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



MEDIA MONITORING

16 June 2015

GENERAL NEWS

The West can keep its ICC

EDITORIAL

Source: The Herald (Harare)

15 June 2015 - FROM time immemorial Africans have been given a raw deal by Westerners from the time of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade to colonialism and now neo-colonialism manifest in several duplicitous institutions that serve to perpetuate Western hegemony.

Even as you read this, police in the United States are busy using African Americans for target practice. No week goes by without reports of some racist shooting down of, or beating of unarmed black Americans.

This is the legacy of the racist concept of white justice that looks at the colour of the suspect not the merits of the case. From the United Nations Security Council to the international financial system dominated by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, it is the primacy of the white West that is promoted.

And even in Africa, we host many institutions that are African in name only with Westerners holding significant weighted votes, a case in point being the African Development Bank.

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Come to the African Union itself, the body created with the lofty vision of fostering a United States of Africa, it does not help matters that 70 percent of the AU budget is met by development partners who end up influencing the continental agenda.

The same goes for the ICC, that at inception propounded lofty ideals of international justice but which has since morphed into an instrument of Western hegemony by targeting African and Eastern European leaders.

The ICC is today a glorified version of the racist lynch mobs that used to hang Africans on the flimsiest of excuses. Since it was set up, the ICC has indicted only developing world leaders while known war criminals like George W. Bush and Tony Blair, who are guilty of killing and maiming millions in Iraq, strut the world as free men.

Looking at those indicted by the ICC, it is clear that the court operates like a spider's web that traps only fleas and mosquitoes leaving larger vermin like rats to run riot.

It is this shameful history that saw the AU decide to collectively condemn the ICC and call for an African Court of Justice. We urge the AU, to adopt as one of its resolutions, wholesale withdrawal from the ICC so that the envisaged African Court of Justice can become a reality.

The African position was vindicated yesterday when the ICC, through Western-sponsored proxies, sought to compel South Africa to arrest Sudan president Omar al-Bashir for alleged war crimes.

While South Africa is party to the Rome Statute, Mr Bashir was in South Africa on AU business and had been guaranteed the requisite immunity, which he must be afforded without fail.

That, however, did not deter the NGO-types in the so-called Southern African Litigation Centre to seek Mr Al-Bashir's detention.

We are encouraged by the ANC position that called on the government of South Africa to guarantee Mr Al-Bashir's safety.

The Westerners can keep their ICC, and we keep our dignity.

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Time for Africa to take its UN seat

EDITORIAL

Source: Daily Mail (Zambia)

15 June 2015 - The call for Africa to have a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council is getting louder, and justifiably so. The demand must continue until the rest of the world not only gets the message but more importantly also heeds the demand.

It is not an unreasonable demand. If anything, it is long overdue, and as stated recently, it is a gross injustice that Africa is not represented as a permanent member. The African continent has over 50 countries and surely it deserves to be appropriately represented.

To achieve this goal, Africa should be more united now than ever before. As President Lungu has said, the African Union should remain united and speak with one voice to attain the objective of reforming the UN Security Council.

Indeed the continent should be united if the rest of the world is to see and appreciate the demand. If divided, the rest of the world would not take Africa seriously.

Thankfully for Africa, the continent is united on this desire and the call has been getting louder in recent months. Unity on the continent is getting firmer.

But as President Lungu said at the Summit of the Committee of 10 (C10) of the AU in Johannesburg on Saturday, there is need to continue the crusade beyond the continent.

He rightly states that there is need to continue engaging with all interest groups to help with the crusade.

The collective effort of the C10 committee which was established 10 years ago should bear fruit sooner rather than later. After last month's C10 summit which Zambia hosted, the resolve is clear and the time has come.

As the 70th anniversary of the founding of the UN draws closer, it must be stressed to all other member nations that Africa can no longer be regarded as a continent of insignificant members.

We don't see why other members of the UN should object to Africa's demand for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. There is no justifiable reason to insist on Africa being in the back seat.

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Some of the world's major security concerns are in Africa, and so who is better placed to make decisions on these other than the people on the continent themselves?

Africa must be in the front seat, along with other stakeholders, to make decisions not only for themselves but to also help in resolving security concerns in other parts of the world.

The time has come for Africa to take its deserved seat.

U.N. Tightens Noose on U.N. Rights Official Who Exposed Abuses

NEWS STORY

Source: Foreign Policy (US)

By Colum Lynch

15 June 2015 - U.N. investigators expand investigation into veteran U.N. human rights official who disclosed abuses against children in the Central African Republic.

United Nations investigators have reopened an internal probe into whether a top U.N. official improperly shared confidential information about efforts to promote human rights in Western Sahara with a senior official from Morocco, which has long sought to limit the monitoring of abuses there, senior U.N.-based officials told Foreign Policy.

The move marks an escalation by U.N. watchdogs to establish whether Anders Kompass, a highly-regarded U.N. human rights official from Sweden, has leaked sensitive information to foreign governments on the internal workings of the U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Kompass is already the target of a separate probe by the U.N. Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) regarding allegations that he wrongfully provided the French government last July with a confidential U.N. report documenting the sexual abuses of children by French soldiers in the Central African Republic.

The case against Kompass has rankled the United States and many other governments, which fear the leak investigation will feed public perception that the United Nations is seeking to silence an official who intended to halt ongoing abuses against children. The United States has urged the United Nations to pursue an independent investigation into the sexual abuse allegations and the organization's handling of the case.

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Meanwhile, OIOS Chief of Investigations Michael Stefanovic has recused himself from the leak inquiry of Kompass, telling governments during a May 13 meeting at U.N. headquarters in New York that the probe by the nominally-independent unit was being directed by U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's chief of staff, Susana Malcorra. Stefanovic also told diplomats that his own boss, Canadian Undersecretary-General for OIOS Carman Lapointe, had bypassed established procedures for determining whether the case merited an investigation. Stefanovic said he filed a formal complaint to Ban's office saying the U.N. investigations unit was being turned into an accomplice in an effort by senior management to get rid of Kompass. U.N. officials said Lapointe believes she can launch an investigation under her own authority, and did so in this instance because of the political sensitivity of the case.

The situation first came to light on May 6, when the Guardian reported that the United Nations had suspended Kompass from his post for giving French authorities the confidential report, which included the names of the victims, investigators, and alleged perpetrators. The six-page report, which was obtained by FP with the names of individuals redacted, details multiple examples in which soldiers from France, Chad, and Equatorial Guinea traded military rations and money for sexual favors from children as young as 8 years old. The soldiers were serving under the command of the French military and the African Union, not the United Nations.

Kompass has since been reinstated to his post by a judge in the U.N.'s administrative tribunal, pending the outcome of the investigation. The intergovernmental organization has defended its decision to investigate Kompass, saying that his actions potentially endangered the very children he claims to have been trying to protect.

"The leaked document contains notes of interviews, including, notably, names and other identifying information pertaining to alleged child victims," Malcorra wrote in a confidential letter to U.N. members obtained by FP. "The disclosure of this document may endanger the safety or security of the children, violate their rights, and invade their privacy."

In an effort to illustrate the risks, the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, Prince Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein of Jordan, told reporters in Geneva last month that the names of the victims had been widely leaked to the media, including a French television crew that tracked down one mother who said that she beat her son so badly after learning that he had engaged in a sex act with a French soldier that "if someone had not stopped me, I would have killed him." But that woman, who accompanied her son when he initially described the abuses to U.N. investigators, was aware of what happened long before the report had been disclosed to the French.

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The handling of the case has generated little support from governments at U.N. headquarters. A group of about 15 countries, including several Latin American and Scandinavian governments, as well as Canada, Japan, Singapore, South Africa, and Tanzania, have pressed Ban to get to the bottom of what happened and to examine the U.N.'s treatment of Kompass.

Officials from those governments say the United Nations seems more committed to disciplining Kompass than taking action to curb violations in the Central African Republic. Skepticism deepened after Paula Donovan — a former U.N. official and co-founder of the nonprofit organization Aids-Free World, who leaked the Central African Republic report to the Guardian — published a string of internal emails and memos documenting the U.N.'s efforts to force Kompass out of his job as the third-highest-ranking official at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Kompass first came under scrutiny in late 2014, when an anonymous source, using the Twitter handle @Chris_Coleman24, tweeted links to a string of alleged emails from the Moroccan ambassador to the U.N. in Geneva, Omar Hilale, to his foreign minister in Rabat. The emails showed Hilale boasting that he had placed a number of individuals, including Kompass and then-U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay, in his pocket.

Soon afterward, Prince Zeid was appointed high commissioner and asked the Office of Internal Oversight Services to look into allegations against Kompass.

U.N. investigators based in Vienna questioned Kompass, examined all of his official emails and telephone records, and scrubbed the hard drive of his computer, according to a senior U.N.-based official familiar with the investigation. They found no evidence that he wrote any of the purported emails.

In March, Malcorra informed Prince Zeid that the investigation into sensitive information given to the Moroccans “could not substantiate any responsibility for Anders Kompass,” according to an account by Prince Zeid’s deputy, Flavia Pansieri, which was leaked by Donovan’s outfit.

Earlier this month, the OIOS informed Kompass in a letter that the investigation into the possible disclosures of confidential information to Morocco had found no evidence implicating him and that the case had been closed, according to a person familiar with the matter. But the OIOS left open the possibility that the case could be revisited if new evidence surfaced.

The U.N. investigations division also produced a so-called “closure report” declaring the Western Sahara investigation over. But Lapointe refused to sign off on the report on the

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grounds that crucial witnesses, including the Moroccan ambassador, had never been questioned in the course of the investigation. From Lapointe's point of view, the case has never been closed.

It remains unclear whether U.N. investigators have obtained new information. But the investigators plan to approach Hilale, who is currently serving as Morocco's envoy to U.N. headquarters in New York.

Hilale did not respond to a request for comment.

Around the same time Malcorra informed him the Morocco investigation turned up no evidence of wrongdoing, Prince Zeid discovered that Kompas had also admitted to sharing the U.N.'s internal report on violations in the Central African Republic. At that point, Prince Zeid instructed Pansieri to urge Kompas to resign from his post.

Kompas refused and told Pansieri he would fight against stepping down. Stockholm also weighed in: A senior Swedish diplomat in New York warned U.N. ethics officer Joan Dubinsky that "it would not be a good thing if the High Commission for Human Rights forced Mr. Kompas to resign. If that occurred, it would go public and a harmful and ugly debate would occur." Dubinsky is supposed to represent whistle-blowers at the United Nations.

A week later, Malcorra hosted a meeting in Turin, Italy, with Prince Zeid, Pansieri, and Dubinsky to address the standoff with Kompas. Following the meeting, Pansieri asked Kompas to provide an account of his disclosure of the Central African Republic report to France.

Kompas has denied providing sensitive information to the Moroccans. But he said he decided to furnish France with a report on abuses because he felt the U.N. mission was not prepared to act on its findings, and he was confident that Paris could help bring the abuses to an end. "I acted with the only concern of stopping the violations as soon as possible and in the context of the U.N. [s] zero-tolerance policy for exploitation and abuse," Kompas said in a memo he drafted in his internal account.

Kompas maintains he has never hidden the fact that he provided the report to the French, which he delivered with a U.N. cover letter and his signature. Less than two weeks after he gave the report to French authorities, he informed Pansieri that he had done so and attached a copy of the redacted report, according to his account. Kompas maintains that Pansieri's special assistant sent him an email on August 8 confirming the receipt of the report, and indicating that the report had also been shared with Ban's office, more than six months before the United Nations began investigating him. Pansieri, Kompas noted, "had never indicated that my behavior had been mistaken."

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The high commissioner's office said that while it may have been appropriate to alert the French, it was reckless to release a report that included the names of the abused children and the investigators. U.N. officials maintain that the investigator on the ground was mortified at the leak. "I believe this lack of respect for the confidentiality of the sources endangered both the alleged victims and interviewers," the investigator wrote in a March 19 letter to Prince Zeid.

Diplomats speaking to Foreign Policy said the Turin meeting left the impression that the U.N.'s nominally-independent internal investigators and ethics officer were operating under instructions from the secretary-general's office.

Diplomats from these governments say the United Nations appears to have devoted a disproportionate amount of effort to pursuing Kompass, while doing little to focus on the abuses underway in the Central African Republic. Facing pressure from the United States and others, Ban on June 3 announced he would launch an "external, independent review" of the allegations and examine the U.N. response. "The secretary-general is deeply disturbed by the allegations of sexual abuse by soldiers in the Central African Republic, as well as allegations of how this was handled by various parts of the U.N. system involved," according to a statement from Ban's office.

"This is not good for the reputation of the U.N.," said one European diplomat, who spoke to FP on condition of anonymity to discuss the issue more candidly. "The key issue certainly for us is that these are grave violations that we have seen in the Central African Republic, but for the outsider it looks like nothing is being done until they finally shoot the messenger. It's the imbalance in their reaction."

Fernando Carrera, the U.N. ambassador from Guatemala, said the controversy surrounding the allegations of abuse in the Central African Republic threatens to blight the international reputation of the global diplomatic body as it heads into its 70th birth anniversary.

Guatemala is one of 15 countries — including some from Scandinavia and Latin America, as well as Australia and Japan — that for weeks have been pressing Ban to investigate the U.N.'s handling of the case. Carrera said some members of that group also have conveyed concerns by the United States that the handling of the case against Kompass, who has claimed whistle-blower status, could jeopardize congressional funding to the United Nations. A senior U.S. official has personally appealed to the U.N. secretariat to assign the investigation to an independent panel of experts.

"There is a wide consensus that anyone who comes out denouncing the sexual abuse of children or women by peacekeeping operation or troops is doing the right thing," the

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U.S. official said. "People who dare to say things [on behalf of young victims] should be protected — not punished."

President Mugabe Urges AU to Start Funding Self

NEWS STORY

Source: The Herald

15 June 2015 - The African Union must fund itself through mobilisation of continental resources and avoid reliance on partners. This was said by AU chairperson President Mugabe while officially opening the 25th AU Summit here [South Africa] yesterday [14 June].

The call by the AU and SADC chair was also echoed by the African Union Commission chairperson, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, and South African President Jacob Zuma earlier in their addresses.

"You will recall that at our last assembly, we directed that the First 10-Year Implementation Plan, our first concrete step to actualise Agenda 2063, be developed for our consideration. Our Assembly will have an opportunity to deliberate on this important matter. Without pre-empting that discussion the people of Africa must continue to own Agenda 2063 and all its plans. To that end, we have to endeavour to avail the requisite technical, financial, human, material and other resources for the implementation of this African blueprint," said President Mugabe.

He added: "The decision we took at the last assembly on alternative sources of funding is of paramount importance in this regard. We need to see greater efforts towards funding our operations and thus ensure ownership of our organisation and its programmes."

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DRC

RDC: les gouverneurs appelés à poursuivre les consultations

Source: RFI

En RDC, les gouverneurs vont désormais prendre la main pour continuer les consultations en vue d'un dialogue à leur niveau, dans leurs entités. Ils ont été instruits en fin de semaine par le président Joseph Kabila lui-même.

15 Juin 2015 - Joseph Kabila a donc décidé d'écouter le Congo profond, d'écouter le paysan qui n'a jamais trouvé son compte dans la « guéguerre » politicienne de la capitale. Et pour certains observateurs, c'est une autre démarche. Aujourd'hui, le débat est bien précis et le contenu des consultations initiées par le président Kabila est en effet essentiellement politique.

La majorité des interlocuteurs du chef de l'Etat ont insisté sur la question principale qui oppose les Congolais: le respect de la Constitution dans l'organisation des élections. Il faut également éviter de déborder au-delà de 2016 sous quelque prétexte que ce soit.

Il faut dire que les consultations initiées par le président Kabila ont également divisé les groupements politiques et la société civile. Il y a beaucoup de contestations quant à la représentativité dans plusieurs groupes reçus au palais de la Nation.

Trial of 'Terminator' warlord will open in Hague, not DR Congo

Source: AFP

The Hague, 15 June 2015 - The trial of former warlord Bosco Ntaganda, nicknamed "The Terminator", will open in The Hague rather than the Democratic Republic of Congo due to concerns over witnesses' safety, the International Criminal Court announced Monday.

Rwandan-born Ntaganda faces 18 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity for his role in a brutal civil conflict in the DR Congo's volatile northeast a decade ago, including allegations that he used child soldiers and sex slaves in his rebel army.

A panel of ICC judges had recommended in March that the trial's opening statements be held in the city of Bunia in the country's northeast, in order to bring proceedings closer to the victims.

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Opening a war crimes trial in the community -- with legal teams decamping from the court's headquarters in The Hague to the DR Congo -- would have been a historic first for the ICC.

But the court said Monday that "concerns over witnesses and victims' safety and well-being, as well as the security of the local communities involved", had been an important factor in deciding to hold the opening proceedings in The Hague instead.

The ICC said it also had to take into account "the concerns expressed by the victims that the accused's return would remind them of the suffering and trauma", as well as the logistics and costs of the move, estimated at more than 600,000 euros (\$677,000).

"The ICC Presidency concluded that the potential benefits of holding proceedings in Bunia are, in view of the Presidency, outweighed by these risks," it said in a statement.

Prosecutors allege that Ntaganda, who surrendered to the court in a shock move last year, was involved in raping child and women soldiers and keeping them as sex slaves.

He is also accused of using child soldiers in his Patriotic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (FPLC) in attacks prosecutors say killed at least 800 people as warlords battled rival militias for control in the mineral-rich Ituri province.

Ntaganda, 41, has pleaded not guilty to the charges.

He is the founder of the M23 rebel group that was eventually defeated by the government in 2013 after an 18-month insurgency in the eastern DR Congo's North Kivu region.

The first-ever suspect to voluntarily surrender to the ICC, Ntaganda walked into the US embassy in the Rwandan capital Kigali in March 2013 and asked to be sent to The Hague.

Fighting in eastern DRC has left some 60,000 dead since 1999, exacerbated by the wealth of mineral resources in the region, notably gold and minerals used in electronic products.

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NGOs demand release of detained pro-democracy activists in Congo

Source: Reuters

By Aaron Ross; Editing by Dominic Evans

15 June 2015 - More than 200 domestic and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) called on Democratic Republic of Congo on Monday to release two young activists arrested in March during a raid on a pro-democracy meeting in the capital Kinshasa.

Some 30 activists, musicians and journalists were arrested on suspicion of promoting armed insurrection on March 15 during a news conference organized by Congolese and West African campaigners to promote youth participation in politics.

All have since been released or deported except for Fred Bauma, an activist with Struggle for Change (Lucha), a group based in the eastern city of Goma, and Yves Makwambala, a webmaster working with the Kinshasa-based group Filimbi.

Bauma and Makwambala both spent more than a month in the custody of Congo's National Intelligence Agency (ANR) before being transferred to prison on charges of plotting against President Joseph Kabila.

"Congolese authorities have held Fred Bauma and Yves Makwambala for months without any credible basis," said Jean-Claude Katende, president of the African Association for the Defense of Human Rights (ASADHO) in Congo in the statement. "Both should be immediately and unconditionally released."

The statement was signed by 220 Congolese and 14 international NGOs, including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.

A parliamentary mission tasked to investigate the arrests told lawmakers last week that it had found no evidence to support the government's accusations.

The National Assembly then voted to recommend that the two activists be released, one of the report's authors told Reuters.

Rights groups say that the detentions are part of a broader crackdown on political dissent ahead of a presidential election scheduled for 2016.

Kabila, in office since 2001, is constitutionally ineligible to stand for election for a third time but critics fear that he intends to try to hold on to power.

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BURUNDI

President Nkurunziza received an EAC ministerial delegation

Source: Site de la Présidence de la République du Burundi
(<http://presidence.gov.bi/spip.php?article5571>)

15 June 2015

MAJOR POINTS AROUND WHICH REVOLVED EXCHANGES BETWEEN THE EAC MINISTERIAL DELEGATION AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BURUNDI

1. Postponement of the elections: The government has tried everything in its power yet bearing in mind constitutional requirements.
2. Local and parliamentary elections that were initially scheduled for the 26th of May 2015 will now take place on the 29 of June 2015, meaning a-34 day shift.
3. Presidential election will be held on the 15th of July instead of the 26th of June. Organizing elections beyond the above dates would not allow a second round should be any, and such a situation would trigger a transitional government.
4. Disarmament: Burundi has already a disarmament unit which has so far collected more than 100 thousand weapons; the unit has been instructed to go ahead.
5. Securing the elections: Defense and Security Forces have been deployed across the country not only to secure elections, but also to search for weapons that may be illegally possessed by civilian population. As a matter of fact, weapons have already been seized.
6. Civil Liberties: The government has undertaken to suspend the execution of warrants arrest against the organizers of violent demonstrations. Politicians have also been urged to liaise with the government to assign security guards to those politicians. It should also be noted that infants and persons under the age of full legal responsibility have been discharged from custody.
7. Stopping violence and exercising restraint: Defense and security forces deployed in the four (4) neighborhoods of the city of Bujumbura where insurrection is reported have continued to suffer from provocation and violence from insurgents. However, they refrained and still from hitting back unless force majeure.
8. In spite of the recommendations by EAC Summit of the 31st May, violent demonstrations continued with its organizers turning a deaf ear to scores of appeals by the government and several organizations. Even though insurgency leaders are yet to publically declare the end of their operations, situation in Bujumbura is returning to normal.

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9. Return of refugees: More than 40 thousands of the approximate 70 thousands reported refugees have so far returned back home and many more are returning on a daily basis. Most of refugees fled due panic resulting from rumors conveyed by some politicians who do not wish elections in Burundi, with the complicity of some foreigners and some members of civil society organizations who want Burundi to plunge into chaos. All this was exacerbated by unprofessional and ill intentioned media that also spread rumors in the country while fuelling disorders. The government intends to send delegations in neighboring countries to pacify its citizen and get them back home.
10. Mediation: The Government of Burundi welcomes efforts made by Said Djinit and condemns delaying tactics used by the opposition and the Civil Society of Burundi. The latter were the first to ask for talks to pave the way for conducive environment for elections. Surprisingly, they pulled out of negotiations over childish claims against the facilitator finally pushed to resign. The government would like to stress further that there is no room for negotiation as far as the candidacy of the current President is concerned.
11. Media and freedom of the press: The Press House is now open to all journalists. In the meantime, investigations are underway to establish responsibility following the participation of some Medias and journalists in connection with the failed coup as well as in the vandalizing of media facilities. Journalists are currently organizing themselves to establish a synergy aimed at covering the upcoming elections. The government of Burundi will support them.
12. Electoral campaign: It is underway, this time with all political parties and independent political actors involved in the current electoral process. Calls from some politicians to postpone again and again the elections are motivated by their hopeless expectations on the outcome of the elections as they do not have militants on the ground. Honestly, it would be better for them to have a transitional government where they can get something than spending their poor economies for nothing. The new electoral schedule has been readjusted as follows:
 - a. 29 June 2015 : Local Councils and MPs ;
 - b. 15 July, 2015 : Presidential Election ;
 - c. 24 July, 2015 : Senators.

Done at Bujumbura, June 15, 2015

Gervais ABAYEHO

Spokesman of the President

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L'Union Africaine a décidé de déployer immédiatement des experts militaires au Burundi

Source: RFI

15 Juin 2015 - A l'issue du 25e sommet de l'Union africaine (UA), à Johannesburg, l'organisation panafricaine a décidé le « déploiement immédiat d'observateurs de droits de l'Homme et le déploiement d'experts militaires de l'UA et de l'Union européenne (...) pour vérifier le processus de désarmement des milices et autres groupes armés », a annoncé, ce lundi 15 juin, Smaïl Chergui, commissaire à la Paix et la Sécurité.

AU to deploy election observer mission in Burundi: official

Source: Xinhua

15 June 2015 - The African Union (AU) will dispatch a 50-member observer mission in Burundi in late June to help oversee presidential and parliamentary elections in the central African nation, it was announced here on Monday.

Ambassador Smail Chergui, the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security said at a press briefing on Monday evening the observer mission will ensure presidential and parliamentary elections are free and fair.

"Deployment of an African Union elections observer mission in Burundi was agreed upon by the heads of state. They also resolved to spare no effort in order to stabilize the country," Chergui told reporters on the side lines of the AU Heads of state summit.

Burundian President, Pierre Nkurunziza on June 9th announced that parliamentary and presidential elections will be held on June 29th and July 15th respectively.

The international community had earlier piled pressure on Nkurunziza to abandon a decision to run for a third term to avoid political turmoil in the country.

Protests triggered by Nkurunziza's decision to seek a third term contrary to the constitution reached a climax in May.

Several people died while hundreds sustained injuries following a running battle between security forces and protesters in the Burundian capital, Bujumbura.

The AU supports a peaceful settlement to the political crisis in Burundi.

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Chergui disclosed that African leaders endorsed Tanzania to spearhead a dialogue process to achieve durable peace and stability in Burundi.

"We have urged all parties in Burundi to embrace dialogue in order to solve the political stalemate amicably," said Chergui.

AU summit rejects Burundi poll date

Source: IOL News (<http://www.iol.co.za/news/africa/au-summit-rejects-burundi-poll-date-1.1872036#.VX-7QdKeDGc>)

15 June 2015 - African leaders meeting for the African Union (AU) summit here have implicitly rejected Burundi President Pierre Nkurunziza's decision to hold presidential elections on July 15 – in which he plans to run again. The leaders threw open the date of the elections to negotiations between the government, opposition and other parties.

The AU's Peace and Security Council, meeting here at heads of state level, decided that the AU would only send election observers to the Burundi elections "if conditions for the organisation of free, fair, transparent and credible elections, in accordance with the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, are met".

Violent street protests and an aborted military coup erupted in Burundi after Nkurunziza announced in April that he would seek a third term as president, despite two-term limits in the country's constitution and in the Arusha agreement which established the framework for democracy in Burundi after the long civil war which ended in elections in 2005.

After intervention by the AU and the East African Community (EAC), Nkurunziza agreed to postpone the presidential elections from June 26 and to set a new date in negotiations with the opposition and civil society. Then last week he abruptly announced elections would take place on July 15.

But the AU Peace and Security Council implicitly overrode this date in its communiqué at the summit when it said "the date of the election shall be set by consensus between the Burundian parties". This would also take into account EAC decisions calling for the postponement of the elections and the results of a technical assessment to be undertaken by the UN.

The consensus would be the outcome of a dialogue between all the Burundian parties to create the conditions for acceptable elections. This should start within one week

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under the facilitation of the AU, the UN, the EAC and the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), supported by the international community.

Opposition parties in Burundi have reportedly welcomed the decision that they will have to agree to a new date for elections. Nkurunziza is not attending the AU summit so his response is not clear.

AU Peace and Security Commissioner Smail Chergui made clear on Monday that creating the conditions for free, fair, transparent and credible elections which the AU would be prepared to observe would also include agreement on whether Nkurunziza should be a candidate for the elections.

The conditions should emerge from the all-parties dialogue, he said at a press conference. The dialogue agenda would include human rights, the free movement of people, free expression, including for media, security, the delay of elections “and indeed the candidature of the president for a new term”.

“Everything should be in the dialogue I hope the Burundians will find a way to avoid the crisis, if the conditions are met.”

The AU Peace and Security Council also decided on the immediate deployment of AU human rights observers and other civilian personnel to Burundi as well as the deployment of AU military experts to verify the process of disarming militias and other armed groups.

AU Commission chairperson Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma has very clearly stated previously that Nkurunziza should not run for a third term but the AU at this summit has been less explicit.

Yet US assistant secretary of state for Africa Linda Thomas-Greenfield praised the AU for being “extraordinarily strong in its efforts to press Nkurunzizi and other countries on the continent on the question of third term...the chairperson has made a strong statement that indicates her position and the position of the AU that Nkurunziza should not be seeking a third term and expressing concern about the deteriorating security situation in the country. “

Thomas-Greenfield said the US had also expressed its disagreement to Nkurunziza and other leaders seeking to amend their constitutions to seek third terms.”We have encouraged them not to do that.”

She noted at a press briefing on the sidelines of the summit that a recent poll had showed that the people of 34 African countries had indicated that they wanted presidential term limits and changes of power.

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Burundi elections: Opposition cautiously welcomes African Union recommendations

Source: International Business Times

15 June 2015 - The African Union's new recommendations regarding the crisis in Burundi have been cautiously welcomed by the opposition, which claims they somewhat failed to address the issue of the third mandate.

It is estimated between 60 and 70 have died and around 150,000 civilians have sought refuge in neighbouring countries since the start of the violence on 26 April, when Burundi's ruling National Council for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD-FDD) party nominated President Pierre Nkurunziza to stand for re-election.

Opposition leaders want the president to withdraw his third-term bid, claiming it violates the country's constitution and the Arusha Accords, a peace deal that ended ethnic civil war and established the foundation for Burundi's post-conflict recovery in 2005.

But Nkurunziza's supporters argue the president's first term should be discounted as he was chosen by the parliament and not by the people in an election as is specified in the agreement.

Third-term bid issue to be discussed

On Sunday (14 June), meanwhile, the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU) published a set of recommendations to end the crisis in Burundi after its meeting in Johannesburg, South Africa.

It is worth noting that neither Nkurunziza, Rwanda's President Paul Kagame nor the leader of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Joseph Kabila - who all look set to run for third terms in their respective nations - were present at the meeting.

Interestingly, Zimbabwe's president Robert Mugabe, who presided the meeting and is serving his seventh term, said: "If the people decide that the president should do only two mandates, it will be two".

The AU asked for the resumption of a dialogue between all parties within one week.

"The inter-Burundian dialogue, building on the work already done with the facilitation of the UN, shall focus on the measures to be taken to create conditions conducive to the organization of free, fair, transparent and credible elections, as well as on all the matters on which the parties disagree," the AU said.

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The third term was not directly cited in the document, however, but "all matters on which the parties disagree" refers to the question of the issue.

While the opposition welcomed the recommendations, it also had some reservations.

"For us (the opposition), the idea of urgency about resuming the dialogue is a good thing, because it means we'll have the opportunity to address all our problems," Frederic Banvuginyunvira, vice-president of opposition party the Front for Democracy in Burundi (known by its French acronym Frodebu), told IBTimes UK on Monday (15 June).

"In principle, the recommendations are good, as long as they are applied and that there is no resistance on the government's side. I fear there could be some resistance regarding the postponement of the elections, because if there is a new one, the government might have to throw in the towel."

After agreeing to discuss the issue surrounding his third-term mandate on 4 June - for the first time since the country was engulfed in political violence - the government said on 9 June that the third-term bid was "non-negotiable".

Government spokesman Philippe Nzobonariba said in a radio broadcast there was no chance of the president standing aside.

"This decision is non-negotiable," he said.

On 3 June, the United States urged Nkurunziza to adhere to the Arusha Accords by stepping down, after two terms in office.

Election date set by consensus and UN evaluation

Recommendations also included a postponement of the elections, which date "will have to be set by consensus and on basis of a UN technical evaluation".

This proposal would put an end to unilateralism and would be the first time the responsibility of setting out election dates would be transferred away from Burundi's independent national electoral commission (CENI), which announced its new calendar for the country's controversial elections on 8 June.

The parliamentary election had been planned to take place on 5 June and presidential poll on 26 June but both were delayed amid security fears.

While legislative and municipal elections will be held on 26 June, the embattled presidential elections are now planned for 15 July.

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The head of the electoral commission, Pierre-Claver Ndayicariye, said the proposal to hold the presidential election on 15 July was in line with recommendations made by East African leaders.

However, if Nkurunziza maintained a decree signed on 9 June regarding the postponement of the elections, this would mean defying the AU.

Immediate deployment of human rights observers

In their recommendations, leaders of the AU called for an "immediate deployment" of human rights observers to Burundi and asked for the government's full cooperation.

"[The] council reiterates its call to the government of Burundi to extend its full cooperation to this process," the statement read.

Under this proposal, the oversight of the security during the electoral process would no longer be the responsibility of the government, but that of the AU.

The council also said it would determine the deployment of AU "military experts", both from the region and other regions of the continent, to verify the disarmament of the country's "militias and other armed groups".

These include the members of the ruling party National Council for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD-FDD)'s Imbonerakure youth wing.

"This group of experts, whose strength shall be determined by the Chairperson of the Commission, in consultation with the region, will submit regular reports on the implementation of the disarmament process," the AU said.

A local Burundian journalist, however, said the recommendations were "long", but that "there is not concrete announcement to come out of the crisis".

The AU meeting followed the publication of a confidential report from the East Africa ministers of justice and attorney generals that caused a stir when it was made public on 12 June, after it concluded Nkurunziza's third term is unconstitutional.

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Burundi's civil society groups calls for cancel of forced polls

Source: Xinhua

15 June 2015 - 15 June 2015 - The Forum for Civil Society Reinforcement (FORSC), a grouping of 143 such organizations, made the appeal in a letter published over the weekend and has sent it to Nkurunziza and other EAC's heads of state.

The EAC's member states include Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi.

Nkurunziza last week approved a new electoral timetable that will see presidential poll, scheduled for June 26, take place on July 15, which falls short of a call by EAC leaders to delay the elections by at least 45 days.

According to the new dates, parliamentary elections will be held on June 26 and senatorial elections on July 24.

In the letters, FORSC official Me Vital Nshimirimana said "President Nkurunziza's attempt to force the elections will compromise peace and security in the region."

The letter was copied to the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, South African President Jacob Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, EAC Secretary-General, Richard Sezibera, and Executive Secretary of the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region, Ntumba Luaba.

The FORSC deplored the fact that the EAC had not found a concrete solution to the problem of Nkurunziza's re-election bid, Nshimirimana said.

UGANDA

Uganda's former Prime Minister, ousted in a power struggle, says he will seek the presidency

Source: AP

Kampala, 15 June 2015 - A former Ugandan prime minister who was fired last year announced Monday that will seek the presidency in elections scheduled for next year, raising the prospect of a heated presidential campaign against the country's long-serving leader.

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In a YouTube message to Ugandans, Amama Mbabazi, a lawyer and career politician who used to be the ruling party's secretary-general before he was ousted in a power struggle with President Yoweri Museveni, said he is running for "a fairer society and a democratic future." Describing the next elections as the most consequential in a generation, he outlined an eight-point program that included promises to fight official corruption and to improve the delivery of public services.

Mbabazi, 66, said he would seek the ruling party's nomination first, a direct challenge to Museveni.

Evelyn Anite, a Ugandan lawmaker who speaks for the ruling party, said Museveni loyalists do not feel threatened by Mbabazi's bid and that they expect his challenge to fizzle out.

Mbabazi once was a close ally of Museveni's, and he held many senior government posts over the years, including minister of defense. The two men appeared to fall out in recent years amid persistent reports that Mbabazi harbored presidential ambitions even as Museveni signaled he wanted to extend his time in office. Museveni fired Mbabazi as his prime minister last year before the ruling party also ousted him as its secretary-general.

Ouganda: Mbabazi à la conquête du pouvoir

Source: BBC Afrique

L'ancien Premier ministre Ougandais, Amama Mbabazi, a annoncé sa candidature à l'élection présidentielle de 2016.

15 juin 2015 - A travers une video postée sur Youtube, l'ancien allié du président Yoweri Museveni, au pouvoir depuis 1986, a promis aux Ougandais un avenir meilleur notamment dans le domaine de la santé et de l'éducation.

Selon la correspondante de la BBC à Kampala, cette information fait la une de tous les médias du pays.

Les observateurs locaux s'attendent à une grande bataille politique entre ces deux hommes qui ont travaillé ensemble pendant plus de quarante ans.

Amama Mbabazi a promis aux Ougandais un développement économique et une meilleure gouvernance.

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Mais, beaucoup de gens s'interrogent car ils ne voient pas de différences entre lui et l'actuel président: Mbabazi a été un homme clé du régime de Museveni pendant 28 ans.

Les alliés du président indiquent qu'il n'a pas peur de son ancien Premier ministre car "il est beaucoup plus populaire que lui".

En Ouganda, des enfants sont sacrifiés à l'approche des élections pour apporter chance et succès: un petit garçon raconte l'horreur

Source: RTL Info (<http://www.rtl.be/info/monde/international/en-ouganda-des-enfants-sont-sacrifies-a-l-approche-des-elections-pour-apporter-chance-et-succes-un-petit-garcon-raconte-l-horreur-731290.aspx>)

15 Juin 2015 - "Quand je me suis réveillé, ma soeur était morte, coupée de partout", raconte Kanani. Le coeur et le clitoris de Sylvia ont été prélevés au couteau. La fillette de huit ans a été victime d'un sacrifice rituel, visant les enfants et censé apporter chance et succès. A l'approche des élections générales prévues en 2016 en Ouganda, ceux qui combattent ces crimes - suffisamment répandus dans le pays pour qu'une force de police spécialement dédiée ait été créée en 2009 - s'inquiètent de voir leur nombre monter en flèche, à l'initiative de commanditaires soucieux de succès.

"Il m'a attrapé, m'a étranglé et ouvert la nuque"

En février 2013, Kanani et Sylvia, alors âgés de neuf et huit ans, font paître le troupeau familial près de leur village, quand un homme qu'ils connaissent vaguement s'approche et les traîne dans la forêt voisine. Cet homme, Sperito Bisekwa, attaque Kanani le premier. "Il m'a attrapé, m'a étranglé et ouvert la nuque", raconte Kanani qui reprend ses esprits, blessé visiblement par une machette, à côté du corps sans vie et mutilé de sa petite soeur. Son coeur et son clitoris ont été emportés pour être utilisés dans des rituels de sorcellerie, selon la police.

Des crimes horribles qui se multiplient à l'approche des élections

L'appât du gain, la soif de pouvoir motivent ces crimes horribles, qui se multiplient en période électorale. Moses Binoga, chef de la force spéciale anti-sacrifice humain, confirme: "A l'approche des élections, vous verrez plusieurs Ougandais, y compris des grands pontes, se rendre chez le sorcier", prévient-il. "Certains sont prêts à tout. Si on leur dit 'vous devez sacrifier un enfant' pour vous assurer un siège de député, ils s'exécuteront", déplore le policier.

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Depuis le début de l'année 2015, cinq crimes rituels ont été signalés à cette force, contre neuf l'an dernier. Mais pour les militants ces chiffres sont loin du compte. C'est l'explosion de ces meurtres en 2009 qui a conduit à la création d'une oeuvre caritative de protection de l'enfance, Kyampisi Childcare Ministries (KCM), qui s'occupe des survivants et des familles des victimes.

Ils pensent que sacrifier un enfant va leur apporter la prospérité

KCM traite quelques cas chaque mois, révèle Shelin Kasozi, une de ses membres, soulignant que les complices des crimes rituels se retrouvent dans "toutes les couches de la société ougandaise". "Les riches croient que grâce à un sacrifice, leurs affaires vont prospérer, les pauvres, qu'ils vont s'enrichir s'ils sacrifient un enfant", a-t-elle indiqué.

Mme Kazozi raconte l'histoire d'un "très, très riche" entrepreneur kampalais, Godfrey Karo Kajubi, condamné à perpétuité en 2012 pour avoir sacrifié un garçon de 12 ans, retrouvé décapité, ses parties génitales tranchées.

Les commanditaires rarement poursuivis

Les disparitions d'enfants alors qu'ils rentrent de l'école ou qu'ils vont chercher de l'eau au puits sont répandues à travers le pays. Il arrive que l'on découvre certains de leurs membres quelque temps plus tard dans des forêts ou des chantiers.

Il est rare de voir les commanditaires de ces crimes poursuivis, explique Moses Binoga. Les sorciers, qui organisent les enlèvements et les meurtres rituels, refusent de donner le nom de leurs clients, à qui ils promettent richesse, fertilité ou vigueur sexuelle.

Le tortionnaire plaide coupable

Sperito Bisekwa a plaidé coupable pour l'attaque de février 2013 dans le village de Nansaka, à 130 km au nord-ouest de Kampala. Il purge une peine de 10 ans de prison pour la tentative de meurtre de Kanani, dont il a avoué qu'il voulait prélever le sang. La décision pour le meurtre de Sylvia n'a pas encore été rendue. Il a reconnu avoir envoyé les membres de la fillette à son frère, un sorcier, qui s'était engagé à le payer l'équivalent de 14.600 euros.

"Je vis dans la peur"

Le père de Kanani et de Sylvia, Joseph Nankunda, exige que le meurtrier de sa fille soit condamné à mort. "Je veux qu'il serve d'exemple à tous les autres", réclame l'éleveur. "Dès que mes gamins mettent un peu plus de temps que d'habitude pour rentrer à la

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maison, mon coeur bat la chamade. Je vis dans la peur", se désole ce père de six enfants, âgé de 48 ans.

Plan d'action national

En février, le gouvernement ougandais a lancé un plan d'action national contre les crimes rituels. Un ancien sorcier tente, lui, de convaincre les féticheurs de l'imiter et de détruire leurs antres. Mais pour M. Binoga, la bataille est loin d'être gagnée. "Tant que des gens, les bénéficiaires du crime, continueront de croire dans l'efficacité des sacrifices d'enfants, la pratique continuera", avertit le responsable.

KENYA

AU to decide on whether to be enjoined in Ruto's ICC case

Source: Daily Nation (Kenya)

By Aggrey Mutambo

15 Juin 2015 - The African Union may Monday make a decision on whether it will seek to be enjoined in the ICC case in which Deputy President William Ruto is contesting the use of evidence renounced by witnesses.

A draft resolution by the Executive Council of the AU has resolved that the continental body's secretariat be included in the case currently before judges at the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

"The executive council requests that the African Union Commission be enjoined in the application by the prosecutor of ICC under Rule 68 against the Deputy President of the republic of Kenya as an interested party for purposes of placing before the Court all the relevant material arising out of the negotiations," a draft statement said Sunday.

The decision was expected to be voted on Sunday evening upon which a declaration was to be announced Monday as the AU member states conclude their 25th Ordinary Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa.

ICC's relationship with Africa was included on the agenda after the Kenyan delegation convinced the organisers last Thursday.

The Executive Council is a ministerial grouping of AU member states which is charged with organising summits and determining issues to be discussed during the assembly.

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Kenya hoped to rally AU members to reprimand the ICC over what it terms as overreaching tendencies in Africa.

Crimes against Humanity

Mr Ruto is facing charges of crimes against humanity during the 2008 post-election violence in which 1,113 people were killed and more than 600,000 displaced.

And although some witnesses have pulled out, disappeared or recanted their testimonies, ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda has applied to the judges to allow her to use their evidence.

Ms Bensouda has based her arguments on Rule 68 which she argues was amended in 2013 by the 12th Assembly of State Parties (ASP) to allow such evidence to be admissible.

The judges will rule on the matter on July 17, 2015 but Kenya is challenging the move as illegal.

“The 12th ASP amended Rule 68 subject to the condition that it would not be applied retrospectively and with a clear undertaking given to the AU Members of the ASP that it would not be applied to the Kenyan situation,” Kenya argued in its brief presented to the AU on the matter.

“It is illegal and absurd in seeking to displace oral evidence of witnesses given before a court with untested statements prepared by ICC investigators,” the brief further said.

AU is not a member of the ICC and neither does it qualify to be one.

Friend of the court

But the judges may accept its application only as a friend of the court or an interested party whose contribution may benefit the case.

The move reflects the relentless effort to tame a Court seen by many leaders in Africa as targeting them.

The Council insists AU is against impunity. But in January, the AU asked the ICC to terminate or suspend Mr Ruto’s case “until the African concerns” and proposals for the amendments of the Rome Statute were considered.

Those concerns include requests to suspend trials against sitting heads of state and a demand that no country should hand over a sitting head of state indicted by the Court.

The request was not honoured.

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But the AU may Monday announce the formation of an 'open-ended' ministerial committee to continue pursuing the matter.

Additionally, the AU members may also direct that the AU Commission Chair Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma writes to the UN Security Council seeking for a meeting with the ministers.

The ICC is not a UN court, but the UN Security Council has powers to defer a case before the Court if it deems it important for international peace and security.

In 2013, Kenya sought this decision from the UNSC, but it was declined.

SOUTH AFRICA

L'Afrique du Sud rejette l'appel de la CPI - Le président Béchir regagne le Soudan

Source: Le Temps d'Algérie (Quotidien national d'information)

15 Juin 2015 - Le président soudanais Omar el-Béchir, recherché par la Cour pénale internationale, a bien quitté Johannesburg hier pour regagner son pays, a confirmé un haut responsable à Khartoum en dépit d'une interdiction de sortie du territoire prononcée la veille par la justice sud-africaine.

«L'avion du président Béchir a décollé de Johannesburg et doit arriver vers 18h30 (15h30 GMT) ce soir [15 juin]», a déclaré à l'AFP le ministre d'Etat à l'Information, Yasser Youssef, ajoutant que le président soudanais devait s'exprimer devant un rassemblement à son arrivée.

M. Béchir avait assisté à Johannesburg à un sommet de l'Union Africaine. La Cour pénale internationale, qui poursuit le Président soudanais pour «génocide, crimes de guerre et crimes contre l'humanité», avait demandé à l'Afrique du Sud de procéder à son arrestation.

L'entourage de M. Béchir n'avait cependant jamais semblé inquiet.

«Cette action en justice, c'est l'affaire du gouvernement sud-africain (...) Nous sommes ici comme hôtes du gouvernement sud-africain. Des assurances ont été données par ce gouvernement», avait déclaré dimanche le ministre soudanais des Affaires étrangères Ibrahim Ghandour.

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SOUTH SUDAN

South Sudan: AU Council to Take Action against South Sudan Warring Parties

Source: Radio Dabanga

15 June 2015 - In a strongly worded statement, the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU PSC) threatened to take measures against South Sudan's warring parties that continue to defy all peace efforts made in an attempt to end the country's war that ignited between government and opposition forces late 2013.

This came in a communique (find below) released on Saturday in Johannesburg, South Africa, in its 515th meeting at the level of AU's heads of state and government, following reports presented to the council by both chairpersons of the AU's Commission and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD, attachment below) on the general situation in South Sudan.

Measures against individuals

The PSC "recalls its previous pronouncements on the need to take the necessary measures, in coordination with IGAD, against any party that fails to honour its commitments and continues to undermine the search for "a negotiated solution" to the conflict, in line with UN Security Council resolution 2206 (2015) of 3 March 2015".

It calls to designate individuals and entities subject to the measures provided for therein. Earlier, the Security Council (UNSC) passed a resolution on the sanctions on South Sudan which would include travel bans and assets freeze on individuals as well as an arms embargo on the country.

The AU's peace and Security Council "strongly condemns the ceasefire violations committed by the parties", as well as "the attacks and other acts of violence and harassment targeting the humanitarian agencies and their personnel and assets".

The PSC announced the convention of a ministerial-level meeting by mid-July to investigate human rights abuses committed during the armed conflict. No date was yet announced for the resumption of the peace talks in Addis Ababa in order to negotiate a final peace agreement.

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A draft peace agreement proposal by IGAD to end the war was rejected by the two warring parties led by President Salva Kiir and armed opposition leader, Riek Machar, due to varying observations in the power-sharing agreement.

UN vows to support African efforts to end S. Sudan war

Source: Sudan Tribune

15 June 2015 - The United Nations will actively contribute to efforts aimed at finding peaceful solutions to the conflict in South Sudan, Jan Eliasson, the deputy secretary general of the world body told the African Union summit on Sunday.

"This war, this nightmare, must come to an end," said Eliasson.

Tens of thousands of people have been killed and nearly two million displaced by the conflict, which broke out in the world's youngest nation in mid-December 2013.

The deputy secretary general requested the continental body to take a position necessary for resolving the conflict, which undermines regional and international efforts.

Eliasson also stressed the need for peace and national reconciliation ahead of the proposed power-sharing between the South Sudanese government and opposition groups.

African heads of state must find effective interventions to eradicate the scourge of war on the continent, Zimbabwean President and African Union Chairman Robert Mugabe said.

"Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, the prevailing political instability and insecurity in some parts of our continent clearly demonstrates the urgent need to fully operationalise the African Standby Force (ASF)," Mugabe told a gathering of African heads of state at the 25th African Union summit in Johannesburg on Sunday.

"We need to live up to our commitment to operationalise the African Standby Force by December 2015. This will be an important step towards the goal of silencing the guns by 2020, which is our pledge," he added.

Mugabe said peace and security were prerequisites for the achievement of the continental body's developmental targets, including Agenda 2063.

"I am encouraged by the fact that we are making steady progress in this regard. We have to redouble our efforts in dealing with the issue of the unnecessary loss of lives of

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our young people in the Mediterranean Sea in their desperate need to reach Europe and other places,” said the African Union chairperson.

“This matter requires our collective and urgent retention. Concrete steps have to be taken to deal with this unfolding tragedy, particularly in terms of addressing its root causes such as poverty, war and insecurity, lack of opportunities, perceptions of good and life abroad as well as stamping out human traffickers and smugglers,” he stressed.

No xenophobic attacks

The AU chairman said African countries must work together to eradicate xenophobic attacks similar to the spate of violence experienced in South Africa in recent months.

“While condemning the recent spate of barbaric violence targeted at foreign nationals...let us be cognisant of the fact that this is a problem that falls upon all of us and we should work together to find a solution. United we will not fail.”

“President [Jacob] Zuma has given us details of the programmes they have embarked upon. The government of South Africa will leave no stone unturned in trying to stem the violence.”

The high-level AU summit is being hosted by South Africa under the theme “2015: Year of Women’s Empowerment and Development Towards Africa’s Agenda 2063”.

Meanwhile, the African Union Commission chairperson Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma told the summit that the recent Ebola outbreak had exposed the weakness of the continent’s health systems. She said the people dying on the Mediterranean Sea and the victims of xenophobic violence in South Africa were driven by factors beyond their control.

“The lessons from the Ebola virus disease are that with African solidarity and resolve, we can find solutions to our challenges. The disease exposed the weakness of our health systems, especially public health. We must look at training more health workers and build our health systems and infrastructure,” she said.

“Excellencies, again we have been faced with the tragedy of many people dying in the Mediterranean Sea and also the incidents of xenophobia. These are the people who leave their countries not out of choice, but out of desperation – to try and make a living elsewhere.”

The AU summit was attended by most African heads of state including Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, wanted by the International Criminal Court for war crimes.

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Juba Cautiously Welcomes IGAD's Power-sharing Agreement

Source: Sudan Tribune

14 June 2015 - South Sudanese President, Salva Kiir, is consulting members of his ruling party (SPLM), opposition groups allied to the government and other stakeholders before responding to the peace proposal drafted by mediators, his office said.

However, Ateny Wek Ateny, President Kiir's spokesman told reporters on that draft power sharing developed by regional bloc, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) exceeded its limitations on mediations.

"Because it [the proposal] when into an area that was not expected especially on giving the power sharing in three states of Upper Nile, Unity and Jonglei," said Ateny, referring to the clause that hand South Sudanese rebels of the three states affected the war.

The proposal gives President Kiir's government 53% at national level, 33% to former vice president, Riek Machar and 14% shared between former detainees and other political parties. In Jonglei, Unity and Upper Nile states where the rebellion is active, Machar takes 53%, government with 33% and 14% to other parties and former detainees," he said Friday.

The latest attempt, known as IGAD plus when other five African countries are included as well the Trioka countries (United States, Norway and United Kingdom), the European Union and China, held a consultative meeting early this week in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Government negotiators led Nhial Deng Nhial, returned to Juba on Thursday and went into closed doors with President Kiir and members of his government.

"And so, when the president looks into the document he calls extraordinary joint meeting of the political bureau, the secretariat of the SPLM and other members of political parties plus members of the cabinet," Ateny said, but did not elaborate further on the matter.

"They came yesterday, consulted and they have made some deliberations that are going to be made public in the next few days to come," added the presidency spokesman.

IGAD is yet to officially announce when the South Sudanese peace talks would resume.

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SUDAN

Wanted Sudan leader Bashir avoids South Africa arrest

Source: BBC

16 June 2015 - Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir has returned to Khartoum from South Africa, avoiding arrest over war crimes charges on an international warrant.

Mr Bashir flew out of South Africa despite an order barring him from leaving while a Pretoria court decided whether to arrest him on charges issued by the International Criminal Court.

Mr Bashir was visiting Johannesburg for an African Union (AU) summit.

An ICC official said the failure to arrest Mr Bashir was "disappointing".

"We still remain quietly optimistic and determined to see justice done in this case," deputy prosecutor James Stewart told the BBC.

The Pretoria High Court issued an order for Mr Bashir's arrest hours after his aircraft left the country.

A South African judge, Dunstan Mlambo, meanwhile said the failure to arrest Mr Bashir had violated the country's constitution.

However, Sudan described the attempt to arrest Mr Bashir as "lame and meaningless".

Foreign Minister Ibrahim Ghandour told reporters at Khartoum airport that the court order was an attack on Sudanese sovereignty.

Mr Bashir arrived at the airport on Monday evening, dressed in white robes and waving a cane. He was greeted by cheering supporters.

The Sudanese leader is accused of committing war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide during the Darfur conflict.

Darfur: Sudan's bloody stalemate

The UN says that about 300,000 people in Sudan have died since fighting began in 2003. More than 1.4 million people are thought to have fled their homes.

Government forces and allied Arab militias are accused of targeting black African civilians in the fight against rebels.

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It is unlikely that South Africa will face sanctions for allowing Mr Bashir to leave the country even after a court order barred him from doing so, says the BBC's Nomsa Maseko in Pretoria.

A number of African countries have in the past decided not to co-operate with the ICC. The court has been accused of racism and bias against African leaders.

So as things stand, Mr Bashir appears to have left South Africa with the blessing of the African Union, our correspondent says.

On Monday, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said the ICC's warrant for the arrest of Mr Bashir must be implemented by countries who have signed up to the court's statutes.

As a member of the ICC, South Africa is obliged to arrest anyone charged by the court.

The South African press has been considering the repercussions of the attempt to arrest Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, who had been attending an AU summit.

IOL News said Mr Bashir's departure would leave "a major constitutional and diplomatic crisis and a big question mark over South Africa's continued membership of the ICC".

The Cape Times said the decision to invite the Sudanese president, despite his indictment by the ICC, had "exposed the fact that the AU considers the ICC largely irrelevant".

"This has the potential to sound the death knell of the ICC," the newspaper said, adding that the arrest "would set a precedent for other leaders on the continent who could be subject to the criminal jurisdiction of the ICC for their actions".