

Disclaimer:

This media monitoring is sent to you only for your information. The inclusion of the attached news items is not an endorsement of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region in Africa or that of the United Nations Organization. Further use or distribution of this media monitoring must be guided accordingly.

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



MEDIA MONITORING

22 July 2015

RWANDA

Rwanda launches national consultation on President Kagame's third term bid

NEWS STORY

Source: International Business Times

21 July 2015 - The Rwandan government has launched a national consultation on the possibility of changing the constitution to allow President Paul Kagame to run for a third term.

The move was made after some 3.6 million Rwandans – about 70% of those on the electoral roll – are believed to have signed a petition asking the parliament to scrap presidential terms and allow Kagame to run in the 2017 presidential election.

The consultation will end on 1 August and will determine whether the parliament – which already voted in favour of changing the constitution earlier in July – will go ahead and amend article 101, which states the Rwanda's president can only be in power for a maximum of two seven-year terms.

"All lawmakers will go to consult with the population... to ask them their opinion about the amendment – what they expect from this reform," parliamentary speaker Donatilla Mukabalisa told news agency AFP.

Disclaimer:

This media monitoring is sent to you only for your information. The inclusion of the attached news items is not an endorsement of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region in Africa or that of the United Nations Organization. Further use or distribution of this media monitoring must be guided accordingly.

Some have warned that most petitioners were forced to sign and those who oppose to the changes are being persecuted. It has been also pointed out that article 193 concerning amendments of the constitution does not allow the number of terms to be changed, but only their lengths.

In an interview with IBTimes UK, human rights activist Rene Mugenzi said the parliament's decision to allow a third term is a "confirmation of a totalitarianism pathway that [Kagame] has taken in Rwanda in the last 20 years."

When contacted by IBTimes UK, ruling party Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) denied the allegations that the public were forced to sign the petition.

RPF's vice president Christophe Bazivamo said: "I think it is not possible to force 3.6 million people to sign a petition. People who have signed were actually happy to do so. It's not possible to force people to sign and to also make them happy.

"The population signed the petition because of facts. We achieved goals when it comes to child and maternal mortality. When it comes to security and social economic development, from 1994 until now, the situation has improved."

BURUNDI

Burundi Starts Counting Votes in Disputed Presidential Election

NEWS STORY

Source: Bloomberg Business

21 July 2015 - Burundi began counting ballots in a presidential election that the U.S. and U.K. said lacked credibility given the political violence and voter intimidation.

Polling stations closed at 4 p.m. local time on Tuesday in relative calm after a night of gunfire and explosions that left at least two people dead in the capital, Bujumbura. The results will be known in days, the country's electoral chief, Pierre Claver Ndayicariye, said on state radio. Voter turnout was low in Bujumbura and higher in many rural areas, he said.

President Pierre Nkurunziza's decision to seek a third term in April triggered protests that led to clashes with security forces. The violence left 77 people dead, drove about 170,000 from their homes and sparked a failed military coup.

Disclaimer:

This media monitoring is sent to you only for your information. The inclusion of the attached news items is not an endorsement of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region in Africa or that of the United Nations Organization. Further use or distribution of this media monitoring must be guided accordingly.

Critics of Nkurunziza argue that he's violating a two-term limit set out in a 2005 peace accord that ended a 12-year civil war, in which 300,000 people were killed. His supporters say the 51-year-old's first term doesn't count because he was chosen by parliament rather than popularly elected.

The unrest in Burundi has the potential to destabilize the Great Lakes region that includes the Democratic Republic of Congo, Africa's top copper and tin producer, and Rwanda, which had a genocide in 1994. Civil wars in the early 1990s in Burundi and Rwanda set the stage for conflict in neighboring Congo, the deadliest war in Africa's modern history.

Harassment, Intimidation

The U.S. said Burundi's presidential elections will not be credible and it's considering sanctions, including visa restrictions, on anyone responsible or complicit in using violence to create instability in the East African country.

"The legitimacy of the electoral process in Burundi over the past few months has been tainted by the government's harassment of opposition and civil society members, closing down of media outlets and political space, and intimidation of voters," U.S. State Department spokesman John Kirby said in a statement on Tuesday.

The U.K. Minister for Africa, Grant Shapps, said in a statement the country risks undoing the gains of the past years since the end of the civil war.

"The Burundian government has failed to ensure the necessary conditions for credible, inclusive and peaceful elections," Shapps said in the e-mailed statement. "I therefore do not consider these elections legitimate."

A second vice president is among a number of officials who have fled the country in the past few months after allegedly being threatened for criticizing the government. At least four of Nkurunziza's eight opponents in the vote, including the main opposition leader Agathon Rwasa, withdrew their candidacy, citing a lack of freedom to campaign. The electoral commission said the names of opposition candidates are still on the ballot and their votes will be tallied in the official count.

The UN said earlier this month that Burundi's parliamentary elections held on June 29 weren't free or fair.

Disclaimer:

This media monitoring is sent to you only for your information. The inclusion of the attached news items is not an endorsement of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region in Africa or that of the United Nations Organization. Further use or distribution of this media monitoring must be guided accordingly.

Burundi's controversial presidential poll attracts low turnout

NEWS STORY

Source: APA

21 July 2015 - Burundi voted Tuesday with low turnout as few queues could be seen at the entrances of polling stations, APA noted early Tuesday afternoon in Bujumbura. Few people took to the voting centers to cast their vote as was the case during the recently held local and legislative polls whose turnout stood at 28 percent.

Some local observers, NGOs and members of UN Observation Mission could be seen here and there.

The observers dispatched by International Conference of the Great Lakes Region and South Africa were also present to monitor the exercise.

The journalists deployed in the country's inner localities reported no major incidents. However, they reported the presence in the polling stations of only the representative of the ruling majority party.

The candidates in competition with incumbent President Pierre Nkurunziza are Jacques Bigirimana FNL, Jean de Dieu Mutabazi COPA coalition and Gerard Nduwayo UPRONA party.

The radical opposition boycotted the election on the ground that its participation would legitimize the candidacy of the incumbent president. Burundi has been rocked by unrest since April when the ruling party announced Nkurunziza would run for a third term.

More than 100 people have died in street protests against the president's bid to extend his time in power.

Burundi Seeks Praise, Not Condemnation, For Holding Election

NEWS STORY

Source: VOA

By James Butty

22 July 2015 - Burundi's government thanked voters who participated in Tuesday's presidential election, calling the vote peaceful, free and fair despite pre-election violence, an opposition boycott and international condemnation.

Disclaimer:

This media monitoring is sent to you only for your information. The inclusion of the attached news items is not an endorsement of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region in Africa or that of the United Nations Organization. Further use or distribution of this media monitoring must be guided accordingly.

The United States Tuesday said the election could not be considered credible because the process was tainted by government harassment of the opposition and civil society members, the closing down of media outlets and intimidation of voters.

A U.S. spokesman warned the election risks unraveling the Arusha Agreement, which limits a president to two terms in office.

Willy Nyamitwe, senior advisor on media and communication to President Pierre Nkurunziza, said the government should be congratulated, not condemned, for holding the election. He said some countries do not even hold elections.

“In some other countries of the world, people are complaining saying that the governments are not organizing elections on time. But, here in Burundi, the government took the responsibility to organize election. So, I think we should be congratulated, not condemned,” he said.

Nyamitwe said the Burundian government could not have postponed Tuesday’s election beyond the constitutional limit.

Critics said Nkurunziza’s third term bid violates the constitution, but Burundi’s constitutional court ruled he is eligible because the first time he was elected it was by parliament, not the voters.

Nyamitwe blamed the opposition for pre-election violence, which he said was intended to intimate Burundians from voting.

“As you know, there are some opposition leaders who called on Burundians not to vote. So, since people wanted to vote, some others were just shooting to intimidate them. So, who’s responsible? Everybody knows its leaders of the opposition and some civil society activists who told the Burundians to refuse anything that comes from the government,” he said.

The African Union did not send observers, saying the election was not going to be free and fair.

Nyamitwe denied the government refused to give visas to an AU delegation, saying the organization should blame itself because it failed to submit its application on time.

“The government of Burundi gave them some small conditions for getting their visas. When they failed to drop their files to the embassy of Burundi to seek the visas, they cannot blame the Burundian government. They have to blame themselves,” Nyamitwe said.

Disclaimer:

This media monitoring is sent to you only for your information. The inclusion of the attached news items is not an endorsement of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region in Africa or that of the United Nations Organization. Further use or distribution of this media monitoring must be guided accordingly.

Polls Close in Burundi Election as President Seeks 3rd Term

NEWS STORY

Source: AP

Bujumbura, 21 July 2015 - Overnight gunfire and explosions kept turnout low Tuesday in Burundi's presidential election, with three people killed in unrest over President Pierre Nkurunziza's bid for a third term that his opponents say is unconstitutional.

Turnout was low in the capital, Bujumbura, and one province but 16 other provinces had a good level of voters, said the head of Burundi's electoral commission Claver Ndayicariye. Results are expected in two days, he said.

With some of the opposition boycotting the election and others charging that they were not allowed to campaign, Nkurunziza, 51, is not facing a strong electoral challenge.

The U.S. State Department warned Tuesday that the election is not credible.

"The legitimacy of the electoral process in Burundi over the past few months has been tainted by the government's harassment of opposition and civil society members, closing down of media outlets and political space, and intimidation of voters," U.S. State Department Spokesman John Kirby said in a statement.

The U.S. is considering sanctions, including visa bans for those found responsible in the promotion of instability in the country, he said.

Many fear that Burundi's election may provoke widespread violence. Since independence from Belgium in 1961, Burundi has had four coups and a civil war that an estimated 250,000 dead. Kirby said the "fragile progress" made since the end of the civil war in 2006 is at risk of unraveling. The British government also issued a statement saying the poll is "discredited."

Burundi has been rocked by unrest since April when the ruling party announced Nkurunziza would run for a third term. More than 100 people have died in street protests against the president's bid to extend his time in power. The strife triggered an attempted military coup in mid-May that was quickly put down by pro-Nkurunziza forces.

Two policemen were shot dead in the capital Monday night, said Willy Nyamitwe, the presidential adviser for information and media. The body of an opposition official was found on a road Tuesday morning. The opposition and the government blame each other for the overnight violence.

Disclaimer:

This media monitoring is sent to you only for your information. The inclusion of the attached news items is not an endorsement of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region in Africa or that of the United Nations Organization. Further use or distribution of this media monitoring must be guided accordingly.

At least 170,000 refugees have fled the country fearing electoral violence, said the U.N. refugee agency. Nkurunziza's critics including his second vice-president, the deputy president of the Constitutional Court and the vice-chairwoman of the electoral commission are among dozens who have gone to exile alleging death threats.

Among the few people who voted in opposition areas of the capital, Bujumbura, many tried to wipe off the indelible ink on their fingers fearing reprisals from opposition supporters.

Unlike the capital city, a high turn-out was reported in Nkurunziza's hometown of Ngozi in northern Burundi where the president voted, riding up to the polling station on a bicycle.

Opponents say Nkurunziza must retire because the constitution limits the president to two terms. But the president's supporters say he is eligible for a third term because he was chosen by lawmakers — and not popularly elected — for his first term in 2005.

Two killed as blasts, gunfire rock Burundi presidential vote

NEWS STORY

Source: Reuters

By Clement Manirabarusha and Edmund Blair

Bujumbura, 21 July 2015 - A policeman and civilian were killed in clashes hours before the start of Burundi's presidential elections, already hit by opposition boycotts and protests over President Pierre Nkurunziza's decision to run for a third term.

Blasts and gunfire echoed around the capital before polling stations opened on Tuesday in a nation grappling with its worst crisis since a civil war ended in 2005. It has faced weeks of demonstrations, a failed coup and clashes between rebel soldiers and the army.

Opponents accuse Nkurunziza of violating the constitution by seeking another five years in office. Western donors and African states, worried about tensions in a region with a history of ethnic conflict, urged Burundi to postpone the poll.

Nkurunziza cites a court ruling saying he can run again. The government said they had already delayed the vote as long as they could and promised a fair poll.

Disclaimer:

This media monitoring is sent to you only for your information. The inclusion of the attached news items is not an endorsement of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region in Africa or that of the United Nations Organization. Further use or distribution of this media monitoring must be guided accordingly.

Voting began in rural areas and dozens queued to cast ballots in areas of Bujumbura that are strongholds of Nkurunziza supporters. But there were only trickles of voters in other districts of the capital and some polling stations stayed closed after the official 6 a.m. start.

Presidential adviser Willy Nyamitwe blamed opponents and those behind protests for overnight violence, saying a policeman and civilian were killed. "People do it to intimidate voters. They don't want the voters to go to the polls," he told Reuters.

A Reuters witness saw one dead civilian man with no obvious injuries on the ground in the Niyakabiga district of the city.

Nkurunziza cycled to a polling station in his northern home village of Buye and queued to cast his ballot, before pedalling off. Onlookers applauded.

One 40-year-old voter in Bujumbura, Ferdinand, said he would vote for Nkurunziza, a soccer fan who is often pictured rolling up his sleeves to work with people in the fields, because he had "a good programme of development for ordinary citizens."

"We need change. We need new blood," said Wilson, a mechanic in Bujumbura who did not give his full name. He added that he would not vote because Nkurunziza's rivals were not running.

In a statement shortly before voting began, U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon called for dialogue to resolve the crisis and urged the government to ensure security.

Weeks of talks between the government and opponents failed to broker a deal and broke off at the weekend.

Opponents say the president's re-election bid is undermining a peace deal that ended a civil war that pitted rebel groups of the ethnic Hutu majority, including one led by Nkurunziza, against the army, led at the time by the Tutsi minority.

The tension worries neighbouring Rwanda, which has the same ethnic mix and suffered a genocide in 1994 that killed 800,000, mostly Tutsis as well as moderate Hutus.

"The outcome of these elections will be void," Jean Minani, one of the opposition presidential candidates, said before the vote, speaking with other candidates joining the boycott.

The United States and European nations, major donors to the aid-reliant country, have halted some aid. The African Union said it would not send observers as the vote would not be fair, although regional east African states sent an observer mission.

Disclaimer:

This media monitoring is sent to you only for your information. The inclusion of the attached news items is not an endorsement of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region in Africa or that of the United Nations Organization. Further use or distribution of this media monitoring must be guided accordingly.

Burundi's electoral commission said opposition names were still on the ballot paper and any votes for them would be counted. It also counted votes for opponents who boycotted a June parliamentary poll that Nkurunziza's party won easily.

UGANDA

Uganda: Groups say proposed law could gag them for polls

NEWS STORY

Source: Reuters

20 July 2015 - Civil society organisations in Uganda say a proposed new law to regulate their activities is intended to stifle freedoms and blunt criticism of government ahead of presidential elections next year.

Veteran leader Yoweri Museveni is seeking another term in office in elections due to be held between March and February 2016, a move that will potentially extend his rule to 35 years.

He faces a challenge from popular opposition leader Kizza Besigye and his own former prime minister and ally, Amama Mbabazi.

Critics say the government is using a range of tactics including harsh legislation and repeated arrests of Museveni's opponents and their supporters to intimidate the opposition.

The law, currently being scrutinised by a parliamentary committee, requires all civil society organisations in the country to be registered afresh.

Public interest

An oversight body, whose members are appointed by the interior minister, can refuse to register an NGO "where it is in the public interest to refuse to register the organisation" or "for any other reason that the Board may deem relevant".

Civil society organisations say such language is ambiguous and that the government is likely to exploit it to clamp down on organisations they think are critical of government.

"The timing just as elections are around the corner is suspect," said Cissy Kagaba, executive director of anti-corruption coalition Uganda (ACCU).

Disclaimer:

This media monitoring is sent to you only for your information. The inclusion of the attached news items is not an endorsement of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region in Africa or that of the United Nations Organization. Further use or distribution of this media monitoring must be guided accordingly.

"The law doesn't define what things like 'public interest' is and state agents can do anything to an undesirable NGO under that name."

A key western ally, Museveni has been credited with returning economic stability to Uganda after year of turmoil but critics say his authoritarian rule and failure to check runaway corruption is causing a collapse of key public services.

Key platform

His refusal to give up power has also irked some of his western backers.

Officials have often expressed anger at NGOs' portrayal of government failures and accused them of inciting the people against the government.

Nicholas Opio, executive director of Chapter Four, a charity that champions civil liberties, said NGOs had become a key platform for people to express dissatisfaction with government.

"The new law presumes that someone needs registration to be able to freely express themselves and that's deeply troubling."

Deputy Uganda government spokesperson Shaban Bantariza denied the legislation was connected to upcoming elections and said it was instead to make charities operate within the law and in the interests of Uganda.

"Some NGOs have operated without being registered...and such NGOs have been misused by those who are against Uganda."

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

CAR court rules refugees have right to vote

NEWS STORY

Source: Reuters

21 July 2015 - Central African Republic's highest court has overturned a decision by the transitional parliament that would have barred tens of thousands of refugees in neighbouring countries from voting in October's presidential election.

Disclaimer:

This media monitoring is sent to you only for your information. The inclusion of the attached news items is not an endorsement of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region in Africa or that of the United Nations Organization. Further use or distribution of this media monitoring must be guided accordingly.

The court, in a decision made public on state radio on Tuesday, said parliament's June 30 decision to exclude refugees violated the 2013 Constitution which gives every adult citizen the right to vote.

The United Nations refugee agency (UNHCR) says there are some 460,000 Central African refugees who fled the religious violence that erupted after the mostly Muslim Seleka rebels seized power in early 2013.

Some 80 to 90 percent of the refugees are believed to be Muslims who fled a backlash against Seleka's 10-month rule by a Christian militia, known as the 'anti-balaka'.

"The issue of technical and material organisation should not allow us to deny to Central African citizens who fear for their lives, their right to vote," said the ruling by the Constitution Court, seen by Reuters.

UNHCR and other UN humanitarian bodies had voiced concern about the transitional assembly's decision.

The refugees represent the majority of Muslims from a Christian-dominated population of around 4.5 million people.

Ongoing insecurity prevents many Muslims from going home, rights groups say.

Members of the transitional assembly had argued that allowing refugees to vote could lead to electoral fraud as they said Seleka had distributed Central African identity documents to foreigners.

A common refrain in the 'anti-balaka'-led reprisals against Muslims was that they were foreigners who had no place in Central African Republic.

Interim President Catherine Samba Panza, who is due to step down at the elections scheduled for 18 October, had opposed the decision by the transitional assembly and requested the court's opinion.

The court noted that, under the country's transitional charter, there is no appeal against its decisions.

An electoral census is under way in Bangui and has been extended until 27 July.

No census of refugee populations have been undertaken in neighbouring countries, however.

Disclaimer:

This media monitoring is sent to you only for your information. The inclusion of the attached news items is not an endorsement of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region in Africa or that of the United Nations Organization. Further use or distribution of this media monitoring must be guided accordingly.

In a sign of the violence still simmering in Central African Republic, the deputy prefect and the mayor of the western town of Baboua - on the main road from Cameroon - were kidnapped on Sunday by armed men, state radio said.

The UN mission (MINUSCA) said the rebel Democratic Front of the Central African People (FDPC) - a splinter group from Seleka led by Abdoulaye Miskine - was responsible for an increase in attacks in the region.

It said the driver of a UN food truck was shot dead in an ambush on Saturday.

KENYA

Kenya president Uhuru Kenyatta says talks with US president Barack Obama to focus on extremism

NEWS STORY

Source: AP

21 July 2015 - The fight against extremism will be the key topic of talks with President Barack Obama, who will be visiting the country of his father later this week, Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta said Tuesday.

Kenya is battling a wave of extremist attacks by al-Qaida-linked al-Shabab militants from Somalia that has killed more than 400 people since October 2011 when the country sent troops into Somalia to fight the militants. Al-Shabab has vowed to avenge the Kenyan military presence.

Kenya has been working closely with American security agencies in the fight against extremism and the meeting with Obama will further strengthen this cooperation, Kenyatta said.

The visit also indicates the two countries have overcome strained relations over accusations of election violence. Ahead of the 2013 presidential elections, a U.S. diplomat appeared to caution Kenyans against voting for candidates accused of crimes against humanity.

Deputy President William Ruto and radio station head Joshua Sang are on trial for allegedly orchestrating the violence following a disputed presidential election in late 2007. More than 1,000 people died and 600,000 people were displaced from their homes.

Disclaimer:

This media monitoring is sent to you only for your information. The inclusion of the attached news items is not an endorsement of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region in Africa or that of the United Nations Organization. Further use or distribution of this media monitoring must be guided accordingly.

The International Criminal Court dropped similar charges against Kenyatta in December, citing a lack of sufficient evidence for the decision, which it attributed to witness intimidation and lack of Kenyan government cooperation.

Kenyatta dismissed assertions that Obama will not meet Ruto.

"The deputy president is part of this government so we shall all be meeting and proceeding with what we need to do," he said. "All I can say is that those who doubted the strength of the friendship between the two countries, or the depth of our engagement, had better re-examine their assumptions."

Obama's father is from Kenya.

SOUTH SUDAN

South Sudanese Soldiers, Allies Accused of War Crimes

NEWS STORY

Source: VOA

22 July 2015 - An international rights group has accused South Sudanese government forces and allied fighters of civilian killings, rapes, and destruction of property during a military operation in Unity State.

Human Rights Watch said in a statement Wednesday that the alleged attacks on civilians between April and June of 2015 amount to war crimes, and the killings and rapes may also constitute crimes against humanity.

In a report issued Wednesday, Human Rights Watch details the findings of more than 170 interviews in May and June with survivors of the attacks. It says more than 125 of the interviewees were displaced by the fighting or attacks on their villages.

The rights group says it has documented about 60 unlawful killings of men, women, and children, including the elderly. It says some victims were hanged, others shot, and others burned alive.

Daniel Bekele, Africa director for Human Rights Watch, called the attacks a "devastating offensive" characterized by "shocking disregard for civilian life."

The report says fighters from the Bul Nuer ethnic group operated alongside government fighters, shooting at civilians as they fled into forests and swamps. It also says the

Disclaimer:

This media monitoring is sent to you only for your information. The inclusion of the attached news items is not an endorsement of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region in Africa or that of the United Nations Organization. Further use or distribution of this media monitoring must be guided accordingly.

government forces and aligned militia deliberately burned villages to the ground and destroyed food stores and seeds intended for cultivation.

It says the rights group documented 63 cases of rape, including gang rapes, yet only one woman reported getting medical or other services for sexual violence. It said government soldiers and Bul Nuer fighters also beat women, threatened them with death, and abducted them.

Human Rights Watch is calling on the United Nations Security Council to expand targeted sanctions on commanders and others responsible for the events of the Unity State offensive, and to set up a court made up of South Sudanese and international legal officials to investigate and prosecute the worst crimes.

HRW is calling on President Barack Obama to make a public commitment to advance an arms embargo when he visits the African Union in late July. And it calls on the African Union, regional governments, and key partners of South Sudan to support those steps.

South Sudan criticizes Kenya for providing freedom to Machar

NEWS STORY

Source: Sudan Tribune

21 July 2015- South Sudan has criticized the neighboring Kenya for allegedly allowing former vice president and current armed opposition leader, Riek Machar, to carry out activities against president Salva Kiir's government on its soil, but Kenya reacted by dismissing the complaint saying Nairobi was exercising policy of impartiality.

South Sudan embassy in Nairobi went public on Sunday, criticizing the Kenyan government in the media, saying the East African nation seemed to have sided with the rebel leader, Machar, in the internal conflict.

The South Sudanese foreign affairs ministry was overreacting to the widely covered press conference which Machar held two week ago on 8 July in Nairobi in which he called on president Kiir to step down as his constitutional term of office was coming to an end by mid-night of that day.

But senior officials of the South Sudan's foreign affairs ministry in Nairobi said this could be seen as Kenya taking Machar's side by allowing him to launch the call on president Kiir to step aside.

Disclaimer:

This media monitoring is sent to you only for your information. The inclusion of the attached news items is not an endorsement of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region in Africa or that of the United Nations Organization. Further use or distribution of this media monitoring must be guided accordingly.

“South Sudan authorities are wondering why Dr. Machar was allowed to criticize a sitting president in Kenya. This could be misconstrued to mean that Kenya was taking sides,” James P. Morgan, deputy ambassador to Kenya told the Kenyan Daily Nation on Sunday.

“The people on the ground are confused with Dr. Machar’s comments, especially considering that they were made in a foreign country,” he added.

However, Kenyan foreign affairs’ principal secretary, Karanja Kibicho, dismissed the complaint from the South Sudanese counterpart, saying his country was neutral and should engage with both factions in the conflict.

“Kenya is a neutral party and is keen to help end the conflict,” he told the Daily Nation.

In the first week of July, Kenyan president Uhuru Kenyatta held separate and joint talks with president Kiir and opposition leader, Machar, urging them to compromise and sign a peace agreement to end the war in the young country.

The two leaders while in Nairobi also submitted their position papers to the Kenyan president who serves as rapporteur in the IGAD-led peace process on the war-ravaged South Sudan.

SPLM-IO receives IGAD timetable to restart peace talks

NEWS STORY

Source: Radio Tamazuj

21 July 2015 - The East African regional organization IGAD has released a timetable for resumption of peace talks between South Sudan's government and rebels in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 6 August.

The rebels' head of external relations committee Dhieu Mathok confirmed that receiving the timetable and said he expected President Salva Kiir and SPLM/A-In Opposition rebel leader Riek Machar to visit Addis Ababa to receive a draft agreement for consultations.

Dhieu explained that the two men will join negotiations on 7 August in Addis Ababa where they will agree on any outstanding issues and then sign a final deal on 17 August.

Disclaimer:

This media monitoring is sent to you only for your information. The inclusion of the attached news items is not an endorsement of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region in Africa or that of the United Nations Organization. Further use or distribution of this media monitoring must be guided accordingly.

Meanwhile, The SPLM Secretary-General Pagan Amum said the draft of the final peace agreement is ready and is waiting for the warring parties to sign next month.

In a press statement in Juba, Amum said the outstanding issues during the negotiations are not an obstacle to the peace process anymore. “For sure, I’m very optimistic because it is IGAD which says that there will be a signing of a peace agreement on the 17th of August. It will be signing of agreement – it’s no longer negotiations,” he was quoted as saying.

But Dhieu denied this, saying there will be negotiations for ten days. The rebel official expressed optimism about reaching a final peace deal as soon as possible.

He noted that the continuation of the civil war means the continuation of the suffering and bloodshed of the people of South Sudan.

UN relief chief heads to South Sudan to bolster humanitarian response as country's challenges mount

NEWS STORY

Source: UN News Centre

21 July 2015 - The top United Nations humanitarian official is heading to South Sudan where a new cholera outbreak has claimed nearly 40 lives, more than 2.2 million people have been uprooted from their homes by conflict and nearly 8 million others are expected to face food shortages during the rainy season.

Over 1,210 cholera cases, including 39 deaths, have been reported in Juba and Bor counties, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). Most of the cases, and 38 of the deaths, were reported in Juba County.

“In response to the outbreak, health partners have set up cholera treatment centres and oral rehydration point in both counties, and are conducting cholera prevention activities, including hygiene promotion and improvement of access to safe drinking water,” the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported today.

OCHA added that some 99,000 people have received cholera vaccines in two counties, Juba and Bentiu.

The UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, Stephen O’Brien, who is also the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, is scheduled to visit Juba and Unity state in South Sudan beginning Wednesday on a four-day visit to see first-hand the

Disclaimer:

This media monitoring is sent to you only for your information. The inclusion of the attached news items is not an endorsement of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region in Africa or that of the United Nations Organization. Further use or distribution of this media monitoring must be guided accordingly.

humanitarian consequences of the conflict, and efforts by aid organizations to respond to escalating needs, his office announced today.

More than 2.2 million people have been uprooted from their homes by the conflict, including 1.6 million people who have been internally displaced and over 600,000 who have fled to Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda as refugees, according to OCHA.

“During his visit Mr. O’Brien is expected to meet communities affected by the violence, senior Government officials, humanitarian partners and the diplomatic community, to discuss the crisis and ways of strengthening the humanitarian operation,” his office said.

OCHA also reported an “alarming” food security situation with nearly 70 percent of the country’s population – 7.9 million out of 11.6 million people – expected to face food insecurity this rainy season.

“The lives of more than a quarter of a million children are at risk from rapidly worsening nutrition,” it said. “In half the states, one in three children suffers from acute malnutrition.”