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



MEDIA MONITORING

17 August 2015

DRC

Congo charges 34 with genocide in inter-ethnic fighting

NEWS STORY

Source: Reuters

By Aaron Ross

14 August 2015 - A prosecutor in Democratic Republic of Congo said on Friday he had charged 34 people with genocide and crimes against humanity in inter-ethnic violence in the country's southeast.

The charges against members of the Luba, a Bantu ethnic group, and Twa, a Pygmy people who inhabit Africa's Great Lakes region, mark the first civilian prosecutions for such crimes in Congo.

"These are crimes that can have severe penalties, up to 30 years for example," the prosecutor-general of Katanga province, Caiphe Useni, told Reuters. Proceedings began on Thursday.

A law enacted in 2013 authorised civilian courts to try cases of genocide and crimes against humanity, he said.

The Luba and Twa have been in conflict since May 2013 in the southeast of Congo, known for its rich deposits of copper, cobalt and other metals.

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Local activists say that the violence is driven by social inequities between the Bantu villagers and the Twa, a hunting and gathering people long denied access to land and basic services.

New York-based campaign group Human Rights Watch (HRW) said on Tuesday that Luba fighters killed at least 30 people in April when they attacked a camp for displaced people in northern Katanga.

Twa militias massacred Luba civilians in reprisal attacks, HRW said.

An Election Crisis in Democratic Republic of Congo Could Mean War

OPINION

Source: <http://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/an-election-crisis-in-democratic-republic-of-congo-could-mean-war/>

By Neil Thompson

16 August 2015 - Back in January, the capital of Kinshasa and other cities were rocked by widespread protests when Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) President Joseph Kabila's regime tried to pass a law requiring a national census to be held before future elections. The opposition reacted furiously, accusing the president, who has been in power since 2001, of seeking to prolong his term in office. Eventually the census proposal was dropped and the government backed off, announcing that presidential elections would be held in November 2016. That clock is now ticking, and there are few indications the government is seriously preparing for a post-Kabila future. On the contrary, events in neighboring Burundi may be encouraging some people around the president to think again.

As electoral norms spread through sub-Saharan Africa in the 1990s, a number of strongmen emerged who rigged elections to keep themselves in power indefinitely. Term limits were introduced into the constitutions of countries like Burundi or the Congo precisely to prevent the emergence of such an electoral dictatorship. Alas from Russia to Turkey to eastern Africa, in the twenty-first century elected autocrats have learned to manipulate constitutions and exploit weak judicial systems to their advantage. Now the apparent success of Burundi's Pierre Nkurunziza in side-stepping constitutional term limits in Burundi shows how the spirit of the law can still be evaded if a legal pretext can be patched together by the party in power.

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The politics of Burundi, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo have all been tragically tied together by conflict and instability spreading from one to the other, so Burundi's example does not auger well for its fragile neighbours' future stability and good governance. President Nkurunziza's claim that his first term in office should not be counted because he had not been elected has a certain plausibility but was grossly irresponsible in a fragile and ethnically divided polity. At the first sign of a serious backlash a statesman would have dropped his bid and allowed a caretaker government to oversee a proper election. Instead, after stacking the constitutional court with his supporters, Nkurunziza is accused of pressuring it to rule in his favor so he could stand for a third term behind a façade of judicial approval.

He had to ride out violent opposition protests and a coup attempt that together cost dozens of lives, but he has managed to secure himself an extra few years in power.

Few people believe the Burundian president's claims to respect legal and constitutional restraints on his power and prerogatives. In an unprecedented rebuff, Nkurunziza's re-election was not even observed by the African Union. Alas, in the bear-pits of his neighbors' politics many leaders will be keen to follow his recent example. For example, there are no doubts that the fourteen year-old regime of Joseph Kabila next door is any less devious in protecting its monopoly on executive power. With the right court rulings and parliamentary maneuvering, the DRC's own term limit issue could be circumvented. Mr Kabila could swap chair whilst remaining in power simply by stripping the presidency of its powers whilst increasing those of another power center such as the prime minister's office. As the reaction on the streets of Kinshasa in January showed however, there are few signs it could be done without bloodshed.

Sadly the present Kinshasa regime has precious little democratic traditions to restrain its maneuverings. The current president inherited his position from his father when the latter was assassinated. The presidential incumbent before that was another Joseph, the infamous Mobutu, who looted the DRC for thirty years and murdered or exiled any political opposition. Four years prior to the present drama in Burundi, the DRC's 2011 election results had already brought opposition accusations that the Congo's Supreme Court had not examined electoral results thoroughly enough when it awarded the victory to the incumbent Kabila administration. How much truth there is in this matters less than the fact that many in the Congolese opposition are likely to believe the judiciary is biased against them. If the DRC's Court became an actor in any kind of constitutional crisis in the run up to next year's elections it would not be seen as a neutral institution but as a tool of the ruling Kinshasa clique.

In the African Great Lakes region contests for power within states are always nerve-racking moments for their neighbors because of the ease with which instability in one

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can spread to the others. The Second Congo War is a prime example of this transmission of instability from one part of the Great Lakes region through porous borders to another. The conflict was triggered in aftermath of the Rwandan genocide when 'Hutu power' extremists fled from their country into eastern Congo following their defeat at the hands of Tutsi forces. Since the eastern DRC was home to previous waves of Hutu and Tutsi refugees from both Burundi and Rwanda and their descendants, the Rwandan Hutu militias swiftly added to eastern Congo's own swirling bush wars, and brought their genocidal ideology with them. A much wider war was sparked when Kinshasa prevaricated and seemed unable or unwilling to control the situation in the east. Rwanda and Uganda promptly invaded and placed Joseph Kabila's father Laurent in power, triggering a region-wide struggle involving nine African states. Millions died across the DRC and peace has only sporadically returned since then.

The weakness of the DRC to armed incursions from its neighbors is reason to be concerned when those states start to look fragile themselves. The peace between the DRC, Rwanda, and Burundi remains extremely brittle. In the east of the Congo the remnants of the Rwandan Hutu militias, local Mai-Mai militants, and assorted other armed groups still pose a threat to civilians, if not to Kinshasa. Meanwhile in May, as tensions in Burundi escalated, the Rwandan government seemed to be preparing the diplomatic ground for an armed intervention if ethnic killings broke out there. Fortunately the Burundi situation has been resolved for now without escalating into inter-ethnic fighting, both because President Nkurunziza's re-election bid was opposed by many members of his own Hutu ethnic group, and because he successfully seems to have bought off some of the opposition, splitting it politically.

Much money, time, and energy has been spent by the international community in Burundi, Rwanda, and the DRC trying to prevent a return to the tidal wave of blood that soaked all three countries between the mid-1990s and the mid-2000s. That may all be at risk if the Kabila regime takes a leaf from President Nkurunziza's book. Repeated rebellions against Kinshasa, some of them backed from neighboring Rwanda and Uganda, have rocked the DRC since the end of the Second Congo War, which ran from 1997 to about 2003. It is a testament both to the weakness of the Congo's central government and the susceptibility of the DRC's east to its neighbors that the embers of Rwandan-linked revolts were not fully stamped out until 2013, and that the Kabila regime needed repeated international intercessions to do so.

It is therefore difficult to see how Kinshasa can extended Joseph Kabila's term of office as neatly as Pierre Nkurunziza has in Burundi. The DRC is a much larger country than its neighbors and there are simply too many armed groups beyond the control of the security forces. Meanwhile the army itself is divided and weak, full of former rebel fighters and widely distrusted for its corruption and brutality. Any bid by Kinshasa to stay

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in power using a legalistic fig-leaf would almost certainly trigger a new revolt in the east and possibility other parts of the DRC and if Kabila's actions were to spark another uprising against his regime it is debatable if the West would intervene to save him.

However it would also be difficult for neighboring governments in Burundi, Uganda and Rwanda to overlook the security and financial incentives of meddling in the DRC's factional politics. If one country starts to back an armed movement, the others will follow suit, threatening a return to regional instability. Despite the dangers, the temptation for Kabila to stay on somehow will be strong, as will the pressure on him from members of his inner circle. The DRC's best hope is that President Kabila has learned from his father and his namesake's mistakes and does not try to outstay his welcome as President Nkurunziza has done in Burundi. Peace in the Great Lakes region could soon depend on the Congo not following in its neighbor's footsteps.

En RDC, Reporters sans frontières dénonce des pressions sur les médias

REPORTAGE

Source: RFI

L'organisation de protection des journalistes Reporters sans frontières s'inquiète et dénonce une détérioration de la liberté d'expression et des « pressions politiques » exercés sur les journalistes congolais. Et ce alors que le pays s'achemine vers un cycle d'élections cruciales avec l'organisation de l'élection présidentielle en novembre 2016.

14 août 2015 - Saisies de matériel, menaces ou arrestations arbitraires : voilà quelques-unes des intimidations listées ces derniers mois par l'organisation Reporters sans frontières et son antenne congolaise Journalistes en danger.

Exemple : début août, un directeur de publication est convoqué par la justice après la parution d'un article dénonçant la mauvaise gestion d'un établissement universitaire. Il y a eu aussi, mi-juillet, l'arrestation du distributeur d'un bi-hebdomadaire régulièrement critique des autorités. Ou encore la garde à vue du directeur d'une radio locale (dans l'est du pays) après qu'une de ses émissions ait parlé de dysfonctionnements dans l'organisation de sa province.

Reporters sans frontières et Journalistes en danger appellent donc les autorités à faire cesser ces atteintes à liberté d'informer et de garantir la pluralité des opinions. Alors que le pays se prépare à des échéances électorales majeures dans les mois à venir.

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De son côté, le ministre des Médias, Lambert Mende, a affirmé ne pas avoir été saisi de ces cas de pressions. Le porte-parole du gouvernement a également promis de prendre des mesures pour protéger les journalistes si besoin.

RDC: perpétuité requise pour les policiers accusés du meurtre du militant Chebeya

ARTICLE

Source: AFP /MCN, via mediacongo.net

Kinshasa, 13 août 2015 - Le ministère public a requis jeudi la prison à perpétuité dans le procès en appel de cinq policiers accusés de l'assassinat, en juin 2010, du militant des droits de l'homme Floribert Chebeya, a constaté une journaliste de l'AFP. Le procureur a requis une "peine de servitude pénale à perpétuité" pour "association de malfaiteurs" et "assassinat" contre les cinq prévenus présents devant la Haute cour militaire de la République démocratique du Congo. Ce réquisitoire rejoint les demandes formulées par les avocats des parties civiles dans leur plaidoirie de la semaine dernière.

Fondateur de l'ONG la Voix des sans-voix (VSV), militant respecté et connu, Chebeya a été retrouvé mort le 2 juin 2010, après avoir été convoqué au siège de l'Inspection générale de la police pour y rencontrer le général Numbi, qui était alors chef de la police. Le général, suspendu de ses fonctions peu après l'assassinat, a toujours nié avoir donné ce rendez-vous, mais les parties civiles le considèrent comme le suspect "numéro un".

Quant au chauffeur de M. Chebeya, Fidèle Bazana, il a disparu après l'avoir déposé à ce rendez-vous, et la justice a conclu qu'il avait lui aussi été assassiné. Son corps n'a jamais été retrouvé.

Au terme du procès en première instance, en 2011, et après une enquête dénoncée comme bâclée par les parties civiles, des organisations de défense des droits de l'homme et plusieurs chancelleries occidentales, quatre policiers avaient été condamnés à mort (dont trois par contumace). Un autre avait été condamné à perpétuité et trois agents acquittés.

Le procès en appel s'est ouvert en juin 2012. Après près de deux ans d'interruption, il a repris en avril de cette année. La Haute cour a alors décidé rapidement de suspendre les poursuites en appel contre trois des policiers condamnés à mort et aujourd'hui en fuite.

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L'un d'eux, le major Paul Mwilambwe, contre qui une procédure est ouverte au Sénégal dans le cadre de l'affaire Chebeya, a mis en cause le général Numbi dans la mort du militant.

RWANDA

British diplomat explains arrest of Rwanda intelligence general

NEWS STORY

Source: Xinhua

15 August 2015 - The British government would provide an explanation to Kigali on the arrest in London weeks ago of the country's chief of intelligence services, the British High Commissioner to Rwanda has said.

Lt. Gen. Karenzi Karake, arrived in Kigali midweek following his freeing earlier on Monday.

Speaking at a news conference in Kigali, ambassador William Gelling said what happened was not unique to Rwanda but could happen to any other two partner states.

His comments followed President Paul Kagame's comments, demanding that though Gen. Karake had been freed and returned home; his government still required more explanations as to what happened and why he was arrested.

"The Rwandan government has asked for clear explanation as to what happened and so, I hope we will be providing that in the next few weeks," the envoy told journalists.

"All I can tell you is that the warrant was issued or reissued while the General was in the UK.

"And at that point the police had no option but to act.

"The reason I think is that the UK joined a new system of electronic warrant survey in the EU and so it's much more rapid."

Gelling also explained that diplomatic immunity does not apply for the UK unless one is accredited to that country.

"You are only a diplomat when you are in the country to which you are accredited.

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"I am a diplomat in Rwanda but I am not a diplomat in Uganda or Tanzania or Kenya.

"Under British law a diplomatic passport when you are not accredited to the UK there is nothing special about it."

The ambassador regretted the fact that the arrest had sparked some diplomatic spat.

"That's regrettable but there was no decision taken that I could point at to regret but I think it's a shame it took us long to have the case brought to a conclusion.

"There was no political decision to arrest him."

The arrest which sparked protests in Kigali was based on a 2008 European Arrest Warrant sparked off by an indictment issued by a Spanish judge in the same year.

Gelling said there was need for talks with Rwandan officials to make sure there is a system that allows Rwandan officials facing similar indictments to travel safely.

"It is possible that in the coming months and years, some of these arrest warrants will be dropped in any case. But I am not an expert on that.

"We want to work to find a system which will allow Rwandan officials and ministers and generals to travel on official business to UK when they need to and to do so safely.

"We will work on that."

Rwanda: Forty Fomer FDLR Militants Complete Reintegration Course

NEWS STORY

Source: New Times (Rwanda)

14 August 2015 - Newly-discharged ex-combatants have resolved to work toward attaining self-reliance and national development.

Speaking at the discharge ceremony of 42 ex-combatants at Mutobo Demobilisation and Reintegration Centre in Musanze District, yesterday, the former militants regretted wasting more than 20 years in DR Congo jungles.

The group, which belonged to FDLR militia, received reintegration and entrepreneurship skills training for three months.

They said they were well received in the country after defecting from FDLR, noting that the skills and reintegration support received would help them fit in the community.

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Emmanuel Sibomana said he served for some years in the DR Congo army before joining FDLR.

He said their commanders always warned them against repatriating until he decided to escape and then handed himself in to Monusco, the UN Mission in Congo.

"I lived a miserable life in DR Congo jungles. Life was not easy and it was always hard to repatriate as our superiors prevented us from voluntary repatriation," said Sibomana.

"I am happy that I managed to repatriate. With these life skills, I will manage to settle in society. I have a plot of land on which I will practice modern farming. I am still strong and optimistic that my life will change," Sibomana added.

The 49-year-old, from Nyamagabe District, repatriated with his family of seven.

"We will ensure that we put more efforts in developing ourselves and compensate for the lost time. I appeal to Monusco, DR Congo officials and other concerned stakeholders to ensure that they facilitate the repatriation process, most of FDLR militia are willing to do so but they are held captive," he added.

The wives of the ex-combatants were taken through a two-week training on women rights and the benefits of working under cooperatives. They were also briefed on development projects tailored for women.

Beatrice Furaha, 23, a wife of one of the repatriated ex-combatants, said she was lucky to make it back home.

"I grew up in DR Congo forests and lost contact with my relatives during fighting in DR Congo. I lived a lonely life until I got married to an FDLR rebel years ago, we lived a life of suffering characterised by hunger and disease for many years," said Furaha.

"I am lucky that I managed to repatriate with my husband and our two children. I have been enlightened on my rights and I know the government values us. I will work with a women's cooperative to ensure that I benefit from various programmes and use my energy to achieve a lot," she added.

Fred Nyamurangwa, a commissioner at the Rwanda Demobilisation and Reintegration Commission (RDRC), urged the former fighters to ensure the acquired skills are put to good use.

He also urged the group to use all possible channels to ensure their colleagues still wandering in DR Congo repatriate so they are also helped to reintegrate.

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More than 10,000 ex-combatants have repatriated and have been supported to reintegrate over the last decade, according to the officials.

Five Rwandan peacekeepers killed in Central African Republic laid to rest

NEWS STORY

Source: Xinhua

15 August 2015 - Five Rwandan peacekeepers who were killed last week by one of their comrade in a suspect "terrorist" act while under UN mission in Central African Republic (CAR), have been laid to rest at Kanombe military cemetery, a suburb of Kigali city, military sources revealed Saturday.

Hundreds of people including relatives and senior commanders of Rwanda Defense Forces (RDF) attended the funeral.

The five men who were laid to rest are Sergeant Major Peter Ntwarabugabo, Sergeant Major Ferdinand Nduwayezu, Sergeant Bernard Ruseka, Sergeant Fidele Bizimana and Sergeant Eric Gasigwa, the Rwandan defense and military spokesperson, Brigadier General Joseph Nzabamwita said.

It is said the killer who was one of their colleague is believed to have acted alone.

Initial investigations is showing that the attack was conducted by one muslim Rwandan soldier who was likely linked to fundamentalism islam especially about one photo found with him showing a masked gunmen armed with Kalashnikov rifle proving his will to join the fighting alongside jihadist groups.

In the meanwhile, analysts believe though the conflict in the Central African Republic is not about religion, but still religious and ethnic affiliations have been manipulated for political purposes.

Third Term: Kagame Set To Join the Circus Show

OPINION

Source: The Guardian (<http://www.ngrguardiannews.com/2015/08/third-term-kagame-set-to-join-the-circus-show/>)

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By Kamal Tayo Oropo

16 August 2015 - In a manner suggesting that crisis may well be embedded in the DNAs of African leaders, Rwandan President Paul Kagame appear set to plunge his country into turmoil not dissimilar to the one his counterpart, President Pierre Nkurunziza, visited on Burundi.

Lawmakers began a national tour last month to gather opinions after both houses of parliament voted in support of constitutional change allowing Kagame a third term. Curiously, but according to the lawmakers, only 10 Rwandans are opposed to the agenda.

Over 3.7 million people – 60 percent of voters – purportedly signed the petition calling for a change to Article 101 of the constitution, which limits the President to two terms, according to Rwandan media.

“Of millions of Rwandans consulted by lawmakers on the need to amend Article 101 of the constitution in the past few weeks, only 10 were against the idea,” the New Times of Rwanda reported recently. But analysts said the lawmakers’ tour was sponsored and designed to give rubberstamp endorsement to Kagame’s ambition.

Any change to the constitution would require a vote in support by at least three-quarters of both parliamentary houses, followed by a national referendum.

On Friday, the United Nations human rights office urged leaders in neighbouring Burundi on the need to renounce violence and resume their dialogue to prevent the country’s political crisis from escalating.

Tensions have been high in Burundi since late April when Nkurunziza decided to seek a third term in office, a move his analysts said violated the constitution and which triggered a failed coup in May.

According to the spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Ravina Shamdasani, spokeswoman, told a news briefing in Geneva that at least 96 people had been killed since the start of election-related violence in April.

The violence has continued since Nkurunziza was re-elected on July 21.

Shamdasani said at least eight members of the ruling CNDD-FDD party had been shot dead by unidentified gunmen in the past two weeks.

In early August, a human rights activist who openly opposed Nkurunziza’s bid for a third term was also shot and seriously wounded.

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Burundi has been slipping closer to the edge even as the world await stakeholders to take concrete steps to renounce the use of violence and to resolve differences peacefully.

There have been at least 60 cases of people being tortured in police and intelligence services custody. The number of those killed, detained or tortured may be much higher. This is even as a Burundi government spokesman said those involved in torture and killing were acting on their own accord and “will be prosecuted and punished accordingly.”

Meanwhile, due to the violence, more than 181,000 people have fled to neighboring countries, ironically including Rwanda, where Kagame, 57, has been at the helm of politics since 1994, when an offensive by his Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) rebels put an end to a genocide by Hutu extremists that left an estimated 800 000 people dead, most of whom were Tutsis, the major ethnic group in Burundi.

As minister of defence and then vice president, Kagame was widely seen as the power behind the throne even before he took the presidency in 2003, winning 95 percent of the vote. He was re-elected in 2010 with a similarly resounding mandate. The next elections are due in 2017.

From the trauma of genocide, he has been painted as a guarantor of stability and economic development, earning praise from donors – and his supporters say many in Rwanda view the prospect of his departure as a step into the unknown.

Critics say however that he has silenced the opposition and the media, even as Kagame says the decision on a third term is for the “Rwandan people”.

BURUNDI

Ex-army chief Col Jean Bikomagu shot dead in Burundi

NEWS STORY

Source: BBC

15 August 2015 - The former head of Burundi's army has been shot dead outside his home in the capital Bujumbura.

Col Jean Bikomagu, who led the armed forces during the country's civil war, was gunned down as he drove through the gates of his house.

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His daughter was badly injured in the attack, a family member told AFP.

It is the latest in a wave of killings across Burundi, since President Pierre Nkurunziza decided to run for - and won - a third term of office.

The civil war was fought along ethnic lines with mostly Hutu rebels fighting against the politically dominant Tutsi minority.

Col Bikomagu led the Tutsis, while Mr Nkurunziza was a member of the Hutu rebel group.

A peace deal led to him becoming president in 2005. But his third presidential bid in July led to unrest across the country, with opposition parties and voters claiming it was unconstitutional.

Tensions there have forced more than 100,000 people to flee this year.

L'Union Africaine condamne fermement l'assassinat du Colonel Jean Bikomagu, ancien chef d'Etat-major de l'Armée

COMMUNIQUE DE PRESSE

Source: Union Africaine

Addis Abéba, le 16 août 2015: La Présidente de la Commission de l'Union africaine (UA), Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, condamne fermement l'assassinat du Colonel à la retraite Jean Bikomagu, ancien chef d'État-major de l'Armée, intervenu le 15 août 2015, à Bujumbura, au Burundi. Elle présente les condoléances les plus attristées de l'UA à la famille du défunt et souhaite prompt rétablissement à sa fille qui a été blessée lors de l'attaque.

La Présidente de la Commission souligne que cet acte ignoble et les multiples autres actes de violence enregistrés ces derniers mois illustrent encore une fois la gravité de la situation que connaît le Burundi et les risques réels de la voir se détériorer davantage, avec des conséquences catastrophiques tant pour le pays lui-même que pour l'ensemble de la région. Dans ce contexte, elle réaffirme la position de l'UA sur le rejet absolu de la violence, et condamne toutes les violations des droits de l'homme et autres atteintes aux libertés. Elle appelle à une enquête transparente et crédible pour identifier les auteurs des assassinats et les traduire rapidement en justice.

La Présidente de la Commission insiste encore une fois sur l'impératif du dialogue et du consensus pour trouver une solution pacifique et durable à la crise actuelle et préserver

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les acquis importants obtenus grâce à l'Accord d'Arusha de 2000 pour la paix et la réconciliation au Burundi et à l'Accord global de cessez-le-feu de 2003. Elle réitère l'appel de l'UA aux acteurs burundais pour qu'ils fassent preuve de la plus grande retenue et d'esprit de responsabilité en ce moment critique de l'histoire de leur pays.

La Présidente de la Commission renouvelle l'engagement de l'UA à aider à la recherche d'une solution pacifique et consensuelle. À cet égard, l'UA, en collaboration avec les autres acteurs internationaux concernés, continuera à apporter son plein soutien à la médiation conduite par le Président Yoweri Museveni de l'Ouganda au nom de la Communauté de l'Afrique de l'Est (CAE).

African Union says Burundi crisis a 'catastrophic' risk for region

NEWS STORY

Source: Reuters

By Aaron Maasho

16 August 2015 - The crisis in strife-torn Burundi risks spiraling into a "catastrophe" for the country and the wider region, the African Union warned on Sunday, after the killing of a senior military official amid escalating unrest.

Unidentified gunmen killed Colonel Jean Bikomagu, a former chief of staff, outside his home in Bujumbura on Saturday. It was the second high-profile assassination this month as the fallout from the re-election of President Pierre Nkurunziza worsened in the central African nation.

Nkurunziza was declared winner of elections held in July, for a third term that both opponents and Western powers said violated the constitution and provisions of a peace deal which ended a 1993-2005 civil war between the Hutu majority and Tutsi minority. Neighboring Rwanda, which shares a similar ethnic population and where a 1994 genocide killed 800,000 people, has also expressed its concern over the unrest.

In a statement, AU Commission chairwoman Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma condemned Bikomagu's killing.

Zuma "underlines that this ignoble act and many other violent acts in Burundi these last few months illustrate the gravity of the situation and the real risk of further deterioration with catastrophic consequences for the country and the whole region," the statement said.

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Bikomagu was army chief during the civil war that started in 1993 when the Tutsi-dominated army was fighting Nkurunziza's CNDD-FDD Hutu rebels.

The election-related violence has been especially frequent in the capital Bujumbura, where the sound of gunfire is regularly heard at night.

The Geneva office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights said last week that at least 96 people had been killed since the start of election-related unrest in April and urged leaders to renounce violence and resume their political dialogue.

Zuma "insists once again on the imperative of dialogue and consensus to work for a peaceful and durable solution to the crisis and to preserve the important points in the 2000 Arusha Accord," the statement said.

Burundi's Security Council, headed by Nkurunziza, said late on Saturday that it has asked for rapid investigations and the arrest and trial of the perpetrators behind the recent killings.

UN human rights office warns Burundi crisis 'spiralling out of control'

NEWS STORY

Source: UN News Centre

14 August 2015 - The situation in Burundi continues to deteriorate amid ongoing killings, arrests and detentions in the latest post-election turmoil to afflict the country, the United Nations human rights office has reported.

"We urge all sides to resume dialogue before the situation spirals completely out of control," warned Ravina Shamdasani, spokesperson of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), as she addressed reporters today in Geneva.

"Burundi has been slipping closer to the edge with every high-profile attack and killing, and we call on leaders on all sides to take concrete steps to renounce the use of violence and to resolve differences peacefully," she continued. "Where violations and abuses have occurred, there need to be prompt investigations with a view to bringing the perpetrators to account and justice for victims."

According to the UN, civil unrest erupted on 26 April in Bujumbura, Burundi's capital, after the ruling Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie-Forces pour la

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défense de la démocratie (CNDD-FDD) party elected President Pierre Nkurunziza on 25 April as its candidate for the then-scheduled 26 June presidential election.

Mr. Nkurunziza has been in office for two terms since 2005, and a broad array of actors warned that an attempt to seek a third term was unconstitutional and contrary to the spirit of the 2000 Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi that ended a decade of civil war in the country.

The OHCHR spokesperson observed that since the outbreak of violence in April, at least 96 people have been killed, mostly among opposition supporters, while some 600 people have been arrested and detained. Among those detained, there have been at least 60 cases of torture and many more cases of ill-treatment, she added.

“So far, no trials have taken place in relation to the violence, killings, torture and ill-treatment since April, although the authorities have repeatedly indicated that investigations are under way and that some police elements have been arrested,” Ms. Shamdasani said, noting that the actual numbers of persons killed, detained or tortured may be much higher than initially thought.

“We understand that in very few cases have investigations actually been initiated. Continuing impunity in Burundi can only fuel cycles of violence.”

Along with the increasing human rights violations, the mounting violence across Burundi has also provoked a widespread humanitarian crisis as refugees have spilled across the country's borders and fanned throughout the region.

Indeed, the most recent data state that over 200,000 people have sought refuge in neighbouring countries with 85,200 Burundian refugees in Tanzania, 71,600 in Rwanda, 28,300 in Uganda, 14,322 in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), 7,000 in Kenya, and 3,000 in southern Africa.

ANGOLA

L'Angola utilise des méthodes qui rappellent "l'apartheid" (opposant)

ARTICLE

Source: AFP

Johannesburg, 15 août 2015 - Le journaliste et militant des droits de l'Homme angolais Rafael Marques de Morais a accusé les autorités de son pays d'utiliser des

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méthodes de répression dignes de l'apartheid, à l'occasion du lancement d'un livre sur l'ancienne colonie portugaise, vendredi à Johannesburg.

"Certaines méthodes du régime angolais rappellent celles employées ici en Afrique du sud pendant l'apartheid contre la majorité de la population. Cela rappelle aussi les vieilles tactiques du régime colonial et fasciste portugais contre les peuples colonisés, a dénoncé M. Marques dans une interview à l'AFP.

M. Marques a notamment pris comme exemple une récente manifestation violemment réprimée par la police la semaine dernière et a également demandé la libération de 15 militants d'opposition arrêtés mi-juin et accusés de vouloir renverser le président José Eduardo dos Santos.

La semaine dernière, un groupe de 50 manifestants composé "principalement des mères et des proches de ces prisonniers politiques" ont été "frappés par la police" qui aurait même "lâché les chiens" sur eux, affirme Rafael Marques de Morais.

"Voici le nouvel accomplissement du gouvernement dans ses efforts de supprimer la liberté d'expression dans le pays. L'élite dirigeante déteste son propre peuple", a-t-il poursuivi.

M. Marques qui est l'un des plus célèbres opposants au pouvoir en Angola a été condamné plus tôt cette année à six mois de prison avec sursis pour "dénonciation calomnieuse" de sept généraux de l'armée dans un livre accusant le régime de couvrir des violences contre les chercheurs de diamants.

Le bâton sans la carotte

L'Angola qui s'appuie essentiellement sur le pétrole pour développer son économie et qui a multiplié son PIB par 10 sur la dernière décennie, doit désormais faire face à la chute des cours, à deux ans des prochaines élections présidentielles.

"En 2017, si les prix du pétrole restent bas, le régime va faire face au plus grand défi de son histoire car le mécontentement va grandir et la population se retournera contre ce gouvernement qui réprime toujours plus pour s'accrocher au pouvoir", prédit M. Marques.

"Le gouvernement essaie de masquer la crise économique en accentuant la répression car cette politique de la carotte et du bâton a marché pendant des années en Angola. Mais maintenant, le gouvernement n'a plus que le bâton donc il y a une augmentation de la violence politique", estime-t-il avant d'ajouter que le pays est "à la croisée des chemins".

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Selon Ricardo Soares de Oliveira, professeur à l'université d'Oxford et auteur de "Magnificent and Beggar Land", sorti cette semaine à Johannesburg, l'Angola a connu "une trajectoire extraordinaire depuis 2002".

"C'était un Etat en déliquescence à la fin de la guerre et c'est devenu un Etat très puissant", explique t-il dans une interview à l'AFP.

Selon l'auteur, ce livre est le premier livre sur l'Angola depuis la fin de la guerre civile qui a ravagé le pays pendant 27 ans, en 2002.

Ecrit en anglais, cet ouvrage qui sera bientôt traduit en portugais tente de dresser un bilan de l'Angola post-guerre civile.

C'était un "régime autoritaire très stable", explique M. Soares de Oliveira, mais les immenses revenus tirés du pétrole n'ont pas vraiment profité à la majorité des 24,3 millions d'Angolais dont la moitié vit avec moins de deux dollars par jour. Seule une petite élite politique s'est considérablement enrichie.

Selon l'écrivain, l'absence d'un successeur indiscutable au président Dos Santos au pouvoir depuis 1979 rend le futur politique du pays plein d'"incertitude".

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Ban appoints experienced UN official as acting head of mission in Central African Republic

NEWS STORY

Source: UN News Centre

14 August 2015 - Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today announced the appointment of Parfait Onanga-Anyanga of Gabon as his Acting Special Representative for the Central African Republic and Head of the United Nations stabilization mission in the country, known as MINUSCA.

Mr. Onanga-Anyanga succeeds Lieutenant General Babacar Gaye of Senegal, who resigned on 12 August amid allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation against peacekeepers at MINUSCA.

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The Secretary-General is grateful for Lieutenant General Gaye's long and distinguished record of public service in the United Nations, most recently, over the past two years, during a critical period in the Central African Republic.

Mr. Onanga-Anyanga brings with him several years of experience with the UN in conflict-affected areas, including as Head of the UN Office in Burundi (BNUB), having served most recently as the Assistant-Secretary-General, System-Wide Senior Coordinator on Burundi in addition to his role as the Coordinator of UN Headquarters Response to the Boko Haram crisis.

From 2007 to 2012 he was the Director of the Office of the UN Deputy Secretary-General. Previously, Mr. Onanga-Anyanga was Special Adviser to the President of the sixtieth and sixty-first sessions of the General Assembly (2005-2007). Prior to that, he was Chef de Cabinet to the President of the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

From 1998-2004, he held a variety of political and managerial positions at the Preparatory Commission of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty Organization in Vienna and New York. Earlier in his career, he was acting Secretary of the UN Standing Advisory Committee for Security Questions in Central Africa, and served as First Counsellor for Disarmament and Political Affairs at the Permanent Mission of Gabon to the UN in New York.

Le Gabonais Parfait Onanga-Anyanga à la tête de la Munisca

ARTICLE

Source: GabonEco (http://www.gaboneco.com/nouvelles_africaines_35504.html)

Le Gabonais Parfait Onanga-Anyanga a été nommé jeudi 13 août 2015, par les Nations unies, à la tête de la mission de l'ONU en République Centrafricaine (Munisca). Il succède au Sénégalais démissionnaire, Babacar Gaye, 15 août 2015 - Suite aux accusations de viols qui auraient été perpétrés par des casques bleus en République Centrafricaine sur des fillettes, le Sénégalais Babacar Gaye, dirigeant de la mission de l'ONU dans ce pays (Munisca) a déposé, mercredi 12 août 2015, sa démission. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga a de ce fait, été choisi par les Nations unies pour lui succéder.

Agé de 56 ans, Parfait Onanga-Anyanga est un homme très connu des milieux onusiens. Sa mission en Centrafrique devra consister en un travail de poursuite de l'action de Babacar Gaye même si, au regard du climat tendu et des scandales qui touchent l'unité onusienne, celle-ci pourrait se révéler particulièrement ardue.

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Profil

Titulaire d'une maîtrise en sociologie décrochée à l'Université Omar Bongo et d'un diplôme de 3^{ème} cycle en science politique de l'université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, Parfait Onanga-Anyanga maîtrise bien les rouages de la diplomatie onusienne liée à l'Afrique notamment au sein de la sous-région CEMAC.

De 1998 à 2004, il a occupé au sein des Nations unies, les fonctions de secrétaire par intérim du Comité consultatif permanent chargé des questions de sécurité de l'organisation en zone CEMAC.

De 2007 à 2012, il a dirigé le cabinet de la vice-secrétaire général de l'ONU à New York aux Etats-Unis. Les questions de sécurité internationales restent les points sur lesquels l'homme s'est beaucoup impliqué tout au long de sa carrière au sein de l'organisation.

Son parcours au sein de l'ONU comprend également le poste de premier Conseiller pour les affaires de désarmement et affaires politiques à la mission permanente du Gabon auprès des Nations unies à New York.

De juin 2012 à décembre 2014, Parfait Onanga-Anyanga a occupé le poste de représentant spécial et chef du Bureau des Nations Unies au Burundi (BNUB). Sa gestion des conflits socio-politiques est partagée comme d'ailleurs pour la plupart des diplomates mandatés par l'ONU en Afrique, entre réussites et échecs. Mais l'expérience est bien acquise.

Le nouveau défi de l'homme sera donc, la gestion de la Munisca en Centrafrique et ce, malgré les scandales qui éclaboussent cette force de l'ONU.

Aristide Sokambi: «Bozizé sera arrêté» s'il revient en Centrafrique**REPORTAGE**

Source: RFI

Exilé depuis plus de deux ans, François Bozizé entend revenir en Centrafrique pour concourir à la présidentielle du 18 octobre. Mais l'ex-chef de l'Etat est sous le coup d'un mandat d'arrêt international et visé par des sanctions de l'ONU. Les autorités centrafricaines l'ont d'ores et déjà mis en garde contre toute tentative de retour sur le territoire centrafricain explique le ministre de Justice, Aristide Sokambi.

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14 août 2015 - L'ancien président centrafricain, aujourd'hui exilé en Ouganda, a justifié son retour par l'instabilité qui prévaut, selon lui, en Centrafrique. Un retour au pays ne serait toutefois pas sans risque pour l'ex-président. Le ministre de Justice Aristide Sokambi, a d'ailleurs déjà pris des mesures à l'encontre de l'ancien président si ce dernier revenait.

« J'ai pris des dispositions via des mandats contre Bozizé, a-t-il précisé. Je ne sais pas par quel chemin, par quel espace, il traversera pour arriver en République centrafricaine mais j'espère que toutes les instances qui sont saisies aujourd'hui, réagiront, si jamais Bozizé tombait entre leurs mains. »

Aristide Sokambi a demandé à « toutes les forces nationales et internationales, les forces de l'ordre, la gendarmerie, la police », qu'il soit arrêté dès son arrivée sur le territoire centrafricain. « Bozizé, ajoute-t-il, est poursuivi par la justice centrafricaine pour de nombreux crimes de sang, des crimes économiques, des crimes contre l'humanité qu'il a commis lors de son passage à la tête du pays. Et après tout ce qui s'est passé pendant [son] règne en Centrafrique, il devrait gagner à éviter de perturber la quiétude de la population centrafricaine. »

SOUTH SUDAN

South Sudan Leaders Try to Clinch Peace Deal on Deadline Day

NEWS STORY

Source: VOA

17 August 2015 - Regional leaders are pushing South Sudan's government and rebels to seal a peace agreement Monday to end their 20-month civil war.

President Salva Kiir and his chief rival, rebel leader Riek Machar, are both in Addis Ababa for talks brokered by the East African bloc IGAD.

Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta posted on Twitter images of the two men taking part in IGAD-led talks late Sunday ahead of the Monday deadline that has also been supported by the United Nations and the United States.

Kenyatta is taking part in the talks along with Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni and Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn.

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Kiir's presence in Addis Ababa comes less than two days after he canceled the planned trip over concerns that rebel factions slated to participate in Monday's talks had split apart and would not present a united front. He later reversed himself, voicing fear that his absence from the talks would be seen as opposition to the peace process.

The makeup of the rebel delegation was not clear late Sunday, less than a week after two rebel generals said they were no longer allied with Kiir's chief rival, rebel leader Machar.

But Machar, who has been in the city for several days, told VOA he will participate in negotiations with the leaders of Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia and Sudan at the regional summit. Machar also said both sides are under intense international pressure to sign an accord.

South Sudan's civil war erupted in December 2013, just months after President Kiir fired Machar as vice president. The fighting has killed thousands and displaced an estimated 1.6 million South Sudanese.

Chronologie des vingt mois de conflit au Soudan du Sud

Source: AFP

17 août 2015

Le Soudan du Sud, indépendant depuis 2011, est déchiré depuis décembre 2013 par un conflit meurtrier entre forces loyales au président Salva Kiir et rebelles menés par l'ancien vice-président Riek Machar.

Les violences, à forte connotation ethnique, ont fait des dizaines de milliers de morts, avec de terribles atrocités contre les civils. Plus de deux millions de personnes ont fui leurs foyers, selon l'ONU, qui a fait état d'un risque de famine dans certaines zones.

2013

15 décembre: Intenses combats entre factions rivales de l'armée à Juba. Salva Kiir annonce avoir déjoué une tentative de coup d'État, initiée selon lui par son ancien vice-président Riek Machar, qu'il avait limogé en juillet.

Le 18 décembre, Riek Machar, qui dès le début du mois avait dénoncé l'attitude « dictatoriale » du président Kiir, nie l'existence d'une tentative de coup d'État. Le

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lendemain, il appelle l'armée à renverser Salva Kiir, l'accusant de vouloir « allumer une guerre ethnique ».

Les combats vont s'étendre à plusieurs régions du pays.

2014

10-20 janvier: Après Bentiu, capitale de l'État pétrolier d'Unité (nord), l'armée reprend aux rebelles notamment la ville de Bor, dans l'État du Jonglei (est). Kampala reconnaît que des soldats ougandais combattent aux côtés de l'armée sud-soudanaise.

27 février: Human Rights Watch (HRW) rapporte de graves violations des droits de l'Homme, assimilables à des crimes de guerre, par les deux camps.

15 et 17 avril: Plus de 350 civils, la plupart réfugiés dans une mosquée, sont massacrés à Bentiu et Bor, selon la mission de l'ONU (Minuss). En mai, l'ONU recentre ses activités sur la protection des civils.

2 mai: A Juba, le secrétaire d'État américain John Kerry met en garde contre les risques de « génocide ».

2015

1er février: Accord intérimaire Kiir/Machar prévoyant notamment un cessez-le-feu –le 7e en un an– mais rompu quelques jours plus tard.

20 mars: Le gouvernement et les rebelles ont intensifié l'enrôlement forcé d'enfants-soldats, selon l'Unicef, qui estime que plus de 12.000 enfants ont été enrôlés comme combattants depuis le début du conflit.

24 mars: Le Parlement prolonge le mandat du président Kiir ainsi que la législature jusqu'en 2018. Selon la Constitution, les élections générales devaient être organisées avant le 9 juillet 2015.

30 juin: Des militaires ont violé puis brûlé vives des femmes et des filles, accuse l'ONU. Dans un rapport, des enquêteurs de la Minuss mettent en garde contre des « violations des droits de l'Homme généralisées », s'appuyant sur le témoignage de 115 victimes et témoins dans l'État septentrional d'Unité, un des plus touchés par la guerre.

Le camp rebelle a été lui aussi à plusieurs reprises accusé d'atrocités, notamment de viols et de meurtres.

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1er juillet: L'ONU décrète des sanctions contre six chefs militaires, trois du côté des forces gouvernementales et trois du côté rebelle. Le lendemain, les Etats-Unis décident de sanctions contre deux chefs militaires accusés d'exactions, un de chaque camp.

6 juillet: L'armée affirme avoir repris aux rebelles le contrôle de la ville stratégique de Malakal, capitale du l'État pétrolier du Haut-Nil (nord-est), réduite en ruines après avoir plusieurs fois changé de mains depuis le début de la guerre.

7 juillet: Le nombre de civils ayant trouvé refuge dans les bases des Nations unies dans le pays a dépassé les 150.000, indique l'ONU.

11 août: Plusieurs chefs rebelles, dont Peter Gadet, chef de guerre frappé par des sanctions de l'ONU, annoncent faire scission de la rébellion.

16 août: Des dirigeants d'Afrique de l'Est participent à Addis Abeba aux pourparlers de paix. Le gouvernement et les rebelles, soumis à une forte pression internationale, ont jusqu'à lundi pour signer un accord.

Soudan du Sud : Salva Kiir à Addis Abeba

ARTICLE

Source: BBC Afrique

Le président du Soudan du Sud, Salva Kiir, assistera aux pourparlers de paix à Addis Abeba sous l'égide de l'organisation intergouvernementale est-africaine (Igad) qui tente de trouver un accord aux belligérants.

16 août 2015 - Selon son attaché de presse, Ateny Wek, le président Sud-Soudanais va s'envoler dimanche pour l'Ethiopie.

Les dirigeants de pays d'Afrique de l'Est ont insisté pour que M. Kiir prenne lui-même part aux négociations au lieu de se faire représenter par son vice-président.

Samedi, le gouvernement du Soudan du Sud a affirmé qu'il continuerait à négocier avec la rébellion pour obtenir un accord de paix d'ici au 17 août l'organisation intergouvernementale est-africaine (Igad).

Le gouvernement du Soudan du Sud et les rebelles ont jusqu'à lundi pour signer un accord afin de mettre fin à vingt mois de guerre civile qui a fait des dizaines de milliers de morts.

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Le plus jeune pays du monde, dont l'indépendance avait été célébrée dans l'enthousiasme en juillet 2011, est plongé dans la guerre civile depuis décembre 2013 quand le président Kiir a accusé son vice-président Riek Machar, tout juste limogé, de fomenter un coup d'Etat.

Après la signature de sept cessez-le-feu, ces dernières discussions sous supervision des médiateurs régionaux de l'organisation intergouvernementale est-africaine (Igad).

Le dernier round de négociations s'était ouvert le 6 août sous la médiation de l'Igad, de l'ONU, de l'Union Africaine, de la Chine et de la "troika" composée de la Grande-Bretagne, de la Norvège et des Etats-Unis.

L'Igad a reçu le soutien de poids du président américain Barack Obama, lors de sa récente visite en Ethiopie, et a donné jusqu'au 17 août pour trouver un accord, faisant planer la menace de sanctions contre les deux camps.

Le calendrier des négociations de paix au Soudan du Sud arrive à terme

ARTICLE

Source: AFP

17 août 2015 - Les pourparlers pour tenter de mettre fin à près de deux ans de guerre civile au Soudan du Sud ont repris, dimanche, à Addis Abeba. Le temps presse : les négociations entre le gouvernement sud-soudanais et les rebelles doivent se terminer ce lundi.

Le Soudan du Sud parviendra-t-il enfin à mettre fin à près de deux ans de guerre civile ? Vendredi, le gouvernement avait quitté la table des négociations face à de graves dissensions au sein de l'opposition. Mais dimanche 16 août, les pourparlers ont repris à Addis Abeba, alors que le processus est censé se terminer par la signature d'un accord ce lundi.

Ce week-end, le président sud-soudanais Salva Kiir est donc finalement revenu sur sa décision de ne pas assister aux pourparlers, selon une annonce dimanche de son gouvernement. Avant de quitter Juba, le président Kiir a ainsi déclaré à la presse avoir été "obligé" de se joindre aux pourparlers et a toutefois prévenu qu'un accord de paix "qui ne peut pas être maintenu ne peut pas être signé".

"On devrait signer quelque chose dont on peut profiter. Si on signe [l'accord de paix] aujourd'hui et que demain la guerre reprend, qu'aurons-nous accompli ?", s'est demandé le président sud-soudanais, ajoutant: "Même si je ne suis pas content, je dois

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m'y montrer car si je n'y vais pas, des forces négatives vont me présenter comme celui qui est opposé à l'accord de paix qui allait être signé".

Riek Machar, le chef du principal groupe rebelle, n'est pas apparu publiquement à Addis Abeba mais plusieurs sources ont affirmé qu'il était bien présent dans la capitale éthiopienne et ce depuis plusieurs jours.

Mais pour Salva Kiir, il ne sera pas possible de signer un accord de paix complet tant que toutes les factions rebelles ne seront pas présentes à la table des négociations. Plusieurs chefs rebelles, dont Peter Gadet, chef de guerre objet, début juillet, de sanctions de l'ONU, ont en effet annoncé en début de semaine dernière faire scission de la rébellion.

Déjà sept cessez-le-feu violés

Des dirigeants de pays d'Afrique de l'Est participaient également, dimanche, aux négociations. Le président ougandais Yoweri Museveni, qui a envoyé des troupes au Soudan du Sud pour soutenir le président Kiir, s'est entretenu avec le Premier ministre éthiopien Hailemariam Desalegn et le président soudanais Omar el-Béchir, ainsi que son homologue kényan Uhuru Kenyatta.

Après la signature de sept cessez-le-feu, aussi vite violés qu'ils avaient été signés, ces dernières discussions sous supervision des médiateurs régionaux de l'organisation intergouvernementale est-africaine (Igad) apparaissaient comme la plus sérieuse opportunité pour les belligérants de mettre fin au conflit qui ensanglante le plus jeune pays du monde, dont l'indépendance avait été célébrée dans l'enthousiasme en juillet 2011.

Ce dernier round de négociations s'était ouvert le 6 août sous la médiation de l'Igad, de l'ONU, de l'Union Africaine, de la Chine et de la "troika" composée de la Grande-Bretagne, de la Norvège et des États-Unis.

L'Igad a reçu le soutien de poids du président américain Barack Obama, lors de sa récente visite en Éthiopie, et a donné jusqu'au 17 août pour trouver un accord, faisant planer la menace de sanctions contre les deux camps. "Nous attendons des parties représentées à Addis Abeba [...] qu'elles négocient avec bonne foi et signent un accord", ont déclaré l'Igad et des médiateurs internationaux dans un communiqué.

Plus de 70 % de la population sud-soudanaise (12 millions d'habitants) a besoin d'une assistance humanitaire, et 2,2 millions de personnes ont fui leurs foyers, selon l'ONU qui a fait état d'un risque de famine dans certaines zones.

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South Sudan rebels accuse IGAD of “confusing” the peace process

ARTICLE

Source: Sudan Tribune

Addis Ababa, 17 August 2015 – South Sudan’s armed opposition faction under the leadership of the country’s former vice president, Riek Machar, has accused the East African regional bloc, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), of further “confusing” the whole peace process in Addis Ababa, saying a peace deal may not be reached as planned.

“I don’t think IGAD is serious to mediate for a successful peace agreement in South Sudan. They are inconsistent, bias and confusing the whole peace process. They have now again distorted their so-called ‘peace compromise proposal’ per influence by President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda,” rebel leader’s spokesman, James Gatdet Dak, told Sudan Tribune when contacted on phone on Thursday.

Dak revealed that a so-called ‘front-line states’ in their recent meeting in Uganda this week came up yet with amendments to their own ‘peace compromise proposal’ in which they changed provisions in the draft agreement.

The group calling itself the “Front-line States” composed of Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia and Sudan were invited for a meeting to Entebbe, Uganda, by President Yoweri Museveni.

Ethiopian prime minister, Hailemariam Desalegn and Kenyan president Uhuru Kenyatta, joined by the Sudanese foreign minister Gandour, held the Monday joint meeting during which president Museveni criticized the IGAD-Plus proposal as coming from the “White man” and was seeking for an African solution.

President Museveni and President Salva Kiir of South Sudan reportedly asked for changes to be made in the proposal as well as for the 17 August deadline to be extended to give the two warring parties ample time for direct negotiations.

However, the rebel leader’s press secretary said information the armed opposition has received from the IGAD chief mediator, Seyoum Mesfin, indicated that major unilateral changes surprisingly took place in the IGAD-Plus proposal.

“While the warring parties have been negotiating to try to agree on some of the contentious issues that can now be incorporated into the IGAD-Plus peace proposal as amendments, IGAD-without-Plus has stepped back by changing provisions and coming up yet with new proposals in the text,” Dak further lamented.

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For instance, he said, the “front-line states’ were dragged by president Museveni into withdrawing the provision for power-sharing in the states. The IGAD-Plus proposal initially said in the three states of Unity, Upper Nile and Jonglei states in the greater Upper Nile region, the government would get 33%, the Sudan Peoples’ Liberation Movement (SPLM-IO) would get 53% and the former detainees and political parties would equally share the remaining 14%.

“This time IGAD is saying there should be no power sharing in the states,” he said.

He said IGAD in the Uganda meeting had also reneged on its previous proposal which sought for demilitarization of the capital, Juba. The opposition supported the demilitarization of the capital, including state capitals and other major towns in the country, arguing that it would restore confidence and avoid repeat of massacres of civilians in the towns by the army.

Dak further added that on the security arrangements including command of the rival armies for a period of transition, unification and duration of the process, the front-line states said the issue would be left to army chief of staffs of Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda.

He said the latest development has gone against the very peace proposal by IGAD-Plus which was supposed to be the basis for negotiations and agreement.

He said the armed opposition faction of the SPLM-IO will not accept this, criticizing IGAD for dwelling on conflicting interests among the regional actors instead of focusing on a consistent sustainable path to peace in South Sudan.

“It is better to call off the August 17 deadline because it would be a meaningless exercise,” he said.

South Sudan leader arrives for peace talks as deadline looms

NEWS STORY

Source: AFP

16 August 2015 - South Sudanese President Salva Kiir arrived in Ethiopia Sunday for peace talks aimed at brokering an end to civil war, reversing an earlier decision as international threats of possible sanctions mount.

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But Kiir, who said he had been "compelled" to join the talks alongside rebel leaders and regional presidents, warned it would not be possible to sign a lasting or full peace deal until all opposition factions could join the agreement.

"A peace that cannot be sustained cannot be signed," Kiir said, before leaving Juba.

"You should sign something that you will enjoy. If it is signed today and then tomorrow we go back to war, then what have we achieved?"

South Sudan's government and rebels are under intense diplomatic pressure to sign a deal by August 17 to end a 20-month civil war in which tens of thousands of people have been killed.

Kiir previously said he would send his deputy after complaining it was not possible to strike an effective deal because rebel forces have split.

But on Sunday he decided to go himself after consultations with regional leaders, who have already arrived in Addis Ababa for the summit meeting on Monday.

"Even if I am not happy, I must show my face because if I don't go, negative forces will take me as the one against the peace that was going to be signed," Kiir added.

'Not afraid of sanctions'

On Sunday, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, who has sent troops into South Sudan to back Kiir, held talks with Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir and Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta.

South Sudan's civil war began in December 2013 when Kiir accused his former deputy Riek Machar of planning a coup, setting off a cycle of retaliatory killings that has split the poverty-stricken, landlocked country along ethnic lines.

On Tuesday, rebel generals said they had split from Machar.

The latest round of talks opened on August 6, mediated by the regional eight-nation bloc IGAD, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, as well as the United Nations, African Union, China and the "troika" of Britain, Norway and the United States.

Diplomats have warned any failure to sign a peace deal could trigger "serious consequences" for the rival leaders, but South Sudan's Cabinet Minister Elia Lomuro said such threats were not helpful.

"We are not afraid of sanctions, this country belongs to us, the peace that we are talking belongs to us not to them," Lomuro said.

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Britain's minister for Africa, Grant Shapps, warned on Friday of possible "targeted sanctions" and an arms embargo if no deal is made.

Marked by widespread atrocities on both sides, the war has been characterised by ethnic massacres and rape. Recent attacks have included castration, burning people alive and tying children together before slitting their throats.

More than 70% of the country's 12 million people need aid, while 2.2 million people have fled their homes, the UN says, with areas on the brink of famine.

During previous peace talks held in luxury Ethiopian hotels, Kiir, Machar and their entourages have run up millions of dollars in expenses while failing to sign a single lasting agreement.

At least seven ceasefires have been agreed and then broken within days, if not hours.

South Sudan welcomes IGAD revised proposal

NEWS STORY

Source: Sudan Tribune

16 August 2015 - South Sudanese government announced on Sunday [16 August] readiness to sign a revised version of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), despite public criticism and protest of the armed opposition leadership under the former vice president turned rebel leader, Riek Machar.

South Sudanese foreign affairs and international cooperation minister, Barnaba Marial Benjamin, told Sudan Tribune during an exclusive interview on Sunday that the government through its "special meeting" attended by the state governors had resolved to permit the travel of president Salva Kiir to the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, to meet Machar and attend the regional summit of the heads of state and governments on the situation on South Sudan.

"The meeting has just concluded with recommendation that the president of the republic goes to Addis Ababa to attend the heads of state and government summit on the situation on South Sudan.

The meeting also resolved that in case the summit wants the two parties to sign any agreement as per the deadline set by the IGAD plus, it should be the version which the regional leaders agreed in Kampala," said minister Marial.

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Marial complained against the chief mediator, Seyoum Mesfin, saying he failed to incorporate the Kampala revised IGAD-Plus compromise proposal into the original text, saying president Kiir will push for implementation of the Kampala text.

IGAD-Plus has however maintained to keep the original Addis Ababa text of 24 July instead of 10 August of Kampala as the basis for negotiations and agreement.

The Kampala version, according to the top diplomat in the country, revised controversial issues, notable of which was the provision which gives the rebels under Riek Machar majority stake in the management and control of the resources and affairs of the conflict affected states of Upper Nile region.

The new version also agreed on the reduction of the period of separate armies to a period not less than 12 months from the date of the signing of the peace agreement, reject demilitarization of the national capital, Juba and other major towns.

Other revised areas of the regional proposal include limiting power sharing to the national institutions instead of expanding them to the states and local level.

The armed opposition faction led by Machar rejected the new Kampala version saying they will not accept it, while calling on IGAD-Plus to maintain the Addis Ababa proposal of 24 July.

The two principal leaders are expected to sign the final deal on Monday evening.

South Sudan lifts aid blockade

NEWS STORY

Source: AFP

14 August 2015 - South Sudan's army has lifted a more than a month-long aid blockade into rebel areas, the UN said Friday, warning of a "dire situation" as fighting continues despite ongoing peace talks.

The blockade since late June of aid barges on the Nile River into the northeastern battleground state of Upper Nile, as well as a ban on food flights into the state capital Malakal, had badly hit areas already on the brink of famine.

Tens of thousands of people have been killed in a 20-month civil war that has been marked by widespread atrocities on both sides.

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"Restrictions on the movement of barges on the River Nile, as well as clearances to use the Malakal airstrip, which had affected the delivery of life-saving assistance to vulnerable people in Malakal in Upper Nile state, have been lifted," the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said in a report Friday.

"The lifting of the restrictions has allowed humanitarian partners to start resupplying critical medicines, fuel, food and water treatment chemicals."

'Dire' humanitarian crisis

The government repeatedly denied the blockade, but rebels said it was aimed to starve them into submission.

The UN said no river barges and flights had arrived in Upper Nile since the end of June, apart from "minimal supplies" via helicopter directly into the UN base in Malakal.

The Nile is the main route for aid into the largely roadless northern areas, including areas under rebel control.

"As fighting continues, humanitarian needs are higher than ever," the UN report added. "Partners are working to ensure supplies continue to be delivered to Upper Nile to avert a further deterioration of the already dire situation."

Peace talks restarted last week in neighbouring Ethiopia, but have made little if any progress, delegates say.

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

Mediators say Kiir and Machar are now due to meet in a bid to stave off sanction threats before the deadline expires on Monday.

'Raped and set on fire'

Diplomats say the rivals are under intense pressure to sign a deal, since failure to do so could lead to a range of punitive measures, including a possible arms embargo and travel bans.

But they remain far apart on power sharing and security, Information Minister Michael Makuei has said. Makuei also warned that recent splits within the rebel army would further complicate negotiations.

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The war has been characterised by ethnic massacres and rape. According to the UN children's agency, recent attacks have included castration, rape and tying children together before slitting their throats.

UN aid chief Stephen O'Brien, who visited South Sudan last month, said he was horrified at reports of "horrendous atrocities" including girls being "beaten, raped and set on fire", the UN report said Friday.

Over 70 percent of the country's 12 million people need assistance, the UN says, which is also combating a cholera outbreak that has killed 43 people.

The war has forced 2.2 million people to flee their homes, with over 600,000 of those now refugees in the neighbouring nations of Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda.

More than 185,000 civilians are crammed into UN peacekeeping bases, including in Malakal, which has seen an influx this month of 10,000 people, taking the total there to over 46,500.

"Relief agencies are racing to cope with the influx as the rainy season creates increasingly desperate living conditions," the UN added.