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



MEDIA MONITORING

11 June 2015

PRESS STATEMENT

PRESS STATEMENT

BUJUMBURA, 10 JUNE 2015

The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region, Said Djinnit, and members of the facilitation team that joined and supported the dialogue between the Burundian parties, met today in Bujumbura with members of the diplomatic corps. During this meeting, the Special Envoy briefed the participants on the dialogue who he facilitated starting from 5 May 2015, at the request of the Burundian parties who had agreed, by themselves, on the agenda as well as the list of participants.

The Special Envoy recalled that during the dialogue, the parties maintained diverging views on the candidature of President Nkurunziza for a third term. He highlighted the progress made on the other four agenda items, namely: the appeasement measures and mutual commitments; the management of the electoral calendar; guarantees for the holding of free, transparent, inclusive and peaceful elections; and protection of Constitutional rights and freedoms. The conclusions of the dialogue are reflected in the attached 29 May press communiqué.

The Special Envoy commended the Burundian parties, in particular, for the set of recommendations adopted by consensus at the 28 May dialogue session, on the right to information and the reopening of private radio and television stations damaged during the 13-14 May events. He encourages the parties to implement these recommendations without delay.

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The Special Envoy takes this opportunity to thank all the Burundian parties for their cooperation during the dialogue that he facilitated with impartiality and, on which he reported faithfully to the Emergency Summit of the East African Community which took place in Dar-es-Salaam on 31 May, and the relevant United Nations organs. The Special Envoy expresses his deep gratitude for the support extended to him in his role as facilitator by the East African Community, the International Conference for the Great Lakes region, the African Union and the United Nations including the Secretary-General, the Security Council and the Peace Building Commission. He also thanks the external partners of Burundi including the European Union, the United States, France, Belgium, and many others who came forth to help during the dialogue process.

Mr. Said Djinnit thanks all the Burundian parties for the facilitation role they entrusted to him on 5 May. He duly takes note of the positions expressed a few days ago, on his role as facilitator by some Burundian parties.

In his capacity as the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, Mr. Djinnit remains committed, in collaboration with relevant regional organizations, to continue to work towards preserving and consolidating peace, democracy and stability in Burundi in accordance with the objectives of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region, signed in Addis Ababa on 24 February 2013.

The Special Envoy encourages the Burundian parties to continue their dialogue with a view to create conditions conducive to holding free, fair, inclusive and peaceful elections. He stresses the importance of preserving the legacy of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement as enshrined in the Constitution. He reiterates his appeal to all parties to exercise restraint and to refrain from any acts likely to increase tension and violence.

DECLARATION AUX MEDIAS

BUJUMBURA, 10 JUIN 2015

L'Envoyé spécial du Secrétaire général des Nations Unies pour la région des Grands Lacs, M. Said Djinnit, et les membres de l'équipe de facilitation qui l'ont rejoint et soutenu dans le dialogue entre les parties prenantes burundaises ont rencontré, ce jour, les membres du corps diplomatique à Bujumbura. Lors de cette rencontre, l'Envoyé spécial a fait le point sur le dialogue qu'il a facilité à compter du 5 mai 2015 à la demande des parties burundaises qui avaient arrêté, elles-mêmes, l'ordre du jour et la liste des participants.

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L'Envoyé spécial a rappelé que tout au long du dialogue, les parties burundaises ont maintenu leurs positions divergentes sur la candidature du Président Nkurunziza à un troisième mandat. Elles ont cependant fait des avancées sur les quatre autres questions à l'ordre du jour à savoir: les mesures d'apaisement et les engagements mutuels; la gestion du calendrier électoral; les garanties pour la tenue d'élections libres, transparentes, inclusives et apaisées; et les libertés fondamentales garanties par la Constitution. Les conclusions du dialogue sont reflétées dans le communiqué de presse publié le 29 mai et qui est joint à la présente déclaration.

L'Envoyé spécial a salué, en particulier, les recommandations que les parties prenantes ont approuvées par consensus lors de leur dernière session, le 28 mai, portant sur le droit à l'information et la réouverture des radios et télévisions privées qui ont été endommagées durant les événements des 13-14 mai. Il les encourage à les mettre en œuvre sans délai.

L'Envoyé spécial saisit cette occasion pour remercier toutes les parties prenantes burundaises pour la coopération dont elles ont fait montre au cours du dialogue qu'il a facilité en toute impartialité et dont il a rendu compte fidèlement au Sommet de la Communauté des pays de l'Afrique de l'est qui s'est tenu à Dar-es-Salaam le 31 mai, ainsi qu'aux instances des Nations Unies. L'Envoyé spécial exprime également sa gratitude au Sommet de la Communauté de l'Afrique de l'est, à la Conférence internationale sur la région des Grands Lacs, à l'Union Africaine et aux Nations Unies y compris le Secrétaire général, le Conseil de sécurité et la Commission de consolidation de la paix pour le soutien qu'ils lui ont apporté en tant que facilitateur. Il tient aussi à remercier les partenaires du Burundi, notamment l'Union Européenne, les Etats-Unis d'Amérique, la France, la Belgique ainsi que plusieurs autres pays qui l'ont soutenu au cours de ce processus.

Mr. Said Djinnit remercie l'ensemble des parties prenantes burundaises pour le mandat de facilitateur qu'elles lui ont confié le 5 mai 2015. Il prend acte de la position exprimée, il y a quelques jours, sur son rôle de facilitateur par des représentants de certaines parties.

En sa qualité d'Envoyé spécial du Secrétaire général des Nations Unies pour la région des Grands Lacs, il réaffirme son engagement à continuer à œuvrer, de concert avec les représentants des Organisations régionales, en vue de la préservation et de la consolidation de la paix, de la démocratie et la stabilité au Burundi conformément aux objectifs de l'Accord-cadre pour la Paix, la Sécurité et la Coopération en RDC et dans la région des Grands Lacs signé le 24 février 2013 à Addis Abéba.

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L'Envoyé spécial encourage les parties prenantes burundaises à poursuivre leur dialogue en vue de la création des conditions propices à la tenue d'élections libres, inclusives et apaisées. Il souligne l'importance de la préservation des acquis de l'Accord de Paix et de Réconciliation d'Arusha tels que consacrés par la Constitution du Burundi. Il réitère son appel à toutes les parties burundaises à la retenue et à s'abstenir de tout acte susceptible d'accroître la tension et de générer des actes de violences.

DRC

U.N. deploys troops, helicopters to back Congo in fight with rebels

Source: Reuters

By Aaron Ross; Editing by Matthew Mpoke Bigg and Hugh Lawson

10 June 2015 - U.N. forces have deployed ground troops, attack helicopters and drones to support a campaign by Democratic Republic of Congo's army against rebels in the northeast of the country, the head of its U.N. peacekeeping mission said on Wednesday.

The offensive against the Ituri Patriotic Resistance Force (FRPI) marks the first time the peacekeepers have provided major combat support to Congo's army since a row in January over the command of a separate operation against Rwandan Hutu rebels.

In that operation, the U.N. mission refused to work with two Congolese generals accused of human rights violations, leading the government to break off most military cooperation.

The U.N. Congo mission is the world's largest and it has gone into action in the country's eastern provinces to combat armed groups, dozens of which plague the region.

The offensive against the FRPI in Oriental Province is the most important since a successful joint campaign against the Rwandan-backed M23 rebellion in 2013, said mission head Martin Kobler.

"Here you have the proof that if we are truly united with the (Congolese army), if we can support (their) operations, it's worth it and produces results," Kobler told a news conference.

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In the first detailed account of the offensive that began last week, Kobler said the army intervened to prevent rebels from marching on the town of Gety after surrender talks with the FRPI broke down in the nearby town of Aveba.

Combat continued this week but the FRPI's estimated 400 fighters have been dispersed into small groups, Kobler's deputy, David Gressly, told Reuters on Monday, adding he had no reports of civilian casualties.

The FRPI, first formed in 2002, is regarded as one of the most rapacious rebel groups in the east, exploiting reserves of gold, diamonds and timber.

Kobler said more talks are needed with the government before the United Nations can resume supporting joint operations against the Rwandan rebels, the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda, whom Congo is fighting unilaterally.

Congo: offensive conjointe contre des rebelles

Source: The Associated Press

Par Saleh Mwanamilongo

Kinshasa, 10 Juin 2015 - Des soldats congolais soutenus par les forces des Nations unies ont lancé une opération militaire contre un groupe rebelle dans le nord-est du pays, et ont tué au moins 34 combattants, ont affirmé des responsables, mercredi.

L'offensive contre les Forces de résistance patriotique d'Ituri (FRPI) survient à la suite d'un différend entre la mission onusienne et l'armée congolaise concernant un plan similaire pour chasser le vétéran groupe rebelle Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR), un groupe armé formé en République démocratique du Congo.

Il y avait eu impasse dans ce cas lorsque l'armée congolaise avait choisi deux généraux liés à des violations des droits humains pour diriger l'intervention.

L'opération désormais en cours cible les FRPI, dont l'ancien dirigeant Germain Katanga a été condamné l'an dernier de crimes de guerre et de crimes contre l'humanité par la Cour pénale internationale.

Les forces onusiennes prennent part à l'offensive tant au sol que dans les airs, selon Jean-Marie Joseph Goncalves, porte-parole militaire pour la mission de l'ONU. Le porte-parole a affirmé que des opérations conjointes avaient été lancées au sol avec le 1er bataillon du Bangladesh de la force d'intervention rapide des Nations unies, soutenu

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par des hélicoptères de combat des Nations unies, dans le but de «neutraliser les positions des FRPI».

Martin Kobler, à la tête de la mission onusienne, a affirmé que la Mission de l'Organisation des Nations unies pour la stabilisation en République démocratique du Congo (MONUSCO) avait dépêché des soldats et des hélicoptères après que le groupe rebelle eut quitté la table de négociations.

«J'appelle de nouveau les combattants des FRPI à se rendre et à amorcer le processus de désarmement pour éviter le risque de mourir (au combat)», a-t-il déclaré.

Il s'agit de l'effort le plus important contre la myriade de groupes rebelles au Congo depuis la victoire de l'armée congolaise et des Nations unies contre le groupe M23 vers la fin 2013.

Deuxième Forum économique : le Nord-Kivu s'ouvre aux investissements en toute sécurité

Source: Agence d'Information d'Afrique centrale

Par Martin Enyimo

10 Juin 2015 - La consolidation de la paix afin de faciliter les investissements a été la principale recommandation des participants à cette rencontre de quatre jours. L'on retient aussi que seize projets de développement ont été adoptés par les participants dans les secteurs des infrastructures, des mines et du tourisme, base de l'économie du Nord-Kivu avec actuellement une démographie de sept millions d'habitants.

2000 km de routes envisagées

À propos des routes, l'on apprend que le gouvernement envisage la construction deux milles kilomètres pour un coût estimé à deux milliards de dollars américains. Prenant la parole à la clôture du Forum, Salomon Banamuhere a rassuré les participants sur la détermination du gouvernement pour renforcer la paix dans cette partie du pays, souvent théâtre de conflits dans les années passées. « Le Gouvernement de la République fera de son mieux pour vous accompagner, vous les opérateurs économiques congolais et étrangers, et toute la population du Nord-Kivu, pour construire nos routes, mieux exploiter nos mines, mieux accueillir nos touristes, mettre en valeur nos terres agro-pastorales afin d'avoir un revenu financier soutenu », a indiqué le ministre d'État.

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Hôte des assises, le gouverneur du Nord-Kivu, Julien Paluku a, dans son allocution de clôture, évoqué l'aspect économique et politique de ses propos : « Tout le sens de mon propos est à la fois économique et politique. Il est économique parce que la Province du Nord-Kivu, après la guerre, a confiance en la dynamique de croissance. Il est économique, parce que nous avons à bâtir des partenariats exceptionnels avec les investisseurs du secteur privé. Il est économique parce que nous avons à inventer des mécanismes et des dispositifs de développement. Il est économique, parce que je crois que c'est l'intérêt de nos entreprises et sociétés d'avoir des alliances. Mais il est aussi politique, car si nous voulons qu'il y ait un cadre stable des affaires, une sécurité pour les investissements, alors nous devons tout faire pour que l'économie du Nord-Kivu puisse être encouragée, soutenue, stimulée par la classe politique d'aujourd'hui et de demain ».

11 milliards de dollars américains à mobiliser entre 2015 et 2025

Julien Paluku a également souligné l'importance et la hauteur du financement nécessaire pour l'envol économique de la province. « Comme tout le monde peut l'avoir constaté, il nous faudra, entre 2015 et 2025, mobiliser près de 11 milliards de dollars américains pour rencontrer les attentes de notre population », a-t-il précisé. Avant de mettre un accent sur la création d'emploi en ces termes : « Au regard des ressources énormes, nous avons montré un Nord-Kivu qui bouge, un Nord-Kivu porteur d'espoir et d'opportunités croissantes, un Nord-Kivu source de vie et d'inspiration. Sans croissance économique suffisante, pas de créations d'emplois en nombre. Agir pour la croissance durable, c'est créer beaucoup d'emplois, c'est également donner les moyens aux entreprises d'investir au Nord-Kivu ; c'est adapter tous nos dispositifs de financement pour que l'économie réelle en soit la seule bénéficiaire. Cela suppose de la confiance ».

Pour le gouverneur du Nord-Kivu, il n'y a point de doute sur l'environnement sécuritaire stable dans sa province et les investisseurs peuvent amener leurs capitaux qui seront sécurisés par le gouvernement central selon un engagement ferme. « Certaines langues pessimistes et décourageantes, tenues loin du Nord-Kivu continuent à faire mauvaise presse de l'environnement sécuritaire de la province au point de faire peur à certains investisseurs. Nous rassurons tout le monde que la paix s'y instaure davantage grâce au génie du Président de la République et toutes les dispositions sont prises pour la sécurité des investisseurs et de leurs capitaux ainsi que leur liberté sociale et économique. Mais au-delà des solutions sécuritaires, nous estimons que seul le développement économique et social pourra, à terme, permettre d'endiguer la criminalité et favoriser la consolidation de la paix. Il n'y a pas de sécurité sans développement. L'une procure l'autre », a affirmé avec fermeté Julien Paluku. Notons-le, un comité de suivi des résolutions du deuxième Forum économique du Nord-Kivu va être mis en place pour le respect des engagements souscrits.

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Aubin Minaku aux consultations: “Nous soutenons le calendrier électoral”

Source: Radio Okapi

11 Juin 2015 - La Majorité présidentielle (MP), plate-forme de partis et personnalités qui appuient la politique du chef de l'Etat congolais, soutient le calendrier électoral global publié par la Commission électorale nationale indépendante (Ceni) en février dernier. Le secrétaire exécutif de la MP, Aubin Minaku l'a réaffirmé mardi 9 juin à l'issue de l'entretien que le président Kabila a accordé à la quarantaine de membres de cette plate-forme. Le président Kabila poursuit ses consultations en vue du dialogue qu'il envisage avec les forces politiques et sociales de la RDC.

« Concernant la question du calendrier électoral global, nous notons que c'est à la suite d'une demande pressante et insistante de l'opposition congolaise et de la société civile que la Ceni est arrivé à adopter un calendrier électoral. Nous soutenons ce calendrier électoral tout en restant raisonnables, tout en contribuant afin que ce calendrier électoral soit respecté par tous », a déclaré Aubin Minaku.

Le président Kabila consulte les acteurs politiques de l'opposition, de la majorité et les chefs des confessions religieuses afin de recueillir leurs avis sur le dialogue politique qu'il envisage d'organiser.

L'UDPS, première force politique de l'opposition, veut un dialogue sous la médiation de la communauté internationale tandis que d'autres partis de l'opposition à l'instar de l'UNC et du MLC sont à ce jour opposés au dialogue.

Les échanges entre les personnalités consultées et le chef de l'Etat tournent notamment autour du calendrier électoral qui prévoit sept scrutins en un peu moins de deux ans. Le secrétaire d'Etat adjoint américain à la démocratie, Tom Malinowski a déclaré jeudi dernier à Kinshasa que son pays était favorable à un dialogue qui se focaliserait sur des questions électorales et ne serait pas utilisé comme un prétexte pour retarder les élections.

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Le traité de libre-échange Tripartite vu de RDC électoral”

Source: RFI

Après cinq ans de négociations, 26 pays d’Afrique ont signé mercredi 10 juin un traité de libre-échange. Ce texte dont l’objectif est de renforcer les échanges commerciaux très marginaux entre ces pays d’Afrique de l’Est, du centre et du Sud est une nouvelle étape sur le long chemin vers l’intégration économique entre des pays au développement très divers. Exemple avec la RDC, pays très peu industrialisé et qui est l’un des rares pays francophones à faire partie de cet ensemble régional.

10 Juin 2015 - Pour Kinshasa, dont l’économie est en pleine reconstruction, signer cet accord tripartite est une façon de prendre le train en marche, suivre les locomotives du continent comme l’Afrique du Sud et l’Egypte afin d’accélérer l’industrialisation balbutiante de ce pays, et se tenir prêt à entrer sur ce marché commun à l’horizon des 5-10 prochaines années.

Gerome Kamwanga est l’un des conseillers en charge de la coopération au cabinet du Premier ministre. « En RDC, on a connu quand même beaucoup de problèmes. D’abord les pillages, puis la guerre, etc. Le tissu économique a été détruit, mais nous sommes en train de le reconstruire. Nous avons un programme moissonnant, qui est le programme de parc agro-industriel. Et là, il nous reste encore 21 parcs agro-industriels à développer. Donc, nous disons : nous sommes d’accord avec ce principe. Nous ne sommes pas encore prêts, on est en train de nous préparer, ça peut nous prendre 5-6 ans. Et puis au moment opportun, on va entrer. »

Dans la même veine, une loi pour que la RDC adhère au protocole des investissements de la SADC est sur le point d’être adoptée. Une façon de s’aligner sur leurs procédures pour attirer les investisseurs.

Mais beaucoup reste à faire. L’agriculture industrielle est inexistante, l’exploitation forestière est à terre. Seul le secteur minier porte l’économie, mais aucune transformation n’a encore lieu en RDC. Le chantier avant que le Congo puisse commencer à profiter de ce marché continental intégré est donc immense.

Pas de traité à l’Ouest

Ce traité de libre-échange et la création d’une zone comprenant la moitié orientale de l’Afrique est aussi l’occasion de se demander ce qu’il en est à l’ouest du continent. Alors qu’en principe, beaucoup de facteurs vont dans le sens de l’intégration: monnaie et

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langue commune, droit du commerce commun, l'intégration économique régionale
peine à y voir le jour.

Congo voters battle against presidential power lust

Source: AP

10 June 2015 - As the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) prepares for its upcoming elections, the battle against the incumbent president's run for a third term rages on.

Joseph Kabila has held presidential power in the DRC since 2001. His second term will end next year and the law rules a third term unconstitutional. In January, Kabila proposed a new electoral law that called for a census before the country's elections next November. His administration admitted the census could delay the 2016 elections, which triggered protests from people who called it a ploy by the president to delay stepping down.

Leaders of opposition parties also saw Kabila's call for a "national dialogue" regarding peaceful elections as a scheme to postpone them. During a visit to Congo last week, Tom Malinowski, U.S. assistant secretary of state for human rights, said the dialogue should not be used as an excuse to delay elections. Kabila's administration called Malinowski's statements "unacceptable" and accused him of interfering in the country's internal affairs.

Jennifer Cooke, director of the Africa program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, explains these tactics are part of a recurring pattern: "In the last election (2011), he made changes to the electoral law six months before the election that were to his advantage. Changes to the rules in the middle of the game is undemocratic, especially when the incumbent has so much power."

The thirst for power among political leaders is a trend in African nations. Blaise Compaore, 27-year president of Burkina Faso, stepped down in October after facing opposition for seeking another term. Burundi's President Pierre Nkurunziza is also seeking a third term. Cooke said this method of seeking power has replaced the old style of coups, and the ongoing protests in some African countries are a sign that "people are willing to empower themselves and say no."

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BURUNDI

U.N. envoy quits role as mediator in Burundi crisis talks

Source: Reuters

By Edmund Blair; Editing by Louise Ireland

Bujumbura, 11 June 2015 - The U.N. special envoy to the Great Lakes region has quit his role facilitating talks between rival factions in Burundi's political crisis but is staying on in his broader regional position, a U.N. official said on Thursday.

Said Djinnit has hosted dialog between the government, the ruling party, opposition parties and civil society groups to try to resolve a row over President Pierre Nkurunziza's bid for a third term, but there have been only limited signs of progress.

A series of elections have been delayed by weeks of unrest and violent clashes between police and protesters, plunging the nation into its worst crisis in a decade and alarming a region which has a history of ethnic killing.

Djinnit has faced criticism from the opposition, who said he was biased towards the government, a charge he dismissed.

"He has just left his work as facilitator for the dialog in Burundi," the spokesman for the U.N. mission in Burundi, Vladimir Monteiro, said. "He remains the special envoy."

Monteiro did not give a reason and it was not immediately clear if the United Nations would assign a new mediator.

In a statement late on Wednesday which did not specifically mention that Djinnit was quitting the facilitation role, the U.N. envoy thanked all the parties for their cooperation "during the dialog that he facilitated with impartiality."

"The special envoy encourages the Burundian parties to continue their dialog with a view to create conditions conducive to holding free, fair, inclusive and peaceful elections," the statement said.

Opponents of Nkurunziza say he is violating the constitution and a peace deal that ended an ethnically charged civil war in 2005 by seeking a third term. The president cites a constitutional court ruling saying he can run.

The parliamentary vote will now take place on June 26, followed by a presidential poll on July 15.

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Said Djinnit quitte le Burundi

Source: BBC Afrique

L'opposition et la société civile avaient rejeté la médiation de l'envoyé spécial des Nations-Unies dans les pays des Grands Lacs .Une partie de ces organisations l'accuse de partialité en faveur du régime en place.

11 Juin 2015 - Said Djinnit dit avoir pris acte de la position exprimée, il y a quelques jours, sur son rôle de facilitateur par des représentants de certaines parties des acteurs en présence au Burundi.

Avant de partir, il a rencontré les membres du corps diplomatique à Bujumbura... Lors de cette rencontre, l'Envoyé spécial a fait le point sur le dialogue qu'il a facilité à compter du 5 mai 2015 à la demande des parties burundaises qui avaient arrêté, elles-mêmes, l'ordre du jour et la liste des participants...

Il a remercié l'ensemble des parties prenantes burundaises pour le mandat de facilitateur qu'elles lui ont confié le 5 mai 2015...et réaffirmer son engagement à continuer à œuvrer avec les représentants des Organisations régionales, en vue de la préservation et de la consolidation de la paix, de la démocratie et de la stabilité au Burundi...

Said Djinnit encourage également les parties prenantes burundaises à poursuivre leur dialogue, en vue de la création des conditions propices à la tenue d'élections libres, inclusives et apaisées... Il a également souligné l'importance de préserver les acquis de l'Accord de Paix et de Réconciliation d'Arusha, tels que consacrés par la Constitution burundaise en souhaitant que toutes les parties burundaises s'abstiennent de tout acte susceptible d'accroître la tension et de générer des actes de violences.

Le départ de Said Djinnit intervient à un moment où Amnesty International estime que les conditions de travail des hommes de medias se sont détériorées depuis le coup d'Etat manqué du mois dernier au Burundi.

L'envoyé de l'ONU quitte ses fonction de médiateur

Source: 20 minutes (<http://www.20min.ch/ro/news/monde/story/14235083>)

Saïd Djinnit, médiateur de l'ONU pour la région, a été accusé par l'opposition burundaise de pencher en faveur du gouvernement, ce qu'il dément.

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11 Juin 2015 - L'envoyé spécial de l'ONU dans les Grands-Lacs, Saïd Djinnit, a abandonné son rôle de médiateur dans le dialogue gouvernement-opposition au Burundi, visant à sortir le pays de la crise née de la contestation contre un nouveau mandat du président Pierre Nkurunziza, a annoncé jeudi un porte-parole de l'ONU.

Saïd Djinnit, dont les opposants à un nouveau mandat de M. Nkurunziza avaient demandé le remplacement, «a renoncé à son rôle de médiateur dans la crise burundaise», a déclaré à l'AFP un porte-parole de la Mission électorale des Nations unies au Burundi, Vladimir Monteiro, précisant que l'intéressé restait l'envoyé spécial de l'ONU dans les Grands-Lacs.

Il «a quitté hier (mercredi) Bujumbura pour le Sommet (de l'Union africaine) en Afrique du Sud (...) mais il pourra revenir à Bujumbura en tant qu'envoyé spécial de l'ONU pour la région des Grands Lacs». M. Monteiro a indiqué ne pas avoir d'information dans l'immédiat sur un éventuel successeur à M. Djinnit dans la médiation à la crise burundaise.

Début juin, l'opposition et la société civile qui animent le mouvement de contestation qui agite le Burundi depuis le 26 avril avaient demandé au secrétaire-général de l'ONU la nomination d'un nouveau médiateur. Elles avaient mis en doute l'impartialité de M. Djinnit, l'accusant notamment d'être favorable à un nouveau mandat de M. Nkurunziza, élu en 2005 et réélu en 2010, que ses adversaires jugent inconstitutionnel.

Des négociations dans l'impasse

Dans un communiqué, M. Djinnit «remercie l'ensemble des parties prenantes burundaises pour le mandat de facilitateur qu'elles lui ont confié» et «prend acte de la position exprimée, il y a quelques jours, sur son rôle de facilitateur par des représentants de certaines parties».

Il rappelle «que tout au long du dialogue, les parties burundaises ont maintenu leurs positions divergentes sur la candidature du président Nkurunziza à un troisième mandat» tout en se félicitant «des avancées» sur d'autres questions.

Ces négociations initiées début mai entre le camp présidentiel, d'un côté, et l'opposition et la société civile de l'autre, sont jusqu'ici restées dans l'impasse, butant notamment sur l'arrêt des manifestations anti-Nkurunziza et le retrait de la candidature du chef de l'État à la présidentielle.

Le président Nkurunziza a établi par décret mercredi un nouveau calendrier électoral fixant au 29 juin élections législatives et communales et au 15 juillet la présidentielle. Ce

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calendrier a été rejeté par l'opposition et la société civile, qui ont dénoncé «une décision unilatérale» et «un passage en force» réalisé sans qu'elles aient été consultées.

UN in Burundi Urges Parties to Continue Dialogue on Fair Elections

Source: Sputnik (<http://sputniknews.com/africa/20150611/1023201059.html>)

11 June 2015 - Parliamentary elections were initially scheduled in the country for June 5, but were postponed amid mass protests triggered by current President Pierre Nkurunziza's bid for a third term in office, with the law requiring him to step down after two terms.

"The Special Envoy encourages the Burundian parties to continue their dialogue with a view to create conditions conducive to holding free, fair, inclusive and peaceful elections... He reiterates his appeal to all parties to exercise restraint and to refrain from any acts likely to increase tension and violence," the UN statement said on Wednesday.

The Special Envoy of the Secretary General for the Great Lakes Region, Said Djinnit, noted the progress made in terms of guarantees for the holding of "free, transparent, inclusive and peaceful" elections, and the protection of constitutional rights and freedoms.

The United Nations said Djinnit remained committed to continuing work toward preserving peace, democracy and stability in Burundi.

In late May, a regional bloc, the East African Community, asked the Burundian government to postpone parliamentary and presidential elections for at least 45 days so that there was enough time to ensure that the vote is held in a peaceful environment.

Burundi's president endorses new poll dates

Source: News24

10 June 2015 - Burundi's president on Wednesday endorsed a new election timetable, hours after the United Nations warned increasing violence committed by pro-government militia could push the country into a civil war.

President Pierre Nkurunziza approved presidential elections for July 15, followed by senatorial elections on July 24, as proposed by the electoral commission and a group of ministers on Tuesday.

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Nkurunziza, however, pushed back the proposed date for parliamentary and local government elections to June 29 - three days later than the commission's proposal, according to presidential spokesperson Willy Nyamitwe.

The proposal comes after the East African Community recommended the delay of elections because of weeks of anti-government protests and a failed coup attempt.

Burundi's opposition rejected the new dates, saying the elections commission was not capable of functioning properly because two of five commissioners resigned last week.

Refugees in neighbouring countries meanwhile reported that the pro-government Imbonerakure movement has committed crimes - including executions, abductions and torture, which "could tip an already extremely tense situation over the edge," warned UN high commissioner for human rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein.

Human rights activists say more than 30 people have been killed in nationwide protests which started on April 26. Demonstrators say Pierre Nkurunziza's bid to seek a third term violates the constitution.

Former intelligence chief, major general Godefroid Niyombare, attempted to seize power in Burundi in May after Nkurunziza announced his candidacy, but the plot failed a few days later.

Burundi election boycott on the cards following delay to polls, analysts

Source: RFI

10 June 2015 - Burundi's opposition and protesters in the capital Bujumbura are likely to boycott the country's delayed elections, according to analysts. Burundi's presidency on Wednesday confirmed that parliamentary elections will go ahead on 29 June and a presidential poll on 15 July. The announcement confirms a proposal by the electoral commission pushing the presidential polls back by over two weeks.

The opposition is "almost guaranteed to boycott the elections", says IHS analyst Robert Besseling, pointing out that key players such as the Catholic Church and EU have already pulled their support for the vote.

"The opposition has said from the start, they're not playing on a level playing field," Besseling told RFI during an interview in Paris.

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SOUTH AFRICA

AU Summit Gives South Africa Chance to Calm Xenophobia Outrage

Source: Bloomberg

11 June 2015 - South Africa's hosting of a summit of African leaders will give it the chance to repair relations with the rest of the continent after an outbreak of xenophobic attacks on foreign nationals that left seven people dead.

While President Jacob Zuma deployed the army to halt attacks on African migrants by mobs wielding machetes and sticks around Johannesburg and Durban in March and April, South Africa faced criticism for not responding quickly enough. The African Union, Nigeria and Zimbabwe publicly condemned the violence.

Even though the issue isn't on the agenda of the African Union summit scheduled to take place in Johannesburg June 14-15, the government needs to show it isn't brushing it aside, said Razia Khan, head of Africa research at Standard Chartered Plc.

"There's no denying the reality that South Africa's reputation within the rest of the region would have been tarnished," she said by phone from London on June 9. "This African Union summit is a good way for South Africa to reach out to the rest of Africa."

The violence erupted as some poor South Africans see Somalis, Ethiopians, Malawians and Pakistanis as competitors for jobs and business opportunities in a country with 26 percent unemployment. One fifth of the population of 54 million survive on less than 335 rand (\$28) a month.

The 54-nation AU replaced the Organization of African Unity in 2002, and seeks to promote continental unity, integration and development. Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe holds the group's rotating chairmanship, while former South African foreign minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma heads the AU commission, which runs its day-to-day affairs.

'Inherently Linked'

"Our future is inherently linked to that of the rest of the African continent," South African Foreign Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane told reporters in Pretoria, the capital, on June 8.

The summit will focus on ensuring that women play a bigger role in Africa's economy and addressing the continent's security challenges. Those include upheaval in Burundi,

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where President Pierre Nkurunziza is seeking a third term that his opponents say is unconstitutional, and insurrections being waged by Boko Haram in Nigeria and Al-Shabaab in Somalia and Kenya.

The leaders will also discuss efforts to establish a free-trade zone on the continent, which would create a market with a combined gross domestic product of \$2 trillion.

Free-Trade Zone

The first steps toward the establishment of the bloc were taken this month when three regional trading groups -- the Common Market for East & Southern Africa, the East African Community and the Southern African Development Community -- agreed to a free trade accord.

The summit "is a wonderful opportunity for South Africa to take the lead in plans to form a new trade bloc" and to say "the xenophobic attacks were isolated," Ian Cruickshanks chief economist at the Johannesburg-based South African Institute of Race Relations, said by phone on June 9. "This is an opportunity for South Africa to go and say we are able to work for Africa and this is what we want to do."

SOUTH SUDAN

Regional interests 'undermine' South Sudan peace: report

Source: AFP

10 June 2015 - South Sudan's floundering peace talks are being undermined by the economic interests of the regional states leading the process, an advocacy group warned Wednesday.

A report from the U.S.-based Enough Project said neighboring Sudan and Uganda were among those frustrating efforts to impose "targeted sanctions" seen as a priority to stop the fighting.

"Willingness to take action on South Sudan has been undermined by a web of political and economic relationships linking regional elites' interests to those of South Sudanese politicians," said the report.

A lack of action at the regional level has left "funding flows for the conflict mostly untouched," the Enough Project said.

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Asset freezes, travel bans and an arms embargo have not been effectively imposed either regionally or internationally, meaning the cost of continued conflict in South Sudan is not borne by the country's warring leaders - but instead by its suffering civilians.

Civil war began in December 2013 when President Salva Kiir accused his former deputy Riek Machar of planning a coup.

The conflict was immediately ethnic, pitting Kiir's Dinka people against Machar's Nuer, and quickly spread. It has been characterised by ethnic massacres, rape and the use of child soldiers. A fifth of the population has been uprooted and nearly half face starvation.

Peace talks, led by regional bloc IGAD, have been going on in Ethiopia almost as long as the 18-month war, resulting in nine failed agreements and ceasefires, all broken within days or even hours.

Separate talks hosted in Tanzania aimed at unifying the split ruling party were a sideshow while the latest effort, launched by Kenya's president last week, appears stillborn.

Threats of sanctions have been repeatedly made - both by IGAD and the UN - but not implemented, except against a handful of battlefield commanders for whom EU and US measures such as travel bans and asset freezes are irrelevant.

The UN Security Council has adopted a sanctions framework for South Sudan but has so far failed to name anyone.

An African Union inquiry into human rights abuses was shelved in January. A leaked draft said Kiir and Machar were both responsible for "organised massacres" and ethnic killings and recommended they be barred from office.

Parties involved in the regional talks have interests that run counter to peace while a complex web of political ties, alliances and friendships tests their willingness to take effective action.

Soudan du Sud: Juba ne compte pas réétudier l'expulsion du haut fonctionnaire de l'ONU

Source: HCH24

Par Hassan Cher

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10 Juin 2015 - e gouvernement de Soudan du Sud a promis de ne pas revenir sur sa récente décision d'expulser Toby Lanzer, le coordinateur des actions humanitaire des Nations Unies dans la plus jeune nation du monde.

Lors de la réunion de la semaine dernière, présidé par le président Salva Kiir, le conseil des ministres aurait refusé de reconsidérer la demande du secrétaire général des Nations unies, Ban Ki-Moon, au sujet du haut fonctionnaire de l'ONU afin que ce dernier puisse terminer son mandat dans le pays ravagé par la guerre.

« Lanzer est plus impliqué dans la politique qu'humanitaire, » déclaré aux journalistes après la réunion de vendredi le chef de Cabinet du ministre des Affaires, Martin Elia Lomoro.

Selon Ban Ki-moon, le coordinateur humanitaire de l'ONU expulsé et nommé pour une autre mission dans la région du Sahel, a joué un rôle vital dans la sensibilisation sur la situation humanitaire catastrophique que la situation de conflit a créé au Soudan du Sud.

Cette prise de conscience a permis de générer l'aide humanitaire et en faisant allusion à la famine de 2014.

« Nous lui avons adressé un avertissement afin qu'il cesse de s'interférer dans les affaires intérieures de la République de Soudan du Sud. Il n'a pas écouté et a continué la diffusion de fausses informations sur le Soudan du Sud », a déclaré Lomoro.

L'ONU, les Etats-Unis et l'Union européenne ont tous condamné le gouvernement du sud-soudanais pour avoir expulsé Lanzer et ont appelé à fin que la décision d'expulsion soit réétudiée.

La semaine dernière, le secrétaire à la presse de la présidentielle, Ateny Wek Ateny, a déclaré que Kiir pourrait révoquer la décision d'expulsion mais sans le retour possible de Lanzer.

La violence au Soudan du Sud ne cesse de s'accroître

Source: La Croix

Depuis le mois d'avril, d'intenses combats opposent l'armée gouvernementale et les rebelles dans le nord du pays. Fuyant les violences à Leer (État de l'Unité), des milliers de civils se sont réfugiés dans des marais où ils survivent dans des conditions épouvantables. L'ONU semble dépassé par la crise soudanaise.

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10 Juin 2015 - « Je n'ai jamais entendu autant de témoignages aussi terribles sur ce qui est en train de se passer à Leer », affirme à La Croix Marc Van der Mullen, le chef de mission de Médecins sans frontières (MSF) à Djouba, la capitale du Soudan du Sud. Leer est le théâtre de violents combats entre l'armée et la rébellion depuis un mois et demi.

La bataille de Leer est en réalité un nouvel épisode tragique de la guerre qui oppose les partisans du président Salva Kiir (réunissant la plupart des groupes Dinka – l'ethnie du président – et leurs alliés) et ceux de l'ancien vice-président Riek Machar (essentiellement des Nuer).

Une épouvantable guerre civile ethnique

Accusant son ancien allié d'avoir voulu le renverser en décembre 2013, Salva Kiir a lancé une vaste campagne d'épuration des Nuer à Djouba, qui s'est traduite par plusieurs milliers de morts de cette ethnie, dont plusieurs ministres. Et depuis lors, ce jeune pays, né le 9 juillet 2011, est plongé dans une épouvantable guerre civile ethnique. 50 000 personnes auraient été tuées et 2 millions déplacées sur 11 millions d'habitants.

« Comme chaque année entre avril et juillet, les belligérants lancent des opérations avant le début de la saison des pluies, qui rend les routes impraticables dans le nord », explique Marc Van der Mullen.

Mais cette année, l'armée gouvernementale et les groupes qui lui sont liés ont attaqué, pillé, brûlé et rasé des villages, s'en prenant sans distinction aux combattants comme à la population. « Les témoignages sont très alarmants?: des fillettes, des jeunes garçons, des femmes et des hommes ont été enlevés, violés, mutilés, torturés et tués froidement », rapporte Marc Van der Mullen. Des comportements constatés et dénoncés aussi par l'ONU et le Comité international de la Croix-Rouge (CICR).

« Cette année, notre équipe locale a trouvé refuge dans les marais »

Pour échapper aux violences, le personnel local de l'hôpital de MSF, le seul dans la zone rebelle, a préféré quitter les lieux avec ses malades, quelques jours après l'évacuation du personnel international, le 9 mai.

En 2014, l'hôpital avait déjà été pillé et détruit par les assaillants, avant d'être reconstruit. « Cette année, notre équipe locale a trouvé refuge dans les marais, à la périphérie de la ville. Elle a été suivie par la population », décrit le responsable de MSF.

Plus d'un mois plus tard, les habitants seraient, selon les sources, entre 100 000 et 200 000 à y vivre dans des conditions sanitaires et alimentaires épouvantables?: insécurité,

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malnutrition, maladies infectieuses. Isolés, sans secours et sans protection, ils seraient aussi la proie de groupes armés qui les pourchassent pour les tuer.

Leer s'est vidée de tous ses habitants

« Les patients évacués avec notre équipe étaient les plus gravement atteints. Les autres avaient été renvoyés chez eux. Sans soins, sans médicaments et vu leurs conditions de vie dans les marais, il y a peu de chance qu'ils soient encore vivants », souligne le responsable de MSF. Aujourd'hui, Leer s'est vidée de tous ses habitants. Si la ville est presque entièrement entre les mains de l'armée, les rebelles tiendraient encore quelques quartiers.

Attaqués à Leer, ces derniers ont lancé une vaste opération militaire depuis la mi-avril, à Malakal, la capitale quasiment détruite de l'État du Haut-Nil (nord) et porte d'accès aux derniers puits de pétrole encore en fonction dans le pays. Les combats font toujours rage, en particulier autour de Melut, au nord de Malakal: le verrou stratégique qui défend le gisement pétrolifère de Palouch, essentiel pour l'économie du Soudan du Sud.

Un conflit envenimé par l'intervention des pays voisins

Face à cette recrudescence de la violence, l'ONU semble totalement impuissante et dépassée. Alors qu'elle dispose d'une force de 12 500 hommes sur place (la Minuss), les Casques bleus ne sont pas engagés à Leer par exemple. Les soldats protègent surtout des camps de déplacés, essentiellement composés de Nuer, dans plusieurs sites du pays (Djouba, Bor, Akobo, Bentiu, Malakal et Melut).

Un conflit envenimé par l'intervention des pays voisins. Chacun jouant sa propre partition et son propre agenda en n'ayant aucune considération pour le sort des populations. Parmi ces pays, l'Ouganda a carrément envoyé des soldats combattre aux côtés du président Salva Kiir tandis que, selon un observateur sur place, l'Éthiopie et le Soudan soutiennent les rebelles de Riek Machar.

IGAD consultative meetings continue in Addis Ababa

Source: Radio Tamazuj

10 June 2015 - Consultative meetings between South Sudan's government, SPLM-G10, and SPLM-In Opposition rebels mediated by the East African regional organization IGAD are still ongoing in Ethiopia's capital Addis Ababa.

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Speaking to Radio Tamazuj yesterday, SPLM-IO deputy head of information and public relations Manawa Peter Gatkuoth said the meeting which brought together the three SPLM factions in an attempt to push for peace in South Sudan would continue on Wednesday.

"The consultations would continue today also with us and the other two delegations at 3:00 pm. Maybe there would be new issues to be discussed," he said.

The rebel spokesman said the SPLM 'former detainees' faction (SPLM-G10) delegation is headed by Pagan Amum.

Manawa said the IGAD mediators engaged each group involved in the process in a separate consultative meeting. He confirmed that the consultation resolved to open a new round of talks mediated by the 'IGAD-plus' after an extraordinary African Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa in mid-June.

The 'IGAD-plus' incorporates select countries from all the five regions of the continent in a new structure that will also see the African Union, the UN, the Troika (UK, US, Norway) and China actively participate in the negotiations.

Rebel group claims destruction of SPLA unit

Source: Sudan Tribune

9 June 2015 - A spokesperson for the Revolutionary Movement for National Salvation (REMNASAS), a South Sudanese rebel group, claimed their forces on Tuesday destroyed a production unit belonging to government troops loyal to president, Salva Kiir.

Col. John Sunday Martin said the unit, known as Capt Makuei Chanroduction under the Directorate of Military Corporation, was allegedly destroyed in an ambush that occurred four kilometres from Maridi town in South Sudan's Western Equatoria state.

"The two platoons were heading to Maridi from their base suited six kilometers on Rumbek road. They were on foot to Maridi to reinforce, where they fall in our ambush," the rebel movement claimed in a statement extended to Sudan Tribune.

"Our patriotic forces killed 5 and wounded serious others; as well captured 6 rifles including a Rocket-Propelled Grenade (RPG), with several rounds of ammunitions, and scattered them in the jungle", it added.

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According to the rebel official, the confrontation happened after their forces stationed in a nearby area were informed of the situation in Maridi and were heading to rescue civilians from the SPLA, as the two platoons of the army headed to reinforce their colleagues.

"Thus our valiant forces of REMNASA ambushed them after received earlier information about their mission to Maridi, as they left their base," the rebespokesperson said.

He also accused the national army of allgedly committing several atrocities against residents of Maridi, citing killings, burning of houses and looting of civilians' properties.

These allegations could, however, not be independently verified by the Sudan Tribune.

The chaos, the rebel official claims, started after a youth from Maridi had misunderstanding with a Dinka tribesman whose cattle encroached to his farm, destroying the farm.

"Instead of apologizing for the damage his cattle caused to the young man's field; he (Dinka tribesman) resorted to fight him in the presence of dozens of his Dinka tribesmen," the rebel official said.

He added, "On top, they (Dinka triesbmen) called on their brothers within the ranks and structures of the security forces, who came and arrested this local young man. Thus, the local youths reacted and used sticks to beat the cows whichresulted chaos in Maridi on tribal lines – between the locals, and Dinka tribesmen."

The Dinka youth were allegely supported by their tribesmen within the ranks and structures of SPLA and National Security started reportedly shot at the local youths where they killed at least one, while the latter retaliated by killing several cows.

"As the Dinka tribesmen were overpowered by the local youths, they ran to the SPLA headquarters (military garrison) and reported that they are being attacked by rebels," the group's spokesperson further claimed.

"Thus, the SPLA were dispatched from the Garrison, instead of calming the situation, they resorted to destroy houses and to kill civilians randomly - from Line Zira to Dar tick - Hai Soura", he alleged.

"The worst scenario was a woman and her children, together with her husband was burnt to death in their house by the SPLA," added the official.

The rebel group cautioned the general populations to refrain from tribal politics, which they claimed was dangerous for national unity and coexistence in the young nation.

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SUDAN

Sudanese president to skip AU summit in South Africa: report

Source: Sudan Tribune

10 June 2015 - The Sudanese president Omer Hassan al-Bashir will delegate his 1st VP Bakri Hassan Saleh to attend the African Union (AU) summit in South Africa.

The anonymous AU source who made this revelation to Turkey-based al-Anadolu agency did not give a specific reason for the expected absence of Bashir.

This week a Sudanese foreign ministry official told Sudan Tribune that Bashir was unlikely to go but that a final decision has not been made.

South Africa has warned several times in the past that it will arrest Bashir should he visit in compliance with an arrest warrant issued for him by the International Criminal Court (ICC) on ten counts of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide he allegedly masterminded in Sudan's western region of Darfur.

This was despite AU resolutions instructing its members not to cooperate with the ICC in apprehending Bashir.

In August 2009 the South African Department of Foreign Affairs issued a detailed statement outlining its position on the AU resolution regarding Bashir from a legal and political perspective.

“An international arrest warrant for President El Bashir has been received and endorsed by a magistrate. This means that if President El Bashir arrives on South African territory, he will be liable for arrest” the statement said.

Bashir has not visited South Africa since the issuance of the arrest warrant but in May 2009 he asserted in an interview with the BBC 'Hardtalk' program that he could visit if he wanted to.

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Sudan's Darfur offensive forces 78,000 to flee

Source: AFP

11 June 2015 - At least 78,000 people and possibly as many as 130,000 have been driven from their homes during the Sudanese army's offensive in Darfur this year, the United Nations said Wednesday.

UN peacekeeping official Edmond Mulet told the Security Council that the army's "Operation Decisive Summer" against Darfur rebels "has resulted in high numbers of newly displaced people."

Aid groups have put the number of newly displaced at more than 78,000 and the United Nations is working to verify reports of as many as 130,000 people driven from their homes.

Darfur has been wracked by conflict since 2003, when ethnic insurgents launched a campaign against the Arab-dominated government of President Omar al-Bashir.

The conflict has cost 300,000 lives and forced some 2.5 million people to flee their homes, according to the UN.

Bashir has been indicted by the International Criminal Court for war crimes in Darfur.

The new surge of violence in Darfur comes as the United Nations is in talks with Khartoum on an exit strategy for its joint mission with the African Union (UNAMID), which has 15,000 peacekeepers on the ground.

Sudan's Deputy Ambassador Hassan Hamid Hassan told the council that "there is no war remaining" in Darfur, "with the exception of a few pockets of resistance that carry out limited sabotage operations."

Darfur, he argued, is riven by "tribal conflicts which have always raged throughout the region."

The deputy envoy called for progress in negotiating the exit strategy but Mulet made clear that this was "linked to results and concrete improvement of the situation on the ground."

The United Nations has set out benchmarks for Sudan to address the Darfur crisis as a condition for winding down the UNAMID mission.

"Now is not the time to abandon the people of Darfur," a US official said following closed-door consultations at the council.

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"It would be irresponsible for the UN Security Council and AU Peace and Security Council to give in to the demands of Khartoum for a premature exit, or even partial withdrawal, of this peacekeeping force, given the ongoing humanitarian and security crisis," said the official, who asked not to be named.

The Security Council is due to decide on June 24 on renewing the mandate of the UNAMID force until next year and a working group on the exit strategy is due to hold more meetings in the coming weeks.

UN chief says agreement on UNAMID's withdrawal has yet to be achieved

Source: Sudan Tribune

Sudan, 9 June 2015 - he United Nations secretary-general Ban Ki-moon revealed that no agreement on the exit strategy of the hybrid peacekeeping mission in Darfur (UNAMID) has been reached yet.

Sudan renewed calls for UNAMID withdrawal from the western part of the country following a dispute over alleged mass rape in the village of Tabit in North Darfur, by army troops in October last year.

A tripartite working group comprised of officials from the Sudanese government, UN and AU was formed to draft an exit strategy for the peacekeeping force.

In a report to the UN Security Council (UNSC) on 26 May, Ki-moon said that no agreement on the exit strategy of UNAMID has been reached yet by the joint working group, adding that the group's meetings were suspended and are supposed to resume later this year.

He further said that UNAMID suggested during the negotiations to withdraw gradually from West Darfur, and leave from three bases in North and South Darfur, in areas that do not currently necessitate its presence, noting that withdrawal from other areas would only be possible if a ceasefire and protection of displaced are ensured.

The UN chief said the working group visited Darfur's five states to assess the humanitarian and the security situation, pointing that it met two times during May to discuss the recommendations which are supposed to be submitted to the UNSC and the African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) ahead of the renewal of the UNAMID's mandate this month.

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He urged the UNSC and the AUPSC to issue clear directives in order to finish the exit process quickly.

He said that the first phase of UNAMID's downsizing included the cancellation of 790 national, international and voluntary posts, suggesting cancellation of 488 posts in the second stage.

Given the current situation in Darfur, the UN chief recommended the UNSC to extend the mandate of UNAMID, without modification, for 12 months, until 30 June next year.

UNAMID has been deployed in Darfur since 2007 with a mandate to stem violence against civilians in the restive region.

It is the world's second largest international peacekeeping force with an annual budget of \$1.35 billion and almost 20,000 troops.

Armed conflict, banditry and tribal fighting

Meanwhile, the report said that fighting between government forces and rebel groups have escalated during the last three months, pointing to increased tribal fighting, banditry and human rights violations.

It said the government intensified its military campaign known as "Decisive Summer" against the Sudan Liberation Movement/Minni Minnawi (SLM-MM) and Sudan Liberation Movement/Abdel-Wahid (SLM-AW) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) leading to the displacement of more civilians.

The report pointed to the mutual attacks between the government troops and the rebel groups, mentioning the battle which took place at Al-Nikhara in South Darfur last April between the government militia of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the JEM.

It said that 15 civilians died and 17 others injured as a result of the government aerial bombing at Al-Toumat village near Al-Nikhara, adding that 14 people including 5 children had died and 18 others injured at Rwata town in Central Darfur state due to aerial shelling.

The UN secretary-general blamed the Sudanese government for using cluster bombs during its military offensive that aimed to put an end to the armed rebellions in Darfur, South Kordofan, and the Blue Nile state.

He said the government offensive in Darfur focused on reclaiming Jebel Marra and preventing the armed movements from crossing the borders with South Sudan to regroup.

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"Despite their numerical superiority, better equipment and logistics, the objective of the Sudanese Armed Forces/Rapid Support Forces joint operations, which was to dismantle the rebel stronghold of Jebel Marra, and establish a firm grip on the area, was not achieved," Ban Ki-moon said.

The report also said that 278 people died in 11 tribal clashes during the last three months compared to the death of 40 people in 8 clashes in the previous period, pointing to clashes which took place between Falata and Salamat tribes in South Darfur besides clashes between Ma'alia and Rezeigat in East Darfur.

It mentioned that 316 crimes have taken place during the past three months including robberies, armed attacks, deadly shooting, rape, carjacking and kidnapping, saying that 60 hostile acts have been carried out against UNAMID.

Sudanese opposition calls on EU Parliament to support new peace process

Source: Sudan Tribune

9 June 2015 - The Sudanese opposition forces called on the European Union (EU) Parliament to support the establishment of a new process for peace and democratic reforms in Sudan.

An important delegation of the Sudanese opposition groups led by the former prime minister and leader of the National Umma Party (NUP) Sadiq al-Mahdi, and the chairman of the rebel umbrella Sudanese Revolutionary Front (SRF) Malik Agar was received at the European Parliament in Strasbourg.

In a parliamentary hearing entitled "Sudan recent elections and peace perspectives", the opposition leaders briefed the EU legislators on the humanitarian and human rights situations but focused their interventions on what the European legislators can do in support of the African Union-led efforts for peace and democratic transition in Sudan.

Mahdi and Agar who spoke on behalf of the opposition Sudan Call forces said the national dialogue process launched in January 2014 was not seriously prepared and was used by the government to buy time before to organize single-party elections aiming to maintaining the current status quo.

The former prime minister stressed that "Sudan now is a failed state". He pointed to the armed conflicts, displacements of civilians and the popular rejection of the regime illustrated by the boycott of April elections. He further referred to the government

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involvement in the conflicts in Central African Republic, South Sudan, Libya and its links with the terrorist group of Daesh saying that Khartoum regime is a factor of regional instability.

"We want the EU parliament to support the people of Sudan who has suffered for 26 years and to back our initiative for comprehensive and just peace and democratization. We hope to get a response to this appeal and the EU parliament issue a strong resolution in support of the people of Sudan in their search for (peace and democracy)," he further said.

Speaking after al-Mahdi, the SRF leader went in his speech to provide further details about the resolution they hope to see the EU lawmakers adopted in support of a new "meaningful peace process".

Agar pointed to the need to protect civilians through stopping war and guaranteeing humanitarian access to the needy in the war affected areas. Also, he underscored the need to create a conducive environment and guarantee basic freedoms before the national dialogue.

"Sudan's peace process and national dialogue will need a new, clear mandate for the mediation. The new mandate will need to include specific goals, a timeframe for moving the process forward in a meaningful manner and preventing the Government's attempts to delay the process, and benchmarks for a truly comprehensive national dialogue process," he further said.

After the rejection of the Sudanese government to participate in a national dialogue preparatory meeting called by the African Union High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) on 30-31 March, the Sudan Call forces requested the African Union to create a new mechanism involving the UN and main international partners.

Agar called for "smart sanctions" on the Sudanese government and to stipulate some conditions related to the humanitarian access, peace and democratic reforms before increasing engagement with Sudan, providing debt relief, and funding as it is pledged by the EU governments in the Khartoum Process on combating human trafficking , or training Sudanese military and police.

Special rapporteur & UNAMID

In a press conference at the EU parliament, SFR vice-president for foreign affairs and leader of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) Gibril Ibrahim called to re-establish a Special Rapporteur on Human Rights for Sudan to monitor the human rights situation in Sudan.

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In his speech, Agar also mentioned this request.

Ibrahim who briefing reporters on behalf of the opposition groups, further said the EU should exert efforts to maintain the hybrid peacekeeping mission in Darfur (UNAMID), as the Sudanese government demands as exit strategy for the joint operation which is dedicated to protect civilians in Darfur.

"Despite its shortcomings, UNAMID protects the civilian population in Darfur from the ongoing government and government-sponsored militia attacks," said Agar who included the matter in his speech before the EU lawmakers.

The hearing was organised by the French Marie-Christine Vergiat, Ana Gomes of Portugal and the Slovenian Ivo Vajgl. Also intervened in the meeting the German Joachim Zeller, the Italian Elena VALENCIANO, the Swedish Bodil Ceballos and the French Barbara SPINELLI.

Vergiat who chairs the EU MPs group on Sudan welcomed the Sudanese guests and regretted the travel ban imposed on the leader of the opposition alliance Farouk Abu Issa, and human rights prominent activist Amin Mekki Mandani.

She further mentioned the absence of the NUP deputy-president Merriam al-Mahdi who was also prevented from travelling to Paris by the Sudanese security agents.

The French MP who is a member of the European United Left/Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL) further vowed to support the ongoing efforts to bring peace and stability in Sudan and the neighbouring countries.

Several EU MPs congratulated the opposition for achieving unity and encouraged them to have a unified stance on issues of peace and democracy in Sudan.

European lawmakers organized dinner for the visiting delegation which included some representatives of civil society groups who succeeded to reach Strasbourg despite the travel ban.

This is the third time that the EU legislators receive the Sudanese opposition groups. The two previous meetings took place in November 2013 and July 2014.