance, la culture du dialogue est inscrite dans l'ADN de la RDC.

30 Juin 2015 - Se considérant toujours comme le président réellement élu au terme de la présidentielle de 2011, l'opposant Etienne Tshisekedi wa Mulumba est monté au créneau, à l'occasion de la célébration des 55 ans de l'indépendance nationale, pour s'adresser à ses compatriotes à travers un message élaboré depuis Bruxelles où il séjourne. Dans ce document, le Spinx de Limete réitère son penchant pour le dialogue qui, dit-il, est une « vieille tradition chez nous de régler les différends autour d'une table pour dégager un consensus qui permette à notre peuple de trouver la voie du salut ».

C'est depuis décembre 2011 qu'il a commencé à réclamer ce dialogue qui demeure, à ses yeux, comme la seule voie royale pour sortir le pays de l'impasse politique dans laquelle il est empêtré depuis la présidentielle organisée en cette année. Il estime avoir été empêché au terme de la présidentielle de 2011 qu'il affirme avoir remporté, d'exercer la noble tâche « d'ériger un État de droit démocratique, axé sur la bonne

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gouvernance en vue de réaliser une vraie justice, la sécurité physique et juridique, le progrès social et le bonheur de tous ». Les régimes qui se sont succédé en RDC ayant privilégié l'incurie et l'enrichissement illicite au profit d'une minorité, Etienne Tshisekedi nourrit l'ambition de tirer le pays et ses populations de l'extrême pauvreté. L'usurpation du pouvoir dont il fut victime en 2011 serait, d'après lui, la source de tous les maux que connaît la RDC aujourd'hui. La solution, pour le leader de l'Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social (UDPS), passe par le règlement du contentieux électoral de 2011 et par la tenue d'un processus électoral consensuel dans le strict respect du délai constitutionnel.

D'où son appel pressant aux parties en présence, en l'occurrence la majorité et l'opposition, « de se retrouver rapidement sous la médiation internationale, conformément à l'Accord-cadre d'Addis-Abeba et les Résolutions subséquentes du Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU en vue de se parler et de trouver ensemble une solution durable à l'actuelle crise politique ».

Loin d'être un aveu de faiblesse, il estime que sa prise de position favorable au dialogue est plutôt réfléchie et s'insère dans sa dynamique de combat. Celui-ci consiste, a-t-il indiqué, « à inverser la courbe des antivaleurs en vue de permettre à la RDC d'être réellement gouvernée et de jouer son rôle naturel de locomotive de l'Afrique ». Et il ajoute: « Si, de mauvaise foi ou en cas d'aterrissement funeste, le dialogue est encore retardé, je n'hésiterais pas à m'en remettre à vous pour qu'ensemble, nous puissions nous approprier notre destin commun ».

CIRGL: élection du Comité national des organisations de la Société Civile pour les Grands Lacs

ARTICLE

Source: DigitalCongo.net (<http://www.digitalcongo.net/article/108168>)

Par Raymond Okeseleke/MMC (ROL/PKF)

Kinshasa, 30 juin 2015 - Les acteurs de la société civile ont marqué une participation vivante témoignée lors de la clôture où la Déclaration finale et les recommandations ont prouvé la haute portée de la quintessence de l'Atelier de Dynamisation du Forum National de la Société civile de la CIRGL en RDC.

CIRGLVu leur rôle déterminant comme acteurs clés dans le processus de paix, de sécurité et développement dans les Grands Lacs, ils ont mis en place un Comité

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constitué de 5 membres. Les structures mises en place ont été appelées à fonctionner et être opérationnelle, fort des promesses et de soutien des efforts et appuis techniques et financiers de la part des partenaires de coopération. Cela, car le fonctionnement desdites structures est voulu non seulement en RDC, mais également dans tous les douze pays de la région des Grands-Lacs.

Lors de la clôture de l'Atelier, Mme Lies, chargée de programme de soutien à la Société Civile de la Monusco, a encouragé les membres du Comité nationale élus au regard de nombreux défis qui les attendent. Le plus gros défis est de renforcer une coordination et une communication inclusives, pas seulement dans le pays mais aussi dans la région. C'est dans ce cadre qu'elle a réitéré le soutien de la Monusco à la nouvelle structure et promet le renforcement de la coordination avec un bureau spécialisé dont elle a fait mention.

Pour sa part, le coordonnateur national de la Cirgl, Baudouin Hamuli, a remercié les élus aux différentes responsabilités, d'autant plus qu'ils deviennent le bras technique de la Société Civile pour la Région des Grands-Lacs.

En effet, dès le début de leurs activités, ils seront à même de mettre en place une vision de stratégies et un programme d'actions du Forum nationale de la Cirgl de la RDC. Ils ont été considérés comme des interlocuteurs valables sur qui la Coordination nationale peut dorénavant compter pour relever le défi et faire participer activement la société civile dans les enjeux régionaux.

Dans les à-côtés, la représentante de l'Accord, Mme Marie-Chantal Kanyange, pour sa part, vu l'apport financier à l'atelier, a exprimé sa satisfaction et reconnaît que des objectifs assignés à cet Atelier ont été atteints. Ce Centre africain pour la résolution constructive des conflits, Accord, basé en Afrique du Sud, avec des extensions au Burundi, au Soudan du Sud, en RCA... travaille sur la gestion des conflits et la consolidation de la paix. Le projet de la Cirgl qui est une vue régionale à travers 4 pays des Grands-Lacs vient en appui à la Société Civile pour que sa voie soit entendue au niveau des décideurs politiques.

Déclaration des Organisations de la Société Civile congolaise à l'issue de l'Atelier de Dynamisation du Forum National de la Société civile de la CIRGL en RDC

Nous organisations de la Société Civile congolaise, représentants les différentes coordinations et dynamiques représentatives ;

Réunies à Kinshasa à l'Hôtel Memling sur convocation du Président du Forum Régional de la Société Civile, Mr. Joseph BUTIKU et avec l'appui financier de ACCORD S.A. en

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date du 29 Juin 2015 en vue de réorganiser le Forum National de la société civile de la Conférence Internationale Région des Grands Lacs, CIRGL en sigle, en RDC ;

Reconnaissant et remerciant la participation des représentants des Nations-Unies (MONUSCO), de l'Ambassade de Belgique, du Forum des Parlements;

Prenant en compte les directives pertinentes de la Déclaration de Dar-es-Salam et du Pacte sur la Sécurité, la Stabilité et le Développement de la Région des Grands Lacs, notamment en ce qui concerne la participation de la société civile ;

Vu l'Accord instituant le Forum Régional de la Société Civile de la CIRGL adopté en juillet 2011 à Bujumbura en ce qui concerne la composition du Forum de la société civile ;

Conscients de notre rôle déterminant en tant qu'acteur clé dans le processus de paix, de sécurité et développement dans la Région des Grands Lacs;

Avons résolu ce qui suit:

1. La mise en place d'une Assemblée Générale d'un Forum National de la société civile sur la région des Grands lacs;
2. L'élection des représentants de la manière suivante:

a) Le Comité National :

FUMUNZANZA GIMUANGA Théodore: (Cadre de concertation)

Georges BOKUNDU: (SARW)

Maitre Albert KABUYA: (CENADEP)

Madeleine ANDEKA (Action Citoyenne pour le Développement Intégral de la RDC)

Rose MUTOMBO: CAFCO

b) Les responsables des commissions' thématiques du Comité National:

Commission paix et sécurité:

Président: Thomas D'Aquin MUITI (coordination société civile Nord-Kivu)

Vice-président: Rose MBUYI (Coordination de la société civile Kasai Oriental)

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Rapporteur: Pasteur MADIFUTA : Réseau de Secteur de Sécurité et Justice (RSSJ)

Commission démocratie et bonne gouvernance:

Président: Jonas TSHIOMBELA (Nouvelle Société Civile Congolaise)

Vice-Président: Franck CITENDE (RENADHOC)

Rapporteur: Jimmy HAMULI (CENADEP)

Commission développement économique et intégration régionale:

Président: CNONGD: Baudouin MANGALA

Vice-Président: FOMEK : Kathy KALANGA KASESULA

Rapporteur: CIFEDH: Aldon MUAMBA TSHISHIKU

Commission questions sociales et humanitaires

Président: Irène ESAMBO (Voix des handicapés pour les droits de l'homme)

Vice-Président: Joseph KIBANGULA (syndicat UNIC)

Rapporteur: Valentin VANGI (Coordination société civile KONGO CENTRAL)

3. Le bureau du Comité national représentera le forum au niveau régional

Avons adopté les recommandations suivantes:

Renforcer la participation de la Société Civile congolaise au Forum Régional de la CIRGL par une représentativité responsable;

Doter le Forum national de la société civile congolaise d'un plan d'action régional, mettre à l'ordre du jour de la prochaine assemblée plénière du Forum National la question relative à la pertinence de la mise en place de la commission genre ainsi que les questions transversale ;

Impliquer fortement les organisations de la société civile congolaise dans la consolidation de la paix, de la promotion du développement économique, de la démocratie et de la bonne gouvernance en RDC et dans la région des Grands Lacs ;

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Formuler les remerciements au Forum Régional de la Société Civile et à ACCORD pour leur soutien technique et financier.

Fait à Kinshasa, le 29 Juin 2015

Pour les Organisations Membres du Forum National de la Société Civile de la CIRGL en RDC.

Democratic Transition in the Congo

OPINION

Source: The Epoch Times (<http://www.theepochtimes.com/n3/blog/democratic-transition-in-the-congo/>)

By Jed Lea-Henry

30 June 2015 - When one speaks of the Congo, it is expected that they speak also of Joseph Conrad. His colonial caricature, 'Heart of Darkness', published over a hundred years ago, remains the most recognisable reference point for what was then the Belgian Congo, later Zaire, and now the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Not merely indicative of the laziness of our thought, this tired cliché in fact speaks volumes about the nature of the humanitarian crises that have defined the Congo both before and after independence. To put it simply: some conflicts lie just beyond the reach of public interest; the detail and scale of certain violence removes it too far from our everyday lives, and makes empathy just too hard. This has never been truer than with the absolute and enduring collapse of the Congolese state – a country whose future is now entirely contingent upon the good will of Joseph Kabila.

From the outside, the conflict in the Congo has the appearance of a civil war, and that certainly is the easiest way to explain it. The violence is, however, far more complex. Congo's two wars have drawn-in over twenty different armed groups, and nine separate countries; therein attracting the label of 'Africa's First World War': description matched by the suffering, with 2.5 million displaced people, and over 4 million deaths (at the height of the conflict 40,000 deaths were being reported each month). However, the battles themselves have been fought almost entirely within Congolese borders and for intrinsically Congolese reasons.

To convolute matters further, the wars have been both deeply ideological whilst simultaneously being reduced almost entirely to the petty theft of resources.

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Recognising the strategic importance of the Congo, Che Guevara travelled the country in 1965 trying to mobilise a socialist uprising. Emaciated and stricken with malaria, he would leave after only a few months, bemoaning the material concerns of the population, along with the unbridgeable divides of tribal loyalty. The opening words of his personal diary for this period are, “this is the history of failure”.

However, Guevara did manage to somewhat foresee the future, writing “the only man who has genuine qualities of a mass leader is, in my view, Kabila”. The man he was referring to was Laurent Kabila, the father of current President Joseph Kabila. Kabila Senior was an ardent Marxist and operated entirely within an ideological world, justifying guerrilla warfare and his vision of the Congo through the language of Communism. However, his rebellion never took form, and for three decades Laurent Kabila sat idle – when the first civil war began in 1996, Kabila was still passing his time as a bartender in Tanzania.

Finally, the name that Laurent Kabila had been trying to build for himself began to pay dividends. The Rwandan and Ugandan armies parachuted Kabila (figuratively) into a leadership position in the rebellion; by May 1997 Mobutu Sese-Seko, who had ruled the Congo for 32 years was ousted, and Laurent Kabila, now President of the Congo, was where he always wanted to be – literally preaching to the nation about the ‘power of the proletariat’, the ‘value of socialism’, and the ‘evils of landowners and capitalists’; needless to say, another civil war was on the way.

The second war came in 1998: Kabila’s old international backers had quickly turned against him, and before long the Congo was once again spliced into regions of control – divided between government forces, international armies, and local militias. Whereas the first war took only months, this second manifestation lacked any urgency. The focus had changed: rather than overthrowing the government, the different forces were now primarily focussed on pillaging the country’s natural resources. Uganda and Rwanda, previously without diamond industries, suddenly began exporting millions of dollars of Congolese diamonds, with Rwandan leader Paul Kagame describing the war as “self-sustaining”. With all sides of the conflict happy to allow the fighting to continue, a peace deal was something that only existed in the vocabulary of unaffected countries and institutions.

The future of the Congo turned on an unlikely moment. In 2001 Laurent Kabila was assassinated and his son Joseph, as expected, inherited the Congolese Presidency. What was not expected however, was just how different Joseph Kabila would be to his father. The Congo had always been ruled by people only focussed on staying in power, not on building a strong state. Upon taking power Joseph Kabila floated the currency, liberalised the diamond industry, restructured mining regulations, began normalising

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international relations, strengthened tax collection, appointed a new young technocratic administration and encouraged international investigations into massacres that his father had previously blocked.

Pragmatic where his father had been ideological, the new, understated leader was also democratic where his father had been dictatorial. Joseph Kabila reintroduced the free association of political parties and implemented a degree of power sharing. Yet above all else, upon taking power the young Kabila almost immediately launched the 'Inter-Congolese Dialogue'. He brought together all the warring factions – 330 delegates from the Congo alone – and showed a rare commitment to securing a long-absent peace.

When Kabila Senior first came to power and addressed his new nation, he was not in a forgiving mood. He stared at the gathered crowds and lambasted them for their tolerance of the previous President, "Who has not been Mobutist in this country? Three-quarters of this country became a part of it! We saw you all dancing in the glory of the monster." By contrast, Joseph Kabila committed himself to a gruelling and almost impossible set of negotiations – when a peace deal was struck in 2003, it was due to a single factor, the political will of the new President.

In conflict we like moral certainty, righteous victims and honourable heroes; Congolese history does not offer this. And Joseph Kabila too, is less than perfect: just as with his predecessors, Kabila maintains an unfathomably lavish lifestyle within what is a desperately poor country; his government is still seen as kleptocratic, he has continued to arm local militias (Mai Mai) and he has struggled to contain an ongoing insurgency in the east of the country. Yet while we ought not to let Kabila off too lightly here, to a great extent this last complaint is not a problem of his making.

The peace agreement was always going to be merely the end of the formal violence, not the end of violence proper. The conflict in the Congo rumbles on, not because Kabila has failed as a President, but rather because he inherited a hollowed-out state. From the Belgians, to Mobutu, and on to Kabila Senior, the Congolese state was always considered as something to exploit rather than something to strengthen.

The Congo is rich in fertile land, expansive river systems, and with unimaginable mineral wealth; all from a country that is the second largest, and fourth most populous in Africa – a country the size of Western Europe; and ideally located in the heart of the continent with significant overlapping interests with its neighbours. However, it is for these reasons that Congolese statesmen, prior to Joseph Kabila, have tended to fear their own country. Presented with such an opportunity for self-enrichment, Congolese leaders came to see their own people as a threat rather than an asset. Successive

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dictatorships went to extraordinary lengths in order to keep the institutions of the state, civil society, and indeed the military, in a permanently weakened condition.

By the time Joseph Kabila came to power, the Congolese state had decayed into nothingness. Without the prospect of a career, the best young talent had long since left the country, soldiers unpaid for years had begun selling their equipment on the black market and looting the local population, militias that had been hastily armed in order to help defend against foreign armies were now holding villages hostage and enflaming ethnic tensions, all the while the country was descending into an ever-deepening humanitarian crisis – the vast majority of deaths in the Congo have been the result of starvation, malnutrition and disease.

The terms have shifted slightly – where people once fought over rubber, gold, timber, ivory and slaves, they now fight over diamonds, copper, cobalt, cassiterite, columbite, uranium and other rare-earth minerals – however, nothing of substance has changed; what Joseph Kabila inherited was merely the empty shell of a country. And this is why his legacy should not be underrated: Joseph Kabila has given the Congo something it has never had before – the tenuous beginnings of a democratic legacy.

After the peace deal was concluded in 2003, Joseph Kabila set about producing a new constitution, and rather than pressing it through with Presidential decree, it was implemented through a referendum in 2005. In 2006 Kabila won the first-ever open Presidential elections with 58 percent of the vote, and in 2011 he was re-elected.

But here is where it all starts to get a little troubling. Despite the steps that Kabila has taken, there have been serious claims of electioneering in the aftermath of both his victories – many of which seem legitimate. As concerning as this might be, it is fairly insignificant compared to what is coming. The country is currently gearing up, albeit slowly, for a new round of Presidential elections next year, and Kabila has a choice – try to re-engineer the constitution in order to allow him to remain as President, or respect the letter of the constitution, accept the mandated term limit of the Presidency, and allow for the first democratic transition in Congolese history.

There have been concerns, particularly regarding the current construction of the electoral roll and the associated implementation of the national consensus. Analysts, behaving more like soothsayers, are agonizingly trying to find anything of deeper significance in such details. The Congo, and indeed the region, is looking and hoping for indications that its nominally democratic leader intends to remain democratic – despite such an intention requiring that he now cede power. However, as of now, there is nothing to suggest that Kabila has any intention other than to step aside.

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By treating the Congo as something to govern rather than something to own, Joseph Kabila has already differentiated himself from his predecessors. The most important thing he can do for his country now, is to leave quietly when his time is up.

BURUNDI

Votes counted in controversial Burundi polls as ruling party eyes win

NEWS STORY

Source: AFP World News

Bujumbura, 30 June 2015 - Burundi election officials finished vote-counting on Tuesday, a day after internationally condemned polls boycotted by the opposition, with the ruling party expected to win a sweeping victory.

"The counting is completed in all the polling stations throughout Burundi," election commission spokesman Prosper Ntahorwamiye told AFP, with those votes now being collated and taken to larger centres for final tallies before results can be announced.

Voting on Monday was marked by grenade attacks, with the election commission claiming an "enormous" turnout despite many polling stations remaining quiet.

The poll followed weeks of violence and a failed coup attempt sparked by President Pierre Nkurunziza's defiant bid for a third term, with more than 70 people killed.

Almost four million people were registered to vote, but the opposition boycotted the polls, as they did in the last elections in 2010, claiming it was not possible to hold a fair vote. Almost 144,000 refugees have fled into neighbouring nations.

The only international observers were those of the UN, who said that their presence should not be "interpreted as a validation" of the process.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon earlier called for the voting to be delayed, as Burundi faces its worst crisis since the end of its civil war nine years ago.

The UN refugee agency said nearly 10,000 Burundians had fled the country over the weekend before Bujumbura closed its borders ahead of the controversial election. It said some 144,000 people had left since April, when the political turmoil began.

The African Union refused to send observers as it was not possible to hold "free, fair, transparent and credible elections".

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The European Union warned the polls would "only exacerbate the profound crisis", while former colonial power Belgium said the polls were not credible and could "further divide the country".

First of three key votes

A combative Nkurunziza late Tuesday asked the international community "to respect our independence", adding that the elections "had passed off very well".

Provisional results of local elections could be ready by late Tuesday or Wednesday, when parliamentary results are also likely due, according to the election commission spokesman, adding it was "impossible" to give turnout figures before results were fully compiled.

In polling stations in Bujumbura queues were short and turnout sparse, with election officials at times outnumbering voters, although in pro-government areas turnout was higher, according to AFP reporters.

Monday's double polls were the first stage of three votes in Burundi, with presidential polls due on July 15 followed by senatorial elections on July 24.

Opponents say Nkurunziza's bid for another term is unconstitutional and violates a peace accord that paved the way for the end of 13 years of civil war in 2006.

Civil society groups backed the boycott in a joint statement calling on voters to skip the "sham elections".

Under the constitution, based on peace deals that ended the civil war, there are strict ethnic quotas in parliament.

Parliament must be made up of 60 percent from the majority Hutu people -- who make up some 85 percent of the population -- with the remaining 40 percent of elected seats reserved for the minority Tutsi.

Opposition leader Pacifique Nininahazwe, who organised anti-government protests before fleeing into exile, said the government "invent the numbers".

Fellow opposition leader Charles Nditije said the polls were "a parody of elections".

Several top officials -- including a deputy vice-president as well as members of the election commission and constitutional court -- have already fled the poverty-stricken, landlocked country.

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Burundi counts votes as thousands flee political crisis

NEWS STORY

Source: Reuters

By Clement Manirabarusha

30 June 2015 - Burundi's authorities were counting votes on Tuesday, a day after holding a parliamentary election that was boycotted by the opposition and marred by sporadic gunfire and blasts.

The U.N. refugee agency UNHCR said nearly 10,000 fled over the weekend before Monday's vote, with some trekking through the bush after Burundi closed its borders, determined to escape its worst political crisis since civil war ended in 2005.

The European Union and African Union did not send observers to watch Monday's poll, saying conditions were not in place to ensure a fair vote.

The United States said it was disappointed that the government did not heed calls to delay the vote due to weeks of unrest triggered by President Pierre Nkurunziza's bid for a third term in office. Opponents say the bid is unconstitutional.

The government says it will not again postpone the presidential vote set for July 15 after it was pushed back several weeks. It says the parliamentary vote went smoothly and that next month's election will be the same.

The electoral commission CENI was expected to announce results on Wednesday or Thursday, spokesman Prosper Ntahogwamiye told Reuters, adding he did not have figure for the turnout yet.

But there was little doubt about the outcome given the opposition boycott. Nkurunziza's CNDD-FDD party dominated the outgoing parliament with 81 of the 106 seats and was expected to secure another majority this time.

Although the opposition coalition did not campaign and boycotted the race, names of the parties were still on the ballot paper. A CENI official told state radio their votes would be counted and they would be awarded any seats they won.

The deputy president of opposition party Frodebu, Frederic Bamvuginyumvira, said Monday's parliamentary vote and local council polls held at the same time were a "non event".

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"These elections were held in unacceptable conditions, were not inclusive, fair and democratic," he told Reuters.

Weeks of unrest has prompted almost 144,000 Burundians, equivalent to more than 1 percent of the population, to flee to neighboring states.

UNHCR chief spokeswoman Melissa Fleming said Burundi closed its borders on Sunday before the vote.

"As of now and in the last 48 hours, refugees and people fleeing have been resorting to fleeing across informal border crossings through the forest to leave the country," she told reporters in Geneva.

Dozens of people were killed in clashes between protesters and police in protests that erupted after Nkurunziza's bid for another five year's in office was announced.

The president, who led a rebel group of the Hutu majority against forces against forces commanded by the Tutsi minority in the civil war, has rejected calls to withdraw his presidential bid, citing a court ruling saying he was allowed to run again.

Burundi polls a sham

OPINION

Source: Daily Nation (Kenya)

29 June 2015 - A defiant President Pierre Nkurunziza is going ahead with parliamentary elections despite protests, an opposition boycott, and appeals by fellow leaders in the East African region and beyond.

Also ignored is United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's appeal to delay the poll.

The situation in Burundi hardly provides a conducive atmosphere for a free and fair election.

And it was bound to get worse. A grenade attack thrown at a polling station at the start of the elections yesterday is the continuation of the grim situation in a country that seemed to have put decades of civil strife behind it to chart a new democratic course.

The trigger is President Nkurunziza's decision to flout a constitutional two-term limit.

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Chaos reigns, with some key officials, including the head of Burundi's parliament, having fled the country in protest. Several members of the electoral commission and a deputy vice-president have also fled.

This is a fiasco that makes a mockery of recent advances in democratisation in the region. The president and his ilk must be reminded that it is not possible to vote freely against the backdrop of gunfire and bloodletting. This is not an election. It is a sham.

Burundians Continue to Flee Country

NEWS STORY

Source: VOA

30 June 2015 - The U.N. refugee agency said thousands of Burundians continue to flee political instability and violence. About 10,000 refugees crossed into neighboring countries over the weekend before the government closed the borders prior to parliamentary elections.

It's now estimated that at least 144,000 refugees have fled Burundi since the beginning of April. That's when violence erupted after President Pierre Nkurunziza announced he would seek a third term.

UNHCR spokesperson Karin de Gruijl said most of those who fled over the weekend went to Tanzania and Rwanda. Closing the border crossings Sunday did not stop the exodus.

"Refugees are still leaving the country. They're using now informal border crossings – basically paths through the bush. They find their way into Rwanda and Tanzania and come then to our offices or our presence near the border to register themselves as refugees. And from there we take them to the camp[s] in the three countries: Tanzania, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo," she said.

While 144,000 have been registered as refugees, many others have not. They've entered neighboring countries without being counted by aid agencies.

De Gruijl said, "There are also people who are going on their own, especially people going to cities or bigger towns, and have their own resources and do not necessarily register as refugees. So, we do think that the number might be higher."

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More than 66,000 Burundian refugees are in Tanzania; well over 56,000 in Rwanda; about 11,500 in the DRC; more than 9,000 in Uganda and just 400 in Zambia.

The UNHCR spokesperson said some were mistreated on their journey.

“There are different reports of harassment. People are also reporting that it’s becoming more and more difficult for them to leave the country,” she said. “Not only because borders are closed, obviously, which makes things more difficult, but there are also roadblocks where militias and others are trying to take away their belongings. So, people are actually trying to leave the country, more or less secretly, taking as little luggage as they can and going through the bush.”

In the beginning, most of the refugees were women and children. Now, there’s a growing number of men. De Gruijl said many may be joining their families already in camps.

“We have been setting up camps or we have been moving people to existing refugee camps in most of the countries with the exception of Zambia at the moment because the numbers are very, very small,” she said.

Overcrowding is becoming a problem at the Nyarugusu camp in Tanzania. It was already home to 50,000 Congolese refugees. They’re now joined by 60,000 Burundians. An alternative site is being sought.

The UNHCR is working with 17 other aid agencies to help the refugees, but funding is a problem. The agency has appealed for \$207 million for the Burundi crisis, but has received only 13 percent of the amount, so far.

Burundi: Despite their criticism, did the international community enable Nkurunziza’s third term bid?

ANALYSIS

By Simon Allison

Source: Daily Maverick (South Africa)

30 June 2015 - On Monday, Burundi voted in the first leg of its controversial elections which will, almost certainly, result in a third term for President Pierre Nkurunziza. In going ahead with the polls, Nkurunziza defied almost everyone in the international

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community, who had urged him to postpone until the political situation had calmed down. But perhaps they should have spoken up sooner.

The list of people and organisations urging the postponement of Burundi's elections was long, and illustrious. It began at the very top of the international community food chain, with none other than United Nations secretary-general Ban-Ki Moon noting his concern at the Burundian government's insistence to go ahead regardless of the deep political and constitutional issues. It included the US and the European Union, both of whom withdrew financial and technical support for the poll. Closer to home, the African Union – in a significant break from tradition – withdrew its election observers in a huff, saying the necessary conditions for free and fair elections had not been met.

Even disgruntled members of President Pierre Nkurunziza's own government criticised the decision, including the speaker of parliament; the vice-president of the Constitutional Court; the vice-president of the electoral commission; and one of two vice-presidents of the country itself.

Less illustrious, but more significant for it, were the voices coming from the less powerful: specifically, the thousands of ordinary Burundians who risked their lives to register their disapproval of both the vote and Nkurunziza's decision to pursue a third term in office. At least 70 have died, and dozens have been tortured, in the political violence which dogged these protests and, as a result, opposition parties have boycotted the vote entirely.

But none of this was enough to stop Nkurunziza. On Monday, the first leg of the electoral process began with parliamentary elections, with the presidential poll scheduled for 15 July. Without the participation of any opposition, and with terrified would-be voters staying away, the vote is a sham. Whatever it may be, this is not democracy.

“What has been playing out in Burundi, including today's fraud election, is clearly the result of a failure of leadership and a lack of fortitude displayed by the African Union. Instead of taking a serious stand against Nkurunziza's illegal bid to stand for a third term, AU leaders, including the current chairman Robert Mugabe, made light of the situation and openly joked about it during the recently concluded AU Summit. Problem is, no one is laughing, and the deteriorating situation in Burundi is a hugely significant blow to the AU's already damaged brand and credibility,” said Jeffrey Smith, the senior advocacy officer at the Robert F Kennedy Centre for Justice and Human Rights.

Smith, like many analysts, blames the AU for letting the situation in Burundi spiral out of control. After all, the AU was supposed to be the principal guarantor of the Arusha Agreement which ended Burundi's civil war in 2000 – the agreement which

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Nkurunziza's third term blatantly violates – and it failed to intervene beyond a few stern statements and those aforementioned jokes (Mugabe, at the opening ceremony of the AU Summit in Johannesburg in June, said: “Two terms was like two weeks! So you must go more, so you want another term and you must find an excuse.” Out of context, it's not entirely clear if he's talking about Nkurunziza or himself).

But the AU is not the only culprit here. At fault too are all the organisations now taking pot-shots at Nkurunziza, all of whom perhaps could have altered the situation had they acted sooner and more responsibly.

“Had the international community been more careful in dealing with the previous polls [in 2010] where you had similar levels of intimidation of the political parties and arresting political dissidents, I think there would have been a sense that this kind of behaviour, in a post-conflict state that had a strong UN presence, would not be acceptable for risk of destabilising country and region. But the decision from EU and UN to turn a blind eye in 2010 has opened the door for Nkurunziza and the ruling party to say ‘if we got away with it in 2010, we would get away with it in 2015’. In addition, I think when attempts to change the constitution in March of last year became serious I think the AU and the East African Community (EAC) should have gotten involved,” said Yolande Bouka, a regional specialist with the Institute for Security Studies (ISS).

The US government should also ask itself a few hard questions. Burundi is a key troop-contributing member of the African Union Mission in Somalia, which is largely bankrolled by the US. Sources suggest that the Burundian government skims as much as 20% off the top of the payments designed for Burundian troops and equipment, and that this is a vital source of foreign revenue – one that's remained intact throughout the instability.

It's hard to escape the conclusion that all those now loudly calling for Nkurunziza's head have, at some point or another, been complicit in his consolidation of power. Now Burundi – and the region, given the thousands of refugees that have already fled for fear of further violence – is paying the price for this short-sightedness.

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REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Congo: Sassou N'Guesso convoque un dialogue sans exclusive

ARTICLE

Source: Agence de presse Xinhua

Par Vivienne

1 Juillet 2015 - Le président de la République du Congo, Denis Sassou N'Guesso, a annoncé mardi [30 juin] à Brazzaville la tenue d'un dialogue national sans exclusive, sans préalable et sans apriori dans le pays, au mois de juillet.

"J'ai arrêté que le dialogue national aura lieu du 11 au 15 juillet 2015. Il traitera des principales préoccupations mises en exergue par les uns et les autres", a précisé le chef de l'État dans un message à la nation radiotélévisé en fin de soirée.

La volonté d'aller à un tel dialogue, a-t-il expliqué, ressort des consultations organisées du 20 mai au 4 juin avec toutes les forces vives du Congo.

S'étant penché sur les questions qui déchirent actuellement la classe politique et l'opinion congolaise, au sujet du changement ou non de la constitution, les participants à ces consultations ont unanimement souhaité la tenue d'un dialogue qui traitera de deux questions principales.

"Il s'agit de la gouvernance électorale et de l'avenir de (nos) institutions", a indiqué M. Sassou N'Guesso.

Il a aussi décidé de mettre en place une commission préparatoire du dialogue national sans exclusive.

Un comité d'experts est prévu au sein de cette commission en vue d'apporter des réponses techniques aux questions qui se pose actuellement dans l'opinion congolaise.

"Comment devrait-on organiser au mieux les scrutins à venir dans notre pays? Fait-on, oui ou non, évoluer les institutions de la République?" telles sont les principales questions sur lesquelles travaillera ce comité dont la composition n'est pas encore connue.

Le chef de l'État congolais a néanmoins fait état d'un acte réglementaire qui déterminera les modalités d'organisation du dialogue national.

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Le président Sassou N'Guesso, dont le second mandat à la tête du pays s'achève en 2016, fait face à de profondes dissensions entre ceux qui demandent son départ du pouvoir, comme l'exige la Constitution, et ceux qui souhaitent sa réélection au moyen d'une révision de la constitution.

Les antagonismes exprimés inquiètent de plus en plus la population qui garde encore à l'esprit les guerres récurrentes connues par le pays entre 1997 et 2002.

Le dialogue est désormais prôné par la plupart des parties prenantes à ce débat comme seul moyen pour trouver une issue pacifique à cette impasse politique de fait.

SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa says it will appeal high court ruling on Bashir

NEWS STORY

Source: Sudan Tribune

30 June 2015 - South Africa will file an appeal to a ruling handed down by a local court this month that accused the government of violating the constitution by not arresting Sudanese president Omer Hassan al-Bashir during his presence at the 2-day African Union (AU) summit in Johannesburg this month.

“Government has decided to appeal the recent high court (Gauteng) judgment on the matter relating to President of Sudan Omer al-Bashir. The reasons for the appeal will be contained in the affidavit that will be submitted within the prescribed due date,” South Africa’s government spokeswoman Phumla Williams said in a statement.

The government will first have request a leave (permission) to appeal from the High Court judges before it can proceed to the Supreme Court of Appeal. If the ruling is unfavorable then the government can take the matter to the Constitutional Court.

Last week, the North Gauteng High Court reprimanded the government for flouting its own laws saying that it has undermined the country’s constitutional democracy in allowing Bashir’s exit. It has previously ordered that the government prevent the Sudanese leader from leaving the country.

“A democratic State based on the rule of law cannot exist or function, if the government ignores its constitutional obligations and fails to abide by Court orders. A Court is the guardian of justice, the corner-stone of a democratic system based on the rule of law. If

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the State, an organ of State or State official does not abide by Court orders, the democratic edifice will crumble stone-by-stone until it collapses and chaos ensues,” presiding Judge Dunstan Mlambo said.

Mlambo also invited the National Director of Public Prosecutions (NDPP) “to consider whether criminal proceedings are appropriate”.

Bashir is wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) to stand trial on charges of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes allegedly committed in Sudan’s western region of Darfur.

South Africa, as an ICC member, was obliged to arrest Bashir but chose not to on the grounds that he enjoys immunity as one of the delegations attending the AU summit. But the court dismissed this argument.

“The Immunities Act at its highest confers discretion on the Minister of International Relations to confer immunity, but she must exercise that lawfully. The state cannot rely on the African Union’s conventions to defend itself. That cannot trump South Africa’s obligations under the Rome Statute,” Mlambo said.

“The ICC does not give heads of state immunity. Therefore immunity is excluded or waived under the Rome Statute,” he asserted.

The court had also demanded an explanation on why Bashir was allowed to leave South Africa despite the interim court order barring him from departure.

The South African government explained in an affidavit filed last week that Sudanese officials had failed to present Bashir’s passport to the immigration officer at Waterkloof Air Force base.

“Two representatives of Sudan, in the company of the protocol officer from the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) handed a set of passports to the department of home affairs immigration officers,” the director general of the Department of Home Affairs Mkuseli Apleni said in the filing.

“After receipt of the passports, the immigration officer first of all checked to determine whether any of the passports belonged to President Bashir. The immigration officer concluded that the passport of President Bashir was not among the passports provided”.

The South African official asserted that as a result “it would then appear from the above that President Bashir departed from the republic without his passport presented to the immigration officer by the two Sudanese representatives who were accompanied by the

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protocol officer of DIRCO. The latter contention is fortified by the fact that verification on the passport details of President Bashir against the movement control system of the department of home affairs reveals that president Bashir indeed entered the Republic of South Africa but there is no record of him leaving the republic”.

South Africa’s largest opposition party, the Democratic Alliance (DA) criticized the government’s move to appeal.

“Instead of government being accountable, once again we see more public money being spent on appeals to evade the consequences of unlawful actions,” Democratic Alliance federal council chairperson James Selfe said in a statement.

“Although it is presently unclear what the state plans to argue, one thing is clear from the judgment handed down in this matter: the South African government was simply in contempt of court”.

“By not respecting the Rule of Law, and equality before the law, government is setting the worst possible example for citizens. Members of Cabinet now sit in meetings and effectively decide that certain people, most often friends of President Jacob Zuma, are above the law”.

The South African government has suggested last week it could decide to withdraw from the ICC “as a last resort” if its proposed reforms in the court’s Statute are not implemented.

SOUTH SUDAN

South Sudan army raped then burnt girls alive: UN

NEWS STORY

Source: AFP

30 June 2015 - South Sudan's army raped then torched girls alive inside their homes during a recent campaign notable for its "new brutality and intensity", a UN rights report said Tuesday.

Rights investigators from the UN mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) warned of "widespread human rights abuses" in a report based on 115 victims and eyewitnesses from the northern battleground state of Unity, scene of some of the heaviest recent fighting in the 18-month-long civil war.

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The military, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), launched a major offensive against rebel forces in April, with fierce fighting in Unity state's northern Mayom district, once a key oil producing area.

"Survivors of these attacks reported that SPLA and allied militias from Mayom county carried out a campaign against the local population that killed civilians, looted and destroyed villages and displaced over 100,000 people," the UN statement read.

"Some of the most disturbing allegations compiled by UNMISS human rights officers focused on the abduction and sexual abuse of women and girls, some of whom were reportedly burnt alive in their dwellings."

Civil war began in December 2013 when President Salva Kiir accused his former deputy Riek Machar of planning a coup, setting off a cycle of retaliatory killings that have split the poverty-stricken, landlocked country along ethnic lines.

The upsurge in fighting "has not only been marked by allegations of killing, rape, abduction, looting, arson and displacement, but by a new brutality and intensity," the UN statement added.

"The scope and level of cruelty that has characterised the reports suggests a depth of antipathy that exceeds political differences."

The UN children's agency said in a report earlier this month that warring forces have carried out horrific crimes against children, including castration, rape and tying them together before slitting their throats.

Two-thirds of the country's 12 million people need aid, according to the UN and one-sixth have fled their homes.

S. Sudan admits losing strategic town of Malakal to rebels

NEWS STORY

Source: Sudan Tribune

30 June 2015 - The South Sudanese government has admitted losing the Upper Nile state town of Malakal, which fell to the armed opposition forces over the weekend.

Defense minister, Kuol Manyang said government forces pulled out of the strategic town to avoid damage and loss of lives, but were within the outskirts of Malakal.

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“The rebels of Riek Machar are in Malakal”, Defence minister Kuol Manyang told reporters on Tuesday. Our forces are around Malakal”, he said, without much details.

The defense minister was reacting to a question asking about general security situation in the country and who actually controlled the strategic oil-rich state capital.

Local officials and residents separately told Sudan Tribune that the armed fighters under the overall command of former government militia commander, Johnson Olony and forces allied to the former vice president Riek Machar under the command of General Gabriel Tanginye remain in control of the town and that government forces were only occupying areas within Lul bridge and some territories east of Akoka county.

Minister Manyang, however, assured the population that pro-government forces were capable of defending the young nation, including their abilities to take full control of Malakal "soon".

The Upper Nile capital has changed hands several times between the South Sudanese army and the armed opposition forces since violence broke out in the country in 2013.

Tens of thousands of people have been killed and about 2 million displaced since fighting broke out in South Sudan as aid agencies warned of severe famine in coming months.

South Sudan: No Sanctions without a Strategy

OPINION

Source: Crisis Group (<http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/publication-type/media-releases/2015/africa/south-sudan-no-sanctions-without-a-strategy.aspx>)

30 June 2015 - As South Sudan's civil war continues unabated and multiple peace processes and initiatives create little tangible progress, members of the UN Security Council are seeking to adopt sanctions against six generals, three each from the government and the opposition sides. This would in effect punish past wrongdoing and risk compromising ongoing peace efforts. It would also undermine the renewed impetus for a coordinated international approach to peacemaking in South Sudan. That process remains under the auspices of the regional body, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which has recently been augmented by a wider grouping, known as "IGAD-PLUS". Imposing sanctions on these generals at this time would also turn individuals and communities in South Sudan who currently favour a peace agreement

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against the international community. The Security Council should hold off on this sanctions package and reframe its South Sudan sanctions strategy.

None of the six named generals are responsible for the failure to reach a viable agreement. They are not key political decision makers and do not play major roles in shaping positions at the Addis Ababa negotiations. Most favour a negotiated settlement and their support will be crucial for successful implementation of any peace agreement that is achieved.

The failure of the IGAD-sponsored talks to date has created frustration, but IGAD-PLUS, launched in South Africa earlier this month, seeks to coordinate a more effective and broadly-supported international strategy by bringing in additional important players, including the African Union (AU), the U.S., UK, European Union, Norway and China, among others. IGAD-PLUS can only succeed with coordinated and effective support from its members and the Council. While IGAD, the AU and UN agree that the road to peace undoubtedly requires a combination of pressure and incentives, these proposed sanctions would likely weaken, not reinforce a more strategic approach. A unity of approach is required, not uncoordinated, independent actions that may produce long-term negative consequences for peace prospects.

Sanctions as a means of pressure should:

1. Be imposed only when clearly supporting a revitalised peace process;
2. Make clear to those targeted what they would need to do to avoid the sanction or have it removed; and
3. Provide clear timeframes and benchmarks for such action to be taken.

The sanctions that are being considered meet none of these tests. In seeking to demonstrate the credibility of the Council's threats, the Council risks achieving the reverse with ill-timed and ill-conceived sanctions. They will not build greater support for an improved peace process, which is the present imperative, and should not be pursued.

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Soudan du Sud: l'ONU fait état de violations atroces des droits humains dans l'Etat d'Unity

ARTICLE

Source: ONU

30 Juin 2015 - La Mission des Nations Unies au Soudan du Sud (MINUSS) a déclaré mardi avoir en sa possession des preuves concernant des violations généralisées des droits de l'homme possiblement commises par l'Armée populaire de libération du Soudan (APLS) et d'autres groupes armés affiliés, au cours de la récente escalade des combats dans l'Etat d'Unity.

Dans un communiqué de presse accompagnant la publication de son rapport sur la flambée de violence au Soudan du Sud durant les mois d'avril et de mai 2015, la MINUSS a expliqué que les membres de son personnel ont interrogé 115 victimes et témoins oculaires originaires de plusieurs comtés de l'État d'Unity (Rubkona, Guit, Koch, Leer et Mayom) dans lesquels l'APLS a lancé une « offensive majeure » contre les forces d'opposition armées à partir de fin avril.

Selon la MINUSS, les survivants de ces attaques ont rapporté que l'APLS et des milices alliées du Comté de Mayom ont mené une offensive contre la population locale, au cours de laquelle des civils ont été tués, des villages ont été pillés et détruits et plus de 100.000 personnes ont été déplacées.

Certaines des allégations les plus sérieuses documentées par les experts des droits de l'homme de la MINUSS font état d'enlèvements et d'abus sexuels à l'encontre de femmes et de filles, dont certaines auraient été brûlées vives à leur domicile.

« Cette récente escalade [des combats] a non seulement été marquée par des allégations de meurtres, viols, enlèvements, pillages, incendies criminels et déplacements, mais également par une brutalité et une intensité d'une nature nouvelle », explique le rapport de la MINUSS. « La portée et le niveau de la cruauté rapportée suggèrent une antipathie profonde qui dépasse les simples différends politiques ».

La MINUSS a cherché à visiter les sites où les atrocités auraient été commises afin de vérifier les allégations, mais son personnel s'est systématiquement vu refuser l'accès par l'APLS, en plus des obstacles logistiques rencontrés.

Depuis la rédaction de son rapport, les experts des droits de l'homme de la MINUSS ont été en mesure de se rendre sur deux sites qui auraient été le cadre d'atrocités et de mener des entretiens supplémentaires avec des témoins oculaires et des victimes. Les

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informations recueillies, a affirmé la Mission de l'ONU au Soudan du Sud, corroborent les rapports antérieurs.

Conformément à la pratique, une copie du rapport a été fournie au Ministère des affaires étrangères du Soudan du Sud dix jours avant sa sortie, mais les hauts responsables du gouvernement ne se sont toujours pas prononcés sur ses conclusions.

Une copie a également été fournie à l'Armée/Mouvement populaire de libération du Soudan dans l'opposition, qui n'a pas non plus émis de commentaire.

Le porte-parole officiel de l'APLS a quant à lui rejeté les allégations de violations des droits de l'homme commises par les forces gouvernementales dans le passé, tout en saluant la conduite d'enquêtes concernant de telles accusations.

« Nous demandons à l'APLS de respecter cet engagement et permettre à nos experts des droits de l'homme d'accéder sans entrave aux sites où ces violations ont été signalées », a déclaré la Représentante spéciale du Secrétaire général des Nations Unies pour le Soudan du Sud et chef de la MINUSS, Ellen Margrethe Loej. « Révéler la vérité sur ce qui s'est produit offre le meilleur espoir de garantir la reddition de comptes pour des violences si atroces et mettre fin au cycle de l'impunité qui permet à ces exactions de se répéter ».

SUDAN

Al Bashir Discusses with African Union Envoy South Sudan Conflict

NEWS STORY

Source: Sudan Vision

30 June 2015 - President of the Republic Omer Al Bashir has affirmed the preparedness of his government for extending every possible assistance for the success of the mission of the African Union Envoy in South Sudan President Alpha Oumar Konare towards realizing peace in South Sudan. Al Bashir advised Konare (according to the Minister of Foreign Affairs Prof. Ibrahim Ghandour) on the importance of bringing together the adversaries with a need to address the root cause of the problem as well as laying down integrated solution and inspect their implementation.

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The African Union Envoy Alpha Oumar Konare has met Tuesday the Sudanese President Omer Al Bashir and addressed the file of the progress of IGAD mediation and the process of peace in the state of South Sudan.

Ghandour said the visit comes in the context of the importance of the role played by Sudan towards realizing stability in the State of South Sudan in the light of the current tensions prevailing there.

He said President Al Bashir has met Konare the highest delegate of the African Union to the State of South Sudan and this meeting comes at the start of Konare's mission who came for discussing with President Al Bashir the best means for ending the conflict and getting advice from Al Bashir related to this file.

Ghandour said President Al Bashir has affirmed to the delegated of the African Union his personal concern and Sudan's attention to Peace in South Sudan as we used t be not one people but one country and President Al Bashir was a President of the people of South Sudan when Sudan was a one country.

Al Bashir has also conveyed to the envoy the government attention to peace in South Sudan as the responsibility of peace in South Sudan is an ethical responsibility because we are brothers and Africans.

Ghandour affirmed the importance of Sudan's role in the file of South Sudan.

Ghandour told the press that Sudan is considering with attention peace file in South Sudan in its capacity as part of Troika IGAD adding that "south Sudan is a sister country to Sudan and it is imperative to realize peace and stability in it".

Ghandour highlighted the Directive by President Al Bashir to his ministries to go ahead with boosting Sudan foreign relations with its Arab and African vicinity.

He said the President has also directed continuation of dialogue with the European Union and the United States of America for clarifying Sudan's view point on many issues. Ghandour affirmed Sudan is keen on promoting its external relations with brothers and friendly countries noting that he has reviewe3d with the President Sudan's participation in the regional and international conferences and Sudan's bilateral relations.

He added "I listened to the directives of the President as Sudan is preparing for participating in the conference of the United Nations and the Indian-African Summit during the coming period.

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UN extends Darfur peacekeeping force despite Sudan protest

NEWS STORY

Source: Associated Press

30 June 2015 - The Security Council on Monday unanimously approved a one-year extension of the joint UN-African Union peacekeeping force in Sudan's western Darfur region where conflict is intensifying, rejecting the Sudanese government's demand that the troops leave.

A resolution adopted by the UN's most powerful body keeps the size of the force the same — 15 845 military personnel and 3 403 international police. It orders the troops to concentrate on protecting civilians, ensuring the delivery of humanitarian aid, mediating conflicts and supporting a peace process.

The council condemned increased human rights violations and expressed deep concern at the escalating fighting between government and rebel forces and the serious deterioration of the security situation in Darfur so far this year. It demanded that all parties in Darfur immediately stop fighting and called for "an urgent end to inter-tribal clashes, criminality and banditry".

Darfur has been in turmoil since 2003, when ethnic Africans rebelled, accusing the Arab-dominated Sudanese government of discrimination. Rights groups charge the regime retaliated by unleashing Arab militias on civilians, a claim the government denies.

Sudan ordered the peacekeeping force known as Unamid out of Darfur late last year.

Unamid's future

The resolution said Unamid's future depends on meeting a set of benchmarks including progress toward a negotiated political settlement, a commitment by all parties to implement a cease-fire, protection of civilians and progress to prevent or reduce community conflicts through mediation.

US Ambassador Samantha Power said that given the very high level of violence and the more than 2.5 million Darfuris who are displaced, the UN force "is needed now more than ever".

Even though the displacement in Darfur last year was the highest in 10 years, Power said the conflict has dropped out of the global spotlight. She urged that greater international attention be paid to Darfur where 4.4 million people need humanitarian aid.

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Britain's UN Ambassador Matthew Rycroft stressed that "now is not the time to cut and run".

"We are aware that there have been calls for the mission to exit, including from West Darfur," Rycroft said. "But this resolution makes clear that given the worsening security situation and the lack of progress on the benchmarks, Unamid cannot yet leave any part of Darfur."

Sudan's Deputy Ambassador Hassan Hamid Hassan demanded that a working group examining an exit strategy for Unamid immediately resume work.

"They claim Darfur now experiences open warfare," Hassan said. "This is completely wrong. There are tribal clashes in certain regions."

Later on Monday, Fatou Bensouda, the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, accused the Security Council of failing to respond to 10 requests from the tribunal for action against individuals that failed to cooperate, including Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, who is wanted for alleged war crimes in Darfur.

Soudan: la CPI se dit déterminée à obtenir l'arrestation du Président Omar Al-Bachir

ARTICLE

Source: ONU

29 Juin 2015 - La Procureur de la Cour pénale internationale (CPI), Fatou Bensouda, a réitéré lundi devant le Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU la détermination de la Cour à obtenir l'arrestation du Président soudanais Omar Al-Bachir, qui est accusé de crimes commis dans la région du Darfour.

M. Al-Bachir fait l'objet d'un mandat d'arrêt de la CPI depuis 2009. Il est poursuivi pour crimes de guerre, crimes contre l'humanité et génocide au Darfour, où les violences ont fait plus de 300.000 morts depuis 2003.

Malgré ce mandat d'arrêt, le Président soudanais a réussi à se rendre dans plusieurs pays sans être inquiété. Ainsi, mi-juin, il a quitté précipitamment l'Afrique du Sud, où il était venu participer à un sommet de l'Union africaine, malgré une interdiction de quitter le territoire prononcée par un tribunal sud-africain.

« La détermination de mon bureau à apporter une justice indépendante et impartiale au peuple du Soudan reste inébranlable », a dit la Procureur de la CPI devant les

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membres du Conseil de sécurité. « Le départ précipité de M. Bachir d'Afrique du Sud prouve que les mandats d'arrêt contre lui restent valides, qu'ils sont toujours pleinement en vigueur et que mon bureau est déterminé à faire en sorte qu'ils soient exécutés ».

Mme Bensouda a estimé que la situation sécuritaire au Darfour continuait de susciter l'inquiétude et que les civils sont les premières victimes de l'instabilité et de l'insécurité, en particulier « à cause d'une campagne du gouvernement les visant ».

Elle a rappelé que l'enquête de la CPI sur les crimes présumés commis au Darfour continue, même si son rythme et son intensité ne correspond à ce que la Cour souhaiterait, en raison de ressources limitées.

« J'appelle quiconque ayant des informations fiables et d'éventuelles preuves de crimes actuels au Darfour à contacter mon bureau et à soutenir de manière active cette enquête », a déclaré Mme Bensouda.

Elle a également une nouvelle fois appelé les Etats parties au Statut de Rome définissant la CPI à promouvoir la coopération afin d'obtenir l'arrestation des individus recherchés par la CPI dans le cadre de la situation au Darfour.