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



MEDIA MONITORING

12 October 2015

GENERAL NEWS

Uhuru urges media to portray Africa accurately

NEWS STORY

Source: KBC (<http://www.kbc.co.ke/uhuru-urges-media-to-portray-africa-accurately/>)

President Uhuru Kenyatta has challenged the media to embrace the tenets of good journalism and portray the accurate picture of Africa.

11 October 2015 - He appealed to journalists to be factual and balanced in their presentation of news instead of only exaggerating the failures of the continent.

The President took a swipe at the foreign media for applying double standards and misrepresentation of the continent.

Citing recent global headlines on Africa, the President noted that they focused on the coup in Burkina Faso, a bombing in Nigeria, crimes in Mali and the latest about Ebola but downplayed the continent's achievements in child mortality and women's access to political leadership which is growing faster than other regions in the world.

"Why exaggerate African failure? Why ignore African success? Stereotypes have an amazing ability to destroy our ability to see the facts; we who love Africa must stand up for her truths," President Kenyatta said.

The Head of State was speaking on Saturday evening when he presided over the 2015 CNN Multichoice African Journalist Awards at Kenyatta International Convention Centre, Nairobi.

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He said it was unfortunate that while foreigners got the story wrong and misrepresented Africa, some African journalists also got the African story wrong.

President Kenyatta called on African journalists to lead in projecting the positive picture of the continent instead of dwelling on the negative and old tired stereotypes.

“I recall an African newspaper that led with the photo of a Westgate victim and another in which the bodies of the Mandera victims took centre stage. If we cannot respect the dignity of Africans, who will?” the President posed.

The Head of State pointed out that Africa is not a doomed continent but a dignified one. He said while there were challenges like Ebola, the continent – backed by the African Union – gave its skills, time and money to save lives.

“There’s an Africa at war, but African peacemakers in AMISOM are ending some of our most intractable conflicts,” the Head of State said.

He said the fact that in the last two years Kenya has connected 14,000 primary schools to electricity and 97% of Kenyan primary schools are now lit means Africa is a continent working to address the needs of its people.

“I have heard of an Africa that is hopelessly dependent on aid and charity; but the Africa I know has some of the world’s fastest-growing economies powered by radical transformation in technology and billions dollars of investments in infrastructure,” the President said.

He said the innovation, resilience and sacrifice of Africans is lifting millions of people out of poverty.

Congratulating journalists who won awards including Kenya’s Paul Kalemba, Enock Sikolia and Charles Kariuki, President Kenyatta expressed optimism that the journalists will serve as leading lights in presenting the continent in positive light.

“So, today, we celebrate these men and women, and all of you who uphold the highest standards of your profession. When those high standards are the norm, we will reclaim the African narrative,” the President said.

Other speakers included Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiangi, CNN International Senior Vice-President Ms Deborah Rayner and MultiChoice Chief Executive Officer Tim Jacobs.

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Dangote gets kudos for ‘stimulating’ African economy

NEWS STORY

Source: The Nation (Tanzania)

12 October 2015 - President Muhammadu Buhari and his Tanzanian counterpart, Dr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, have hailed businessman Aliko Dangote for stimulating African economy through his investments.

Dangote’s investments, the two leaders said, were sustaining the continent’s economic stability and standard of living.

They spoke at the inauguration of Dangote Cement’s \$600 million plant in Mtwara, Tanzania as well as the groundbreaking of a 26-hectare jetty.

The cement plant was described as the largest in East and Central Africa and the largest single investment in Tanzania.

The event attracted notable personalities from Nigeria, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi and Democratic Republic of Congo. Kikwete said the investment opened the door for job creation and opportunity for people to express their creative abilities.

He described the three million metric tonnes per annum (mtpa) cement plant as the largest in the eastern and Central Africa.

The Tanzanian president noted that the investment would have a huge impact as well as bilateral relation between his country and Nigeria.

“It will go a long way in transforming our happily existing diplomatic and political relations into investment and trade arena,” he noted.

Kikwete added that the timing of the cement plant’s establishment was “very auspicious”, coming at a time when the demand for cement was on the upsurge locally and regionally.

His words: “It is logical that there is a sound relationship between economic growth and booming of the construction sector, whereby cement is a critical input. Tanzania is one of the countries where such relationship can easily be traced.”

Kikwete, who said Tanzania was attracting more investment, added that it has registered an average growth of seven per cent.

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He said the country was one of the top 10 fastest growing economies in Africa.

Buhari, who was represented by Kaduna State Governor Nasir El-Rufai, said Dangote was a key role player in the Africa's economic development.

The president added that the businessman's investment model was in tandem with his government's economic policy.

He said Dangote taught the continent the need to adopt an economic integration policy to encourage Africans to invest on their continent "rather than waiting for the elusive foreigners to come and help invest and develop Africa".

Buhari added that Dangote had proved a point that though there could be challenges, "there are huge returns for African investment in Africa".

"Others should emulate him and partner with the government on the onerous task of job creation. As our son, we are proud of Dangote. Nigeria is very proud of him," the president said.

The Federal Government, he said, was placing an emphasis on job creation.

Buhari noted that it would work assiduously to achieve the plan to create a million jobs.

He hailed the government and people of Tanzania for "providing the enabling environment that makes business to thrive, even to non-indigenes".

Dangote said the "key factor that drives investments in an economy is the presence of an investor-friendly business climate".

He noted that Tanzania was one of the most attractive investment destinations in Africa.

The businessman added that was attested to by the substantial amount of Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) that flows into the country yearly.

The cement plant, he said, was part of the company's African expansion drive.

The Tanzanian plant is the fourth plant to be commissioned after Ethiopia, Zambia and the Cameroon plants.

The Dangote Group now has cement operations in 18 African countries and it plans to commission its cement plants in Senegal and South Africa before the end of this year.

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D.R. CONGO

RDC : le G7 se positionne dans l'opposition

INFORMATION

Source: Radio Okapi

11 octobre 2015 - La plate-forme politique des sept partis politiques « G7 » exclus de la Majorité présidentielle (MP) se positionne désormais dans l'opposition, selon une déclaration politique de ce regroupement. Dans son acte constitutif signé samedi 10 octobre à Kinshasa, le G7 annonce qu'il présentera une candidature commune et unique à la prochaine élection présidentielle de 2016.

« Le G7, plate-forme désormais organisée, se positionne clairement comme une force de l'opposition et en appelle à toutes les forces politiques et sociales-tant de l'intérieur que de la diaspora-convaincues de la nécessité d'assurer l'alternance politique de se joindre à lui, dans un large front républicain, pour la réussite de ce combat », peut-on lire dans cette déclaration.

Cette plate-forme politique se fixe un certain nombre d'objectifs qui doivent caractériser son combat démocratique, notamment la lutte pour le respect par tous les congolais de la constitution et les lois et règlements de la République démocratique du Congo (RDC).

L'acte constitutif du G7 indique que cette plate-forme devra :

Promouvoir l'alternance démocratique en RDC

Œuvrer pour l'organisation des élections crédibles et véritablement démocratiques, conquérir le pouvoir et gouverner sur la base d'un programme commun de gouvernement

Présenter des candidatures des partis politiques membres aux élections à tous les niveaux et les gagner comme une famille politique unie sous un leadership visionnaire

Présenter une candidature commune et unique à la prochaine élection présidentielle.

Et pour atteindre ces objectifs, le G7 se dit ouvert à d'autres formations politiques et pourra conclure avec celles-ci des accords de partenariat ou de collaboration. Ainsi, le G7 pourra devenir « G7+ », selon les adhésions de nouveaux membres.

Non à la pression sur la Ceni

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Dans sa déclaration faite à l'issue de la signature de l'acte constitutif, le G7 demande avec insistance au gouvernement de cesser de mettre la pression sur la Commission électorale nationale indépendante (Ceni), l'obligeant à ne pas publier le nouveau calendrier électoral aménagé, qui selon cette plate-forme, est disponible.

« Le G7 sait que ce calendrier aménagé existe. La Ceni doit donc s'assumer en toute indépendance pour le rendre public, toutes affaires cessantes, et en faire ainsi une boussole éclairant les pas des Congolais vers l'alternance politique apaisée qui doit intervenir en décembre 2016 », ont déclaré les signataires de l'acte constitutif de cette plate-forme.

Dans sa déclaration, le G7 demande aux parlementaires réunis en session budgétaire de dégager en priorité les ressources nécessaires pour l'organisation des élections nationales démocratiques de 2016 à travers des scrutins transparents et crédibles.

Quant au dialogue politique, le G7 estime qu'il n'a plus de raison d'être car il ne servirait qu'à retarder inutilement de petits arrangements les aspirations légitimes du peuple congolais à l'alternance prévue en 2016.

« Si concertations il doit y avoir, il appartient à la Ceni de s'y employer dans le cadre habituel qu'elle a mis en place de manière à dégager le consensus et la mobilisation la plus large des forces politiques et sociales pour le respect de la constitution », écrit le G7 dans sa déclaration.

La déclaration politique du G7 a été signée par des personnalités ci-après :

Pierre Lumbi, pour le compte du Mouvement social pour le renouveau (MSR)

Olivier Kamitatu pour l'Alliance pour le renouveau du Congo (ARC)

José Endundo pour le Parti démocrate chrétien (PDC)

Dany Banza pour l'Avenir du Congo (ACO)

Gabriel Kyungu wa Kumwanza pour l'Union nationale des fédéralistes du Congo (Unafec)

Charles Muando NSimba pour l'Union nationale des démocrates fédéralistes (Unadef)

Christophe Lutundula pour l'Alliance des démocrates pour le progrès (ADP-MSDD).

Le G7 est un regroupement de sept partis politiques issus de la MP, qui a adressé une lettre ouverte au Président de la République critiquant le dernier arrêt de la Cour constitutionnelle.

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Cet arrêt de la cour conditionne le lancement du processus électoral par l'organisation prioritaire des élections des gouverneurs des vingt-et-une nouvelles provinces pour lesquelles le gouvernement n'a pas prévu de budget. Ces frondeurs ont également dénoncé des « manœuvres inavouées » pour ne pas respecter la constitution, imputant à la Majorité une « stratégie suicidaire ».

Faire coexister mines industrielles et creuseurs artisanaux en RDC

REPORTAGE

Source: RFI

C'est un dilemme auquel la République démocratique du Congo est régulièrement confrontée. Comment industrialiser son secteur minier et faire venir des investisseurs tout en ne pénalisant pas les populations locales, notamment les creuseurs artisanaux ? Dernier exemple en date, celui de la mine d'or de Kibali, première mine industrielle dans l'ex-province orientale. Un rapport de deux organisations recommande au minier sud-africain de créer une zone d'exploitation spéciale pour les creuseurs clandestins afin d'éviter des tensions récurrentes avec l'entreprise et faute d'autres alternatives pour ces populations locales.

12 octobre 2015 - C'est un peu David contre Goliath ou l'histoire d'un conflit dans lequel personne n'a totalement raison ou tort. Il y a un peu plus de trois ans, l'Etat congolais accorde une concession à l'entreprise minière Kibali pour exploiter de l'or. Mais un peu plus de 15 000 personnes vivent sur la zone. Le minier sud-africain les reloge donc en dur et dans des maisons équipées d'électricité, de meilleures conditions que celles que les habitants avaient auparavant. Des routes sont également construites.

Mais un gros problème demeure : celui du travail pour ces populations. Car à en croire la Conférence épiscopale congolaise, coauteur du rapport sur le sujet, avec une ONG internationale, plus de 500 000 personnes vivent de l'exploitation artisanale de l'or. Or, depuis l'arrivée du minier, qui a commencé à exploiter la mine en septembre 2013, ces populations n'ont plus le droit de creuser : l'activité est illégale sur une concession industrielle.

Les revendications des orpailleurs artisanaux violemment réprimées

Reste qu'en l'absence d'autres opportunités, les orpailleurs artisanaux quémandent depuis des mois de pouvoir creuser sur une petite zone. Ils ont écrit des lettres et

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manifesté, des revendications très violemment réprimées par la police et l'armée, selon les auteurs du rapport intitulé : Géant minier Kibali, ôter les impuretés pour que l'or soit pur.

L'entreprise sud-africaine de son côté se défousse : elle n'est pas responsable des agissements des autorités dit-elle, et ne veut pas encourager une activité illégale sur sa concession. Reste que pour la Conférence épiscopale congolaise, le minier devrait ouvrir un espace pour l'exploitation artisanale afin de préserver la paix avec les populations locales et sa bonne image.

RWANDA

Rwanda's top court clears way for Kagame third term

NEWS STORY

Source: Reuters

Kigali, 9 October 2015 – Rwanda's Supreme Court ruled yesterday that President Paul Kagame could run for a third seven-year term, rejecting an attempt by the main opposition party to block changes to the country's constitution.

In the latest instance of an African leader seeking to extend his days in power, the Kagame-controlled parliament backed a motion in July to let him run again as leader of the east African state.

The constitutional changes must pass a referendum although there is little chance of them failing due to Kagame's control over the media and many aspects of public life, as well as his popularity as a nation-builder after a 1994 genocide.

"All depends on the opinions of the people," the Supreme Court said in its ruling.

The opposition Democratic Green Party, which brought the case before the Supreme Court, said it would continue to push for protection of existing constitutional term limits, a hot topic in Africa after similar moves by regional leaders.

"We are not happy but we've not given up. We are going to appeal to the president," Green party leader Frank Habineza told Reuters after the decision.

Kagame has not said explicitly that he wants to run again but has made clear he is open to persuasion.

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The Kigali court ruling is likely to attract attention in other African nations where term limits are under similar pressure.

Congo Republic is holding a referendum this month on constitutional changes that would allow 71-year-old President Denis Sassou Nguesso to extend his decades-long rule.

In neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo, opposition parties have accused President Joseph Kabila, who has been in charge for 14 years, of plotting to extend his time in office via violence and manipulation of a packed electoral calendar.

BURUNDI

Burundi's hunt for 'rebels' spooks frightened Rwandans

NES STORY

Source: The Daily Times (Rwanda)

12 October 2015 - Buses to Burundi from neighbouring Rwanda used to be full, but nowadays they struggle for passengers: a reflection of tensions amid accusations Kigali is backing a rebellion against Bujumbura.

Checkpoints on the roads from Rwanda have sprung up, with passengers regularly taken off buses and accused of being part of a rebel army Bujumbura accuses Rwanda of harbouring on its soil. "If you are young you are routinely arrested," said Jacques, who works for a Rwandan bus operator.

Burundi, where a 13-year civil war between Tutsis and Hutus ended in 2006, has been rocked by violence since April, when President Pierre Nkurunziza launched his successful but highly controversial bid for a third term in power. It sparked an attempted coup and months of civil unrest led by opposition groups, who said it was in defiance of the constitution and the Arusha accords which ended the war.

Tightly-controlled Rwanda — which has a similar ethnic makeup to Burundi — is seen as a safe place for those who oppose the government in Bujumbura. The Rwandan capital Kigali has become a refuge for many opposition and civil society activists — as well as dissidents from Nkurunziza's ruling party.

Burundi however goes a step further, claiming that rebel forces — set up by mutinous soldiers after a failed coup in May — are also there and enjoying Rwandan support.

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Relations between Rwanda and Burundi grew tense after Rwanda President Paul Kagame urged Nkurunziza to end his bid for a third term.

The people of Rwanda and Burundi have close ties, and have taken turns sheltering in each other's countries when trouble spiked, including during Rwanda's 1994 genocide and Burundi's 1993-2006 civil war. But relations between Bujumbura and Kigali are more frosty.

The number of travellers between the capitals -- which are only 300 kilometers (185 miles) apart -- has been cut by almost two-thirds, one Rwandan bus company owner said.

Many Rwandans used to travel regularly to Burundi for business, to study or to visit relatives.

Since the crisis began in Burundi in April, some 200 Rwandans have been arrested in Burundi, a Rwandan diplomat said, adding that while around 50 had been released, they had been no news of the others. "Rwandans are in the crosshairs of Burundi's security services, they are taken from the bus from Rwanda and imprisoned, just because they are Rwandans," the diplomat said, asking not to be named. "Others were arrested at their workplace."

Alois Bayingana, a 43-year-old Rwandan taxi driver, was arrested in August in a Bujumbura bar after driving a customer to the city from Kigali. He was taken to Burundi's feared National Intelligence Agency. "I was severely beaten, they kept saying that I was a rebel sent by Kagame," said Bayingana, who was released after two weeks.

Burundians leaving or returning home are also questioned. For traders the restrictions are costly.

"I cannot go to Burundi," said a Rwandan businessman who would only give his name as Stephane, adding he had invested "millions" of dollars in the country. "I am afraid, my friends in Burundi tell me not to come," he added, saying he feared being accused of financing rebellion. Rwanda's government has remained tightlipped despite a slew of accusations from Burundi.

Kigali's Minister of Justice Johnston Busingye said Rwanda was seeking to resolve tensions "amicably and diplomatically" between the two "sister republics".

For now, businesses try to survive. Rwanda and Burundi "accuse each other, but we are merchants, and no one knows exactly why and we do not know what will happen" in the future, Stephane said, fearing a long crisis and saying he was "very worried" for his business.

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CONGO (Republic)

Référendum constitutionnel au Congo : manifestation dispersée

REPORTAGE

Source: RFI

Au Congo Brazzaville, la campagne pour le référendum sur le projet de loi de constitution qui permettrait au président Sassou Nguesso de briguer un troisième mandat, s'est ouverte le vendredi 9 octobre. Plusieurs jeunes ont participé, à Brazzaville, la capitale, à une marche à l'appel de mouvements citoyens parmi lesquels, Ras-le-bol, pour dénoncer ce référendum au slogan de "Sassoufit". Plusieurs d'entre eux ont été arrêtés. Une source policière fait état de six arrestations tandis que selon les militants, une dizaine de jeunes ont été arrêtés.

10 octobre 2015 - La campagne pour le référendum sur le projet de loi de constitution se tiendra du 9 au 23 octobre. La tenue de ce scrutin controversé se tiendra le 25 septembre. L'adoption d'une nouvelle constitution permettrait au président Sassou Nguesso de briguer un nouveau mandat en 2016.

Les premières manifestations ont ainsi commencé, vendredi, dans le sud de Brazzaville où la police a dispersé, à la mi-journée, une marche de quelques dizaines de militants de l'association Ras-le-bol, opposée au changement de constitution.

Parmi les slogans, on pouvait entendre « Non au référendum ! », « Sassoufit » ou encore « Sassou dégage ! »

Joint par RFI, Martial Panucci, porte-parole du mouvement Ras-le-bol, s'insurge contre les arrestations et la dispersion des manifestants par la police utilisant des grenades lacrymogènes et se dit très inquiet.

« Pendant que nous faisons la marche pacifique nous avons été arrêtés par les forces de l'ordre et ils nous ont dispersés à coups de bombes lacrymogènes. Certains des membres du mouvement ont été arrêtés. Il y a près d'une dizaine de personnes qui ont été arrêtées », a affirmé Martial Panucci.

« Nous sommes très, très inquiets parce qu'on sait comment les choses se passent ici. Nous demandons à ce qu'ils soient libérés le plus vite possible, sinon nous allons continuer à manifester », a ajouté le porte-parole du mouvement Ras-le-bol.

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« Nous sommes des mouvements pacifiques ! Nous ne cassons rien ! Nous demandons juste au président de retirer le référendum. Et nous disons à la police de faire son travail qui est de nous protéger, plutôt que de nous agresser tout le temps, de nous intimider. Nous en avons ras-le-bol ! », a tenu à préciser Martial Panucci, porte-parole du mouvement Ras-le-bol.

Ce samedi 10 octobre, ce sont les partisans du président Sassou N'guesso et du changement de constitution qui prévoient un meeting dans le centre de Brazzaville.

Référendum constitutionnel au Congo: les partisans de Sassou réunis

REPORTAGE

Source: RFI

Au Congo-Brazzaville, les partis et associations de la majorité, au pouvoir, ont fait une démonstration de force, samedi 10 octobre, sur le boulevard Alfred Raoul où ils ont rassemblé, selon leurs propres estimations et celles de la police, plus de 100.000 personnes. Des dizaines de milliers de personnes sont ainsi venues prendre des instructions afin d'aller voter « oui » au scrutin référendaire du 25 octobre prochain, pour donner la possibilité au président Denis Sassou Nguesso de briguer un troisième mandat, en 2016.

11 octobre 2015 - Le boulevard Alfred Raoul n'avait plus accueilli un tel monde depuis la fête du cinquantenaire de l'Indépendance du Congo en 2010. La foule qui s'étendait du rond-point de la Patte d'oie au pont du Centenaire, arborait des t-shirt et des casquettes sur lesquels on pouvait lire des écrits synonymes d'instruction, comme par exemple, « Oui au référendum et au changement de la Constitution ».

Le fait que cette marée humaine ait bravé la pluie est « un sanglant démenti à la spéculation », estime Pierre Nogolo, secrétaire général du Parti congolais du travail, le dernier à prendre la parole pendant le meeting qui a duré près de trois heures.

« Le oui va remporter à 95 % parce que toutes les filles et fils du Congo sont pour l'évolution de nos institutions », a déclaré, à RFI, un manifestant.

« En regardant le projet de loi constitutionnel qui a été adopté récemment au Conseil des ministres, nous avons vu qu'il a une belle part réservée à la jeunesse congolaise, comme la question de la parité entre l'homme et la femme, et il y a également la question, aujourd'hui, de la constitutionnalisation de la décentralisation de notre pays »,

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a, pour sa part, relevé cet autre partisan du président congolais, Denis Sassou Nguesso.

L'opposition réplique

Le rassemblement a eu lieu à l'endroit-même où l'opposition avait mobilisé ses partisans deux semaines plus tôt pour dire « non » au changement de constitution.

Ce meeting des partisans du président congolais n'a pas impressionné l'opposition qui assure que la mobilisation n'avait rien de spontanée.

« Ce n'était pas une mobilisation spontanée ! Ce sont des jeunes gens de 16 à 18 ans qu'on a manipulé à coup d'argent. Si vous regardez les réseaux sociaux, vous vous rendrez bien compte des témoignages que font les jeunes Congolais. Ils disent qu'ils ont été appelés à assister à ce meeting moyennant 10 000 francs [CFA]. Et d'ailleurs, il y en a qui se sont énervés et qui sont repartis parce qu'ils n'ont reçu que 3 000 ou 5 000 francs ! Donc tout cela n'a rien de spontané », a déclaré, à RFI, Paul-Marie Mpouélé coordonnateur du Front pour le respect de l'ordre constitutionnel et l'alternance démocratique (FOCAD).

« Ces jeunes gens qui sont venus, ne sont pas venus pour appuyer le « oui » au référendum mais parce qu'ils ont été « achetés ». C'est regrettable et ce qui est dramatique, là-dedans, c'est que nos amis persistent dans la bêtise ! Ils sont bien conscients que ce procédé, c'est-à-dire le référendum, est totalement illégal mais ils persistent. Ils veulent aller jusqu'au bout de leur forfaiture, jusqu'au bout de leur coup d'Etat constitutionnel. Bien évidemment, nous ne permettrons pas cela. Nous avons commencé nous-mêmes à faire des descentes sur le terrain pour que ce référendum n'ait pas lieu », a ajouté Paul-Marie Mpouélé.

D'autres rassemblements sont prévus, de part et d'autre, avant le scrutin référendaire du 25 octobre.

SOUTH AFRICA**South Africa Should Leave International Court, Ruling Party Says****NEWS STORY**

Source: <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-10-11/s-africa-should-leave-international-court-ruling-party-says>

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By Michael Cohen

11 October 2015 - South Africa should leave the International Criminal Court because it no longer serves its purpose, the nation's ruling party said.

"The ICC has lost its direction," Obed Bapela, the head of the international relations committee for the African National Congress, told reporters at a conference near Johannesburg where the party announced new policy. The Hague-based court needs to be restructured because some nations are using it to further their own agendas, he said.

South Africa's government refused to arrest Sudanese President Umar al-Bashir, who has been indicted twice for war crimes and genocide by the ICC, when he visited Johannesburg on June 15 for an African Union summit. The government also defied an order from South Africa's High Court that al-Bashir couldn't leave the country while it reviewed the case.

While South Africa is a signatory to the Rome Statute that established the ICC, the government argued that it couldn't arrest al-Bashir because he was in the country for an event that fell under the AU's jurisdiction.

Al-Bashir has ruled Sudan for a quarter century since taking power in a military coup. The ICC indicted him in 2009 and 2010 for his role in atrocities in Sudan's western Darfur region, where insurgents took up arms in 2003. As many as 300,000 people have died in the conflict, mainly from illness and starvation, according to the United Nations.

Sudan will be invited to attend a China-Africa summit due to take place in South Africa in December, International Relations Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane said.

SOUTH SUDAN

Russia voices concern about U.N. sanctions, spy drones in South Sudan

NEWS STORY

Source: Reuters

By Michelle Nichols; Editing by Lisa Shumaker

10 October 2015 - United Nations - The United Nations Security Council on Friday [9 October 2015] voted to amend the mandate of a peacekeeping mission in South Sudan

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so it can back implementation of a recent peace deal, but Russia and Venezuela abstained over concerns about sanctions and surveillance drones.

Political row between South Sudan's President Salva Kiir and his former deputy Riek Machar sparked civil war in late 2013 and reopened ethnic fault lines between Kiir's Dinka and Machar's Nuer people. More than 10,000 people have been killed.

Kiir and Machar signed a peace deal in August, but since then both sides have accused one another of attacks, and humanitarian groups have pulled out of parts of the oil-rich country where heavy violence has been reported.

Some 13,000 U.N. peacekeepers are still sheltering more than 200,000 people at camps throughout South Sudan. Peacekeepers have been deployed in South Sudan since the country declared independence from Sudan in 2011.

"This resolution expresses our continued commitment to maintain pressure on both sides, neither of which has fully complied with its ceasefire obligations," U.S. deputy U.N. Ambassador David Pressman told the council.

The U.S.-drafted Security Council resolution extended the peacekeeping mission until Dec. 15. It warns of targeted sanctions against people who threaten South Sudan's peace, security and stability, using the same language contained in a resolution adopted by the council in May to renew the operation.

"The South Sudanese parties now need support and encouraging efforts to implement the agreement and settling the conflict in South Sudan, whereas the threat and use of sanctions can only harden their positions," Russia's deputy U.N. Ambassador Petr Ilichev told the council after the vote.

Venezuela said a threat of sanctions was counterproductive, while China, which voted in favor of the resolution, said the council should be cautious when considering imposing sanctions.

Russia, Angola and Venezuela last month objected to a U.S. bid to impose U.N. sanctions on South Sudan's army chief and a rebel commander for their roles in the conflict.

Russia's Ilichev also said Moscow advised against asking U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to deploy surveillance drones as part of the peacekeeping mission because the South Sudanese government had objected to such a move.

South Sudan's U.N. Ambassador Francis Deng said the call for surveillance drones "without consultation with the government is to invite controversy, and potential

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disagreement and hostility, when harmony and cooperation are what the situation calls for."

South Sudan opposes drones for peace mission

NEWS STORY

Source: AFP

10 October 2015 - New York - South Sudan told the United Nations on Friday that it opposed the use of surveillance drones to help track ongoing fighting in the world's youngest nation.

The comments came as the Security Council approved a resolution that asks Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to deploy more helicopters and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) to strengthen the UN mission in South Sudan.

South Sudan's Ambassador Francis Mading Deng told the 15-member council that the use of UAVs was a "contested" issue and complained that the move was decided without consultation with Juba.

Such a decision will "invite controversy, and potential disagreement and hostility, when harmony and co-operation are what the situation calls for," Deng said.

Warring sides

The UN has made successful use of drones in its mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo, allowing peacekeepers to survey areas that are hard to access or too dangerous to deploy the blue helmets.

Russia and Venezuela abstained from the vote largely in protest at the new provision on the use of UAVs and another section on the threat of sanctions, but the resolution was adopted by a vote of 13 in favour.

Russian deputy ambassador Petr Ilichev said it was time to engage with South Sudan's warring sides to advance peace and not "frighten them off with the threat of sanctions."

South Sudan's President Salva Kiir signed a peace accord on August 26, a few days after rebel leader Riek Machar committed to the agreement, but fighting has continued.

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Salva Kiir reveals threat of ICC referral

NEWS STORY

Source: Radio Tamazuj

11 October 2015 - South Sudanese President Salva Kiir has revealed that his government was threatened by foreign powers with a referral to the International Criminal Court, without saying who specifically made the threat.

“Some of our international partners in peace even turned to threats and intimidations, both in public and private – sanctions, the withdrawal of aid and support, referrals to the International Criminal Court,” Kiir stated in an article published in his name in the Washington Times on Sunday.

The president did not elaborate on this to reveal whether he personally was threatened with investigation or the threat was kept vague.

According to the Rome Statute, the ICC Prosecutor may open an investigation when a situation is referred to him or her by the United Nations Security Council. This suggests that the threats against Kiir may have been by one or more members of the UN Security Council.

Writing in the Washington Times, Kiir slammed the unnamed “international partners,” saying, “The tools of democracy, prosperity and justice, now are used to bludgeon those same principles.”

“From distant capitals came demands that we shred our constitution and the safeguards for the South Sudanese enshrined within it,” he added.

Kiir stressed repeatedly in the article in the Washington Times that he objected to key elements of the peace deal that he signed in August, but that he was pressured into signing it anyway. Kiir explained that the deal “rewards insurrection” and imposes a supra-national monitoring commission “headed by a foreigner and with absolute veto power over the decisions of the government”

He questioned also the “ordered demilitarization” of the capital city Juba and state capitals, saying this is a threat to South Sudan's territorial integrity. “Of course we... voiced our objections. We were told, however, to keep quiet,” reads the article written in Kiir's name.

Kiir's counterpart in Sudan, Omar al-Bashir, is wanted by the ICC on charges of war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity. Bashir fled from an African Union

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summit unexpectedly in June when a South African court issued an arrest warrant for him, citing the ICC decision.

Deadline passes for Ugandan army withdrawal from S Sudan

NEWS STORY

Source: Radio Tamazuj

10 October 2015 - The Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF) have not withdrawn from South Sudan's Jonglei State in spite of committing to do so when the Ugandan government signed as guarantor of the recent peace agreement between South Sudan's warring parties last August.

The peace agreement signed by Riek Machar on 17 August and by Salva Kiir on 26 August mandates the completion of the withdrawal of all allied forces from the country, with the exception of Western Equatoria State, within 45 days of signing.

By that time frame, 45 days from 26 August would be 10 October.

A major Ugandan daily newspaper reported last month that the UPDF would finish the process of withdrawal by 10 October. However, a witness in Jonglei told Radio Tamazuj today that Ugandan soldiers are still present in the area.

Yesterday, the UN Security Council passed a resolution calling for the withdrawal of “armed groups and allied forces invited by either side, consistent with the Agreement.”

The resolution also mandated the UN Mission in South Sudan “to monitor and report on the withdrawal of all State and non-State security actors, allied to either Party in conflict, from the territory of South Sudan, with the exception of Western Equatoria State.”

UNMISS have not yet said anything publicly about the continuing presence of Ugandan army forces in Jonglei.

South Sudan rebel Oloni 'may take up arms again'

NEWS STORY

Source: BBC

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A major rebel leader in South Sudan has told the BBC he may have to take up arms again, despite the signing of a peace agreement six weeks ago.

12 October 2015 - Gen Johnson Otony said the government was undermining the deal with attacks on civilians and a plan to re-draw state boundaries in the country.

Tens of thousands of people have died and millions have been displaced since the civil war began in 2013.

South Sudan gained independence from neighbouring Sudan four years ago.

'Naked power-grab'

Gen Otony told the BBC the peace deal was unlikely to work.

He said he was incensed at what he saw as the wrongful occupation of his tribe's land by government forces.

He also said he was angered by a plan - announced earlier this month by President Salva Kiir - to turn South Sudan's 10 states into 28.

Gen Otony portrayed the move as a naked power-grab, the BBC's Tim Franks reports.

The rebel leader said land appropriations had pushed his tribe to use force in the past and they could do so again.

Many people in the world's youngest country appear weary and traumatised by the war, but few are confident of peace, our correspondent says.

SUDAN

ICC Prosecutor Asks India to Arrest Sudan President during His India-Africa Forum Summit Visit

NEWS STORY

By Devirupa Mitra

New Delhi, 11 October 2015 - As New Delhi gears up for its biggest ever diplomatic jamboree with African nations, it appears that the President of one of the key countries is a "war criminal", against whom two arrest warrants were issued in 2009 and 2010. The International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutor has said that India should "contribute"

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towards the goal of accountability for the “world’s worst crimes” by arresting the visiting Sudanese President, Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir.

In response to a query from The Sunday Standard, the office of the prosecutor of the Hague-based ICC has for the first time commented on the forthcoming visit of the President of Sudan for the third India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS) to be held from October 29.

The ICC Pre-Trial Chamber had issued two warrants of arrest against President al-Bashir in 2009 and 2010 for five counts of crimes against humanity, two counts of war crimes and three counts of genocide during the war in Darfur.

India, which is not party to the Rome Statute that created the ICC, has been one of Sudan’s biggest international partners. Before this trip, President al-Bashir has not been on an official visit to India. He has transited twice through India in 1999 and 2002, but hasn’t travelled to the subcontinent since the indictment.

Noting that India is not a member of the ICC, the office of the Prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, said: “The United Nations Security Council referred the situation of Darfur, Sudan, to the ICC in 2005 through its resolution (1593)”.

The statement added: “It is important to note that the United Nations Security Council 1593 urged all states, including non-State parties to the ICC as well regional and other international organisations, to cooperate fully with the ICC. This includes arresting Mr al-Bashir.”

Further, it said that ICC judges have “clarified that the UN Security Council Resolution 1593 lifted immunities otherwise enjoyed by President al-Bashir under international law”. This was a reference to 2014 when President al-Bashir went to Congo to attend the COMESA meeting, which was again upheld in the case of South Africa allowing the Sudanese president for the African Union summit in August this year.

“By arresting and surrendering ICC suspects, India can contribute to the important goal of ending impunity for the world’s worst crimes,” ICC prosecutor’s office said in response to a query from this newspaper on India’s duties under the international law.

When India invited the 54 heads of states in Africa for the third IAFS, Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s special envoy, Minister of State for External Affairs V K Singh, personally invited al-Bashir on September 19 in Khartoum. After the meeting, Sudanese Foreign Minister Ibrahim Ghandour told the media that President al-Bashir would be attending the mega summit.

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When asked about ICC prosecutor's view about the visit of the Sudanese President, spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs Vikas Swarup said, "India is fully compliant with its international obligations."

Despite international sanctions, India's political and economic relations have kept apace, with the bilateral trade in 2014-15 being \$1.4 billion. Several Indian firms like ONGC, Tata Motors, Mahindra and BHEL are operating in the North African country.

Harvard Law School Professor Alex Whiting, who had been attorney in the ICC prosecutor's office from 2010 to 2013, agreed that India "does not have legal obligation" to enforce warrant for al-Bashir as UNSC resolution 1593 "does not obligate non-State parties to cooperate with the ICC but only urges them to do so".

"However, India is a signatory to the Genocide Convention which states 'that genocide, whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, is a crime under international law which [the contracting parties] undertake to prevent and to punish'," Whiting said. India became a party to the 1948 Genocide Convention in 1959.

Whiting felt that "this obligation would cause India to think twice about hosting someone who has been charged by an international tribunal with genocide".

Incidentally, South Africa is currently in the dock in ICC, as it has been asked to explain why -- despite being member of ICC -- it did not arrest the Sudanese President during his visit in June.

South Africa had claimed that it could not arrest a sitting head of state under domestic law. After a South African court unexpectedly issued an order to the government to enforce the ICC warrant, President Al-Bashir made a quick, quiet exit.

Among the international community, United States may express public annoyance with India, as it did in Aug 31 ahead of Al Bashir's Chinese sojourn to China to attend the commemorative parade to mark 70th anniversary of victory over Japan in World War 2.

The US state department had then said that it was against "invitations, facilitation or support for travel by persons subject to outstanding ICC warrants". China, like India and United States, never acceded to the Rome Statute.

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Sudan's Bashir urges rebels to resume talks, only one notable group shows up

NEWS STORY

Source: Reuters

By Khalid Abdelaziz; Writing by Ahmed Aboulenein; Editing by Mark Heinrich

Khartoum, 10 October 2015 - Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir formally reopened talks with rebel and opposition groups on Saturday [10 October] but only one significant opposition party showed up, and he urged them to halt a boycott on dialogue in return for a ceasefire.

Bashir's government has been confronted by rebellion in its Darfur region since 2003 and a separate but linked insurgency in the states of Blue Nile and South Kordofan since the secession four years ago of South Sudan.

Eighteen opposition groups that had initially agreed to take part in a formal national reconciliation process at its inception in early 2014 pulled out this January, leaving the future of any such dialogue in question.

"I'm inviting the parties and rebels who are absent today to be part of a national dialogue. To those that did not come today we will not close the door, because they are Sudanese," said Bashir, who took power in a 1989 coup.

He was speaking in Khartoum at the start of what was billed as renewed talks with the opposition but which were attended by only one notable opposition group, the Islamist Popular Congress Party, which split from Bashir's political fold in 1999.

"If other parties are ready for the cessation of hostilities, we are ready to declare a comprehensive ceasefire."

The main armed rebel groups have rejected previous amnesty offers and refuse to attend talks held inside Sudan. The government has rebuffed opposition and rebel demands to link political negotiations with peace talks.

Abdullah Mursal, a leader of the Sudanese Revolutionary Front (SRF), an umbrella organization of rebel groups, told Reuters that an initial meeting should be held in the Ethiopian capital in accordance with a September African Union resolution.

"We will not be involved in talks like this (in Khartoum) that are decided upon unilaterally," Mursal said.

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The National Coalition Forces, the main opposition coalition, also boycotted Saturday's gathering; it demands that Bashir repeal security and press laws and free political detainees before it enters into negotiations.

"The regime is not serious about these talks. We will not participate in dialogue before the government implements procedures to create the political climate for talks," National Consensus Forces spokesman Abu-Bakr Youssef said.

Bashir is accused of masterminding genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes during Sudan's Darfur conflict and is wanted by the Hague-based International Criminal Court, which issued a warrant for his arrest in 2009. He denies wrongdoing.

The 72-year-old president, who extended his rule in April when he was re-elected with over 94 percent of votes after most opposition groups boycotted the vote, called for a national dialogue early last year but scant headway has been made.

Sudan has been suffering from an economic crisis since South Sudan seceded in 2011, costing Khartoum over 70 percent of its oil revenues.

AU's absence from Sudan dialogue conference prompts questions

ANALYSIS

Source: Xinhua News Agency

Khartoum , 11 October 2015 - The African Union's (AU) absence from the opening session of the Sudanese national dialogue conference, which kicked off Saturday, has raised many questions, particularly that the AU is entrusted with all Sudan's peace and negotiations files.

Mohamed Hassan Saeed, a Sudanese political analyst, told Xinhua on Sunday that the absence is very influential because the AU is the mediator in all the Sudanese issues.

The AU is involved in negotiations between Sudan and South Sudan, talks between Khartoum and Darfur armed groups, negotiations between Khartoum and the rebels of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM)/northern sector and the national dialogue, he said.

It is apparent that there is likely a mutual discontent between Sudan and the AU.

On Aug. 25, the African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) issued a resolution calling "for an urgent pre-national dialogue meeting of all relevant parties at the AU

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Headquarters in Addis Ababa to discuss and agree on procedural matters relating to the dialogue."

But, Khartoum rejected the AU call and insisted that the dialogue should be in Sudan.

"The AU, with its recent decision, wanted to be holding on the issue of the national dialogue and controlling its procedural steps via the preparatory meeting, which Khartoum rejected," he said.

"Definitely the absence of the AU officials from the dialogue conference was a message to Khartoum, indicating the AU dissatisfaction," he explained.

Saeed further stressed the importance for the Sudanese government to exert intensive efforts to reassure the AU that the outcome of the dialogue conference would be consistent with the directives embodied in the AUPSC resolution which stressed the necessity of conducting a transparent dialogue that leads to applicable results.

Nevertheless, other analysts believe the AU absence would not constitute any barrier that might prevent the national dialogue from reaching its aspired ends if the participants agreed on decisive solutions to the current political issues.

"I do not see the African absence would have any big effect on the dialogue, because we saw that the AU has been involved in many files of Sudanese issues without achieving tangible results," Abdul-Rahim Al-Sunni, another Sudanese political analyst, told Xinhua.

"If the AU wants to involve in the national dialogue without achieving any positive breakthrough, then Khartoum did well when it insisted that the dialogue should be convened inside Sudan," he added.

Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir on Saturday opened the sessions of the national dialogue conference in Khartoum with the participation of 92 Sudanese political parties and representatives of regional organizations besides Chadian President Idriss Deby.

Three Darfur armed movements are participating in the conference.

The conference is scheduled to discuss six major issues including peace, identity, rights and freedoms, economy, external relations and rule and management.

Major political parties and armed movements have rejected to participate in the conference, including the Revolutionary Front Alliance, which brings together the SPLM/northern sector and the major Darfur armed movements.

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In January 2014, President al-Bashir declared an initiative calling on the opposition parties and the armed groups to join a national dialogue to end the country's crises.

Sudan: South Africa Asks ICC for More Time

NEWS STORY

Source: <http://www.geeskaafrika.com/sudan-south-africa-asks-icc-for-more-time/10272/>

Nairobi, 10 October 2015 – Public Diplomacy and Regional Security News. The government has asked the International Criminal Court (ICC) for more time to explain why it allowed Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir to evade an arrest warrant and leave the country when he visited in June.

Bashir is accused of masterminding genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes during Sudan's Darfur conflict and is wanted by the Hague-based tribunal, which issued a warrant for his arrest in 2009.

As an ICC signatory, South Africa is obliged to implement warrants from the court. But when Bashir visited for an African Union summit, the government refused to arrest him, and even allowed him to leave the country in violation of a domestic court order.

In a subsequent ruling, the High Court made clear that Pretoria was under legal obligation to exercise the warrant. ICC judges last month asked South Africa for an explanation.

However, the government, which has argued that Bashir enjoyed diplomatic immunity during his visit, said on Monday it needed more time to assess the legality of its position because it felt the ICC had not adhered to the "principles of justice".

"The request was made with a view to assess whether South Africa was in breach of its obligations to cooperate with the Court," the foreign ministry said in a statement.

South Africa said it would approach the political body of the ICC for clarity on how the immunity of serving heads of state that are not parties to the ICC's Rome Statute – such as Sudan – should be handled.

The failure to detain Bashir was a blow to the ICC, which has come under criticism from African states for what they see as its disproportionate focus on the continent in bringing its prosecutions.

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Sudan's al-Bashir kicks off 3-day visit to Algeria

NEWS STORY

Source: Xinhua News Agency

Algiers, 10 October 2015 - Sudanese President Omar al- Bashir on Sunday started a three-day visit to Algeria at the invitation of his counterpart Abdelaziz Bouteflika.

Al-Bashir was welcomed at the international airport of Houari Boumediene in Algiers by Speaker of the parliament, Mohamed Larbi Ould Khelifa, as well as a number of cabinet ministers and officials.

The visit would be an opportunity for the two presidents to exchange views on regional and international issues of common interest, including the situation in the Arab and African regions.

Sudan's ambassador to Algeria, Issam Aouadh Metouali, was quoted by the local Algerian radio as saying that relations between Algeria and Sudan are marked by convergence of views on regional and international issues.

Regarding economic and trade exchange between the two, Issam Aouadh Metouali said they were recording dynamic progress, saying the Algerian Sudanese Joint Commission would hold its meeting before the end of this year.

Khartoum bids on Algeria to help it overcome the economic difficulties due to a decade-long embargo by the West. In this regard, the diplomat further urged Algerian operators to invest in Sudan. Trade exchange between the Arab nations is below 100 million U.S. dollars a year.

Discussions over UNAMID exit strategy to resume next November

NEWS STORY

Source: Sudan Tribune

Khartoum, 11 October 2015 - The African Union, United Nations and Sudan tripartite mechanism will resume discussions next month on an exit strategy of the hybrid peacekeeping mission from Darfur, said a Sudanese official on Sunday.

On the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly Sudanese in September, foreign minister Ibrahim Ghandour discussed with UN chief Ban Ki-moon the withdrawal

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of African Union-United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) and called to resume the talks.

The foreign ministry spokesperson Ali al-Sadiq, told reporters on Sunday that a meeting was held in New York with the participation of the three parties, adding that the chairperson of the African Union Commission Dlamini Zuma was represented by its deputy.

"The meeting reiterated the importance of achieving the UNMAID exit strategy form Darfur. It has also been decided that the tripartite team determines the date of its next meeting which is expected to convene early in November in Khartoum," Sadiq said.

The tripartite committee tasked with the development of the exit strategy had been expected to sign an agreement last May. But in June, Sudanese officials said that the UN retracted from an agreement reached by the joint team on an exit strategy.

In a report on 26 May, Ban Ki-moon told the UN Security Council UNAMID can only withdraw gradually from West Darfur, and leave from three bases in North and South Darfur, in areas that do not currently necessitate its presence.

He linked the full withdrawal from the region with signing of a ceasefire agreement within a peace agreement where the protection of civilians can be ensured.

The government says the situation is favourable for the expensive mission and propose to direct its money for recovery and development projects. The government also argues that the displacements that occurred earlier this year are caused by communal fighting and they are now under control.

UN agencies say there are nearly 2.5 million displaced persons in Darfur, despite the signing of peace agreement in Doha in July 2011.