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



MEDIA MONITORING

3 August 2015

GENERAL NEWS

Ban hails UN Member States' agreement on 'people's agenda' to end poverty, promote sustainability

NEWS STORY

Source: UN News Centre

2 August 2015 - United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has praised UN Member States for reaching agreement on the draft outcome document that will constitute the new sustainable development agenda, which will be formally adopted by world leaders in New York this September.

“Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” encompasses a universal, transformative and integrated agenda that heralds an historic turning point for our world. This agreement results from a truly open, inclusive and transparent process,” the UN chief said in a statement issued this evening.

Concluding a negotiating process that has spanned more than two years with the unprecedented participation of civil society, the 193 Member States agreed to an ambitious agenda that features 17 new sustainable development goals that aim, by 2030, to eradicate extreme poverty, promote prosperity and people's well-being, while protecting the environment.

“This is the People's Agenda, a plan of action for ending poverty in all its dimensions, irreversibly, everywhere, and leaving no one behind. It seeks to ensure peace and

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prosperity, and forge partnerships with people and planet at the core. The integrated, interlinked and indivisible 17 Sustainable Development Goals are the people's goals and demonstrate the scale, universality and ambition of this new Agenda”, stated Mr. Ban.

More than 150 world leaders are expected to attend the Sustainable Development Summit at the UN Headquarters in New York, from 25 to 27 September, to formally adopt the outcome document agreed this weekend. “I look forward to joining Heads of States and Government, civil society, faith and business leaders, and peoples around the world for the adoption of this new agenda in the historic Summit in New York, » added the UN chief.

The new sustainable development agenda builds on the success of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which helped more than 700 million people to escape poverty over the past 15 years and aimed at an array of issues that included hunger, disease, gender inequality, and access to water and sanitation by 2015.

The broader sustainability agenda go much further, addressing the root causes of poverty and the universal need for development that works for all people. “We are resolved to free the human race within this generation from the tyranny of poverty and want and to heal and secure our planet for the present and for future generations,” states the text.

“We are determined to take the bold and transformative steps which are urgently needed to shift the world onto a sustainable and resilient path. As we embark on this collective journey, we pledge that no one will be left behind,” the Member States continue.

Highlighting poverty eradication as the overarching goal of the new development agenda, the outcome document fully integrates the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and calls for action by all countries, poor, rich and middle-income.

The 17 sustainable goals and 169 targets aim at tackling key systemic barriers to sustainable development, such as inequality, unsustainable consumption and production patterns, inadequate infrastructure and lack of decent jobs. The environmental dimension of sustainable development is covered in the goals on oceans and marine resources and on ecosystems and biodiversity, bringing core issues into the goal and target framework.

Member States stressed that the desired transformations will require a departure from “business as usual” and that intensified international cooperation on many fronts will be

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required. The agenda calls for a revitalized, global partnership for sustainable development, including for multi-stakeholder partnerships, as well as for increased capacity building and better data and statistics to measure sustainable development.

Providing an effective follow-up and review architecture, the agenda will include a Technology Facilitation Mechanism to support the new goals, based on multi-stakeholder collaboration between Member States, civil society, business, the scientific community, and the UN system of agencies. Agreed at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which took place last July in Addis-Ababa, the Mechanism will have an inter-agency task team, a forum on science, technology and innovation, and an online platform for collaboration.

The successful outcome of the Addis Conference gave important positive momentum to the last stretch of negotiations on the sustainable development agenda. It is expected that the consensus reached on the outcome document will provide momentum for the negotiations on a new binding climate change treaty to culminate at the Climate Change Conference in Paris, from 30 November to 11 December 2015.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

UN concerned over human trafficking in DR Congo

NEWS STORY

Source: Xinhua

Kinshasa, 31 July 2015 - The United Nations Mission for Stabilization of Congo (MONUSCO) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) have expressed concern over rising cases of human trafficking in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo).

In a statement issued on Thursday during celebrations to mark the World Day against Trafficking in Persons that is always celebrated on July 30, the two organizations noted that DR Congo had become a destination or probably a transit point of people trafficked for forced labour or sexual slavery.

MONUSCO and IOM noted that armed groups and uncontrolled soldiers in eastern DR Congo were the key perpetrators of incidents linked to human trafficking witnessed across the country.

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"A significant number of men and boys working as unlicensed small scale miners have been exploited by businessmen in unacceptable slavery situations," the statement added.

MONUSCO and IOM reiterated the need for a collective fight against this phenomenon and urged all stakeholders to take appropriate measures aimed at identifying and punishing those who commit these acts.

RWANDA

Rwanda opposition back new plan to lift presidential term limits

NEWS STORY

Source: Xinhua

Kigali, 2 August 2015 - Rwanda's opposition politicians have declared support for amendment to the Constitution allowing President Paul Kagame to run for a third term in office which has been backed by the country's lawmakers.

Rwandan lawmakers who have been consulting citizens on the amendment of the Constitution, met opposition politicians under a consultative meeting in Kigali.

Nine out of 11 recognized political parties declared their support for constitutional amendment to lift the seven-year limit of the presidential term.

Yet the Democratic Green Party made a stand against the move, while the PS-Imberakuri Party remained indecisive.

Supporters have declared that Kagame deserves to lead the country after 2017 and the Constitution should not be a stumbling block.

"We need Article 101 to be amended because in a democratic society people have powers to choose leaders of their own choice," said Sheikh Musa Fazil Harelimana, Minister of Internal Security.

Francois Ngarambe, secretary general of the ruling Rwanda Patriotic Front, said political parties have responsibility to respect the voice of the approximately four million Rwandans who have petitioned parliament calling for scrapping of term limits.

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However, Dr. Frank Habineza, head of the Democratic Green Party, maintained that the Constitution should not be amended so as to facilitate peaceful transfer of power.

"We petitioned Parliament against the change of Article 101 of the Constitution because we believe Rwanda deserves sustainable peace and security only guaranteed by peaceful transfer of power," Habineza said.

A change of the constitution will now be put to a referendum.

Former FDLR fighter wants Kagame in power

NEWS STORY

Source: Rwanda Eye (<http://rwandaeye.com/featured/6863/former-fdlr-fighter-wants-kagame-in-power/>)

30 July 2015 - Corporal Innocent Maniragena is a former rebel fighter with the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) whose aim of joining the rebel movement was to oust the Rwandan president Paul Kagame.

This earlier idea according to Corporal Innocent Maniragena, a resident of Kabatwa sector, in Ngando village, Nyabihu district has changed.

Just like many former rebels fighters who have returned from Congo, the former anti-Kagame fighter now says that he wants Kagame to stay in power because of the peace he has enjoyed in Rwanda since his repatriation.

"I used to be a rebel with the FDLR and you know how times have changed since then in the former Gisenyi and Ruhengeri provinces where we came in fighting him (Kagame) and had camps in areas of Nyamutera among others" Maniragena said.

Maniragena also confessed that in the war of bullets with Rwandan government soldiers, his group was defeated, and at some time they had to retreat back to the bushes in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), though the aim was to remove Kagame from power.

"We came fighting this government and we used to call them cockroaches (inyenzi)" a common derogatory word we used several times" he said

Today, Maniragena agrees that the rebels failed to attain their goal because of the peace that exists in Rwanda and states that it is very reason why he is grateful for president Kagame who had mercy for people like him.

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With an emotional tone in his voice the former rebel fight explains that during his arrest, just like others, they thought that they would be killed or imprisoned, but instead they were put under an integration and a six months skills development program.

After his graduation, the former rebel says he is grateful that he is now employed as a reserve force, and runs his milling business which grinds about 10 tons of grains a day and with this he says that this has made him a successful person in the Kabatwa community since he owns a house.

For this reason, just like many demobilized and repatriated rebels, Corporal Maniragena says the constitution should be amended to give Kagame more years in power since he has given peace which is a pillar of Rwanda's development.

The Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda in its French Acronym) is the primary remnant Rwandan Hutu rebel group which committed genocide against the Tutsi and has been fighting the Rwandan government from the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, since 2000.

BURUNDI

African Union Urges Calm in Burundi after General Assassinated

NEWS STORY

Source: Bloomberg

By Felix Njini

3 August 2015 - The African Union appealed for calm in Burundi after unidentified attackers killed an adviser to President Pierre Nkurunziza.

General Adolphe Nshimirimana, the former head of intelligence in Burundi, died Sunday when a group of unidentified men attacked him in the capital, Bujumbura. The incident is likely to further destabilize the East African nation, African Union Commission Chairwoman Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma said in a statement posted on the organization's website.

Dlamini-Zuma called on Burundians to "exercise utmost restraint, not be provoked and to refrain from any acts of retaliation that would only further escalate and complicate the already bad situation."

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Gunmen in uniform kill ally of Burundi President Nkurunziza

NEWS STORY

Source: Reuters

By Drazen Jorgic

2 August 2015 - Gunmen wearing military uniforms shot dead a former Burundian security chief and close ally of President Pierre Nkurunziza on Sunday, the presidency said, heightening tensions after a disputed presidential poll.

Nkurunziza called for calm after the attack, which the United States and European Union condemned. But late on Sunday, bursts of sporadic gunfire could be heard in northern Bujumbura.

General Adolphe Nshimirimana, who was in charge of the president's personal security at the time of his death, was killed in a car alongside three of his bodyguards in the Kamenge district of the capital Bujumbura, witnesses said.

They said the four attackers in military fatigues sprayed the car with bullets and drove off shortly after 8 a.m. (0600 GMT). "Two had machine guns and two others rocket launchers. They came in military lorry and returned back in the same car," said a taxi driver named Paul.

Pictures on social media showed a black bullet-riddled SUV with its front tyres flattened and side windows shot out.

Nkurunziza said security forces need to be strengthened to prevent future killings and pleaded with Burundians "not to fall in trap of revenge".

"We ask every Burundian, in hills and the capital, to stay united," Nkurunziza told state radio, vowing the killers would be brought before to justice.

Burundi has been in chaos since late April when Nkurunziza announced he would seek a third term in office, a move that his opponents and Western powers said violated the constitution and a peace deal that ended an ethnically-charged civil war in 2005.

Months of protests and a coup attempt were quelled, but the capital and some areas in the countryside have been rocked by sporadic violence and killings.

Nshimirimana, who was also a former chief of staff in Burundian army, was seen as part of Nkurunziza's inner circle. Opponents say he was one of key men behind the crackdown on protesters and thwarting of the coup.

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"I have lost a brother, a companion in the struggle. The sad reality is that General Adolphe Nshimirimana is no longer with this world," Willy Nyamitwe, the presidency's communications chief, said in a message posted on Twitter.

Some of the army generals behind the attempted coup have vowed to lead a rebellion to oust Nkurunziza, who won the July 21 presidential poll after the opposition boycotted the elections.

African leaders fear the violence could split the country down ethnic lines and lead to another civil war, an alarming prospect for a region still scared by the 1994 genocide in neighboring Rwanda where 800,000 Tutsi and moderate Hutus were slaughtered. Burundi has a similar ethnic make-up.

Western diplomats have also warned a rift in the army could push Burundi back into conflict. The last 12-year civil war pitted the military, which at the time was led by the ethnic Tutsi minority, against rebel factions of the majority Hutus, the biggest of which was led by Nkurunziza.

The European Union urged restraint while U.S. called for calm and "dialogue between all sides".

"No place for violence on path forward," said Thomas Perriello, the U.S. Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, on his Twitter account.

Burundi's president urges national unity after winning contentious elections

NEWS STORY

Source: AP

Bujumbura, 31 July 2015 - Burundi's re-elected president is urging unity after winning contentious polls that the international community says were not credible.

In a televised speech Thursday night, Pierre Nkurunziza said he would be a president for all, including those who did not vote for him.

He said that during his presidency "everyone will enjoy the same rights and opportunities without favoritism."

Nkurunziza won 69 percent of the vote while his closest rival, Agathon Rwaswa, got 19 percent in the July 21 elections.

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The elections took place amid violence stemming from regular street protests against Nkurunziza's bid for a third term in office, which many saw as unconstitutional.

The U.N. had urged Burundi's government to delay the elections until the situation was sufficiently calm to hold credible, free and fair elections.

Burundi opposition leader takes top parliament job

NEWS STORY

Source: AFP

Bujumbura, 30 July 2015 - Burundi's main opposition leader Agathon Rwasa was on Thursday elected as deputy head of the national parliament, despite having condemned recent elections and supported months of civil unrest.

Rwasa, who has denounced the third consecutive term win by President Pierre Nkurunziza, had said earlier this week that he intended to "play the game" in order to try and help find a solution to the country's political crisis - but has already been branded a "traitor" by other opposition figures.

In a parliament session on Thursday, Rwasa was elected as the national assembly's first deputy president, winning 108 votes out of 112 thanks to support from Nkurunziza's ruling CNDD-FDD party.

Burundi's hardline Interior Minister Edouard Nduwimana, who had pulled out of key talks with the opposition just before the presidential elections, was elected as second vice president of the assembly.

Rwasa has said he would not oppose the formation of a unity government if its main aim is to prepare new elections.

Donor sanctions

"As long as the negotiations have not been completed, play the game," Rwasa said on Monday. "I think everything will be determined by the outcome of the dialogue being conducted between the parties."

Nkurunziza's candidacy was condemned as unconstitutional by the opposition and provoked months of protests and an attempted coup in mid-May.

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His victory - in which he took more than 69% of the vote in the July 21 poll to give him an immediate first-round victory - could trigger donor sanctions against the already impoverished nation.

There are also widespread fears the country, located in the heart of central Africa's troubled Great Lakes region, could be plunged back into civil war.

Months of anti-Nkurunziza protests rocked the capital after he announced his intention to run again in late April. The demonstrations were violently repressed, leaving at least 100 people dead and hundreds others wounded or in detention.

Many opponents have also fled, joining an exodus of more than 150 000 ordinary Burundians who fear their country may again be engulfed by violence. In mid-May, rebel generals attempted to overthrow Nkurunziza in a coup, which failed.

They have since launched a rebellion in the north of the country.

UGANDA

VP meets US special envoy

NEWS STORY

Source: New Vision (Uganda)

1 August 2015 - The Vice President Edward Kiwanuka Ssekandi has assured the United States administration of Uganda's commitment in promoting peace and tranquility for sustainable development of the great lakes region.

The Vice President who was meeting US Special Envoy to the Great lakes Region, Thomas Perriello and the US Ambassador Scott DeLisi at his office in Kampala also appreciated the support by Washington in addressing some the security concerns in the region.

The meeting took place on Friday, according to statement issued from the office of the vice-president.

He said that Uganda has been involved individually and alongside her regional sister states in contributing to the peace in the region saying the leadership in the country was open to suggestions that would provide lasting solutions to peace in the region.

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He said despite challenges in the Southern Sudan, Somalia, the Eastern DRC and lately Burundi, some progress has been made in disrupting insurgents like LRA, ADF, M23 and Al'shabab among others who had made the region sanctuary for their insurgency.

On Burundi, the Vice President called for the return to the Arusha accord which he said had pacified the country from the earlier episodes of insurgency and said that Uganda recommends a transition Government of national unity to avoid further escalation of violence in Burundi.

The US Special Envoy commended Uganda for offering leadership in addressing peace and security issues in the region and called for concerted efforts to ensure that Burundi issue is amicably, urgently addressed.

He also agreed that a unity Government was the best solution for Burundi saying to avoid further isolation of the opposition and senior members of Government some of whom have already fled the country like the second Vice President, the Speaker and the Chief of Staff among others, the Government needs to accommodate dissenting views.

Ambassador DeLisi said that the US was concerned at reports that both sides were training and arming militia youth and urged Uganda to mobilise regional leaders to ensure that the Burundi issue is expeditiously managed before it explodes into full regional crisis.

Briefing the meeting on the situation in Burundi, the Minister of Defence Dr. Crispus Kiyonga said that an earlier meeting between the two sides had to be postponed as the government side was not represented but said another summit will be convened soon.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

UN peacekeeper killed in clashes in Central African Republic

NEWS STORY

Source: Reuters

At least one soldier with the U.N. peackeping mission in Central African Republic was killed on Sunday during clashes with armed assailants in a northern neighbourhood of the capital Bangui, a spokesman for the mission said.

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2 August 2015 - Residents said heavy machinegun fire was heard around 3 a.m. (0200 GMT) and it continued for several hours in the mostly Muslim district of PK5, where some inhabitants had set up barricades and were burning tyres.

"The mission launched an operation to arrest a person wanted by the judicial services for various crimes. Our forces came under heavy fire. One MINUSCA peacekeeper was killed and several others were wounded," the spokesman said by telephone from Bangui.

Central African Republic descended into chaos in March 2013 when predominantly Muslim Seleka rebels seized power, triggering reprisals by "anti-balaka" Christian militia who drove tens of thousands of Muslims from the south in a de facto partition.

A transitional authority has been set up to organise elections on October 18 and restoring democratic rule.

Though attacks in the capital have eased in recent months, sporadic violence still occurs across the country.

UN warns of CAR humanitarian crisis

NEWS STORY

Source: Aljazeera

2 August 2015 - The Central African Republic is geared to become one of the largest humanitarian crises of our time if immediate action is not taken to increase aid to the country, according to the UN.

Aurelien Agbenonci, from the UN's Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) for CAR, told Al Jazeera on Sunday that if the shortfall for aid was not met, the UN "won't be able to continue humanitarian activities till the end of the year".

Only 31% of the UN humanitarian appeal for the CAR has been secured, the UN said.

"This is an extremely trying time for everyone but it would be a critical mistake for the international community to be lulled into thinking that stability has returned to the country," Agbenonci, humanitarian coordinator for OCHA in CAR, said.

The comments came as one UN soldier was killed, according to a spokesperson for the UN stabilisation mission Minusca, when fighting broke out in a northern neighbourhood

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of the capital Bangui. "The mission launched an operation to arrest a person wanted by the judicial services for various crimes. Our forces came under heavy fire. One Minusca peacekeeper was killed and several others were wounded," Reuters quoted the unnamed spokesperson as saying.

Million displaced

About a million people have been displaced since Seleka fighters took control of Bangui in March 2013.

Around 2.7 million people, more than half the population, are still in need of aid, while 1.5 million people were affected by food insecurity.

"Putting an end to impunity by bringing perpetrators of human right violations and grave violations against children to justice should be a priority," Agbenonci said.

Describing the challenges on the ground as "serious", Juliette Delay, a global communications officer with the UK-based International Rescue Committee (IRC), said it was still "difficult to characterise the situation in CAR as the biggest disaster of our time given the multiplicity of global crises and especially the situation in Syria".

"The situation in the Central African Republic is serious [...] roughly 50% of the population is in need of humanitarian assistance [and] the fact that the state is not able to deliver essential public services such as health care, education, and security.

Delay told Al Jazeera the lack of media attention on CAR is not a symptom of the situation on the ground having improved, other than in Bangui.

Both Amnesty International, the human-rights monitor, and the UN said that there has been a progressive return of internally displaced persons and refugees in the areas, but civilians remain at the mercy of armed groups operating in the hinterland with impunity.

"There might not be enough 'spectacle' to make it in the international news agenda, but the IRC continues to operate under difficult conditions in a country which is still rife with insecurity, especially in the countryside," Delay said.

The UN's comments from two days after Amnesty released a report documenting the deliberate erasure of Muslims from the country.

Amnesty said that more than 30 000 Muslims were living in seven protected enclaves around the country. Those living outside the enclaves faced a daily battle for survival. The UN said that targeted attacks have resulted in a massive exodus of the Muslim and Fulani communities from CAR, with the communities still largely under threat from anti-Balaka militia.

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The anti-Balaka have specifically targeted the country's Muslim minority, seen as sympathetic to the Seleka who took over the country briefly in a coup in 2013. "The humanitarian community is extremely concerned by the situation of the estimated 36 000 people from minority communities in CAR trapped in enclaves living under high risks of attacks," Agbenonci said.

Ocha says humanitarian needs continue to exceed resources available.

CAR has been led by a transitional government since January 2014. The country is scheduled to hold presidential and parliamentary elections on October 18.

SOUTH SUDAN

South Sudan willing for peace, reserved over IGAD document: FM

NEWS STORY

Source: Xinhua

2 August 2015 - South Sudan's foreign minister stressed Saturday his country's willingness to achieve comprehensive peace, but expressed reservation over a draft peace document proposed by mediators.

"Definitely South Sudan's government is willing to reach a comprehensive peace agreement. This is the desire of our people," Barnaba Benjamin told Xinhua over phone from Juba. "However, the other party (referring to the armed opposition) has crippled all efforts for political settlement by insisting on demands that could not be achieved on the ground," he noted.

He said his government has reservations regarding a draft peace deal earlier proposed by the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development in Africa (IGAD) and other international mediators for the the South Sudanese warring parties to consult on. "We agree on some items of the draft agreement, including the formation of a transitional government," said Benjamin, adding that "but we have reservations on some items that are impossible to achieve such as giving the opposition 53 percent of power-sharing in the Upper Nile, Unity and Jonglei States. This is unacceptable."

The IGAD's proposed peace document granted the current government a majority in the legislature, the position of president and 53 percent of ministerial portfolios. It further proposed for the rebels a new position of first vice president and 33 percent of

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ministerial portfolios, while the remaining 14 percent was allotted for the other opposition groups, excluding the Greater Upper Nile region (Jonglei, Upper Nile and Unity States) where 53 percent were suggested to go to the rebels and 33 for the current government.

Though the IGAD has availed the South Sudanese rivals until August 17 to ink a peace deal, yet Juba insists on its position rejecting any agreement that does not consider it as an elected government with full powers. “The IGAD cannot impose a peace agreement on the southerners. The IGAD’s task is only to facilitate the process of negotiations between the South Sudanese rivals. Our responsibility, as government and opposition, is to agree on a fair and comprehensive deal that fulfils the demands of our people,” said Benjamin.

Meanwhile, the top South Sudanese diplomat rejected threats on imposing sanctions on his country in case a peace deal is not reached as scheduled. “Sanctions have never been a solution in any place in the world. I have spoken with the U.S officials and told them sanctions is not the right path to achieve peace in South Sudan,” added Benjamin.

Recently the U.S special envoy to South Sudan Donald Booth said that the patience of his country and the mediators has run out as South Sudan’s warring parties have so far failed to reach an agreement to end the violence there. “Too many lives have been lost, too many millions of South Sudanese have been displaced and too many are at the verge of starvation and facing homelessness,” he noted.

He urged the two parties to work to reach a comprehensive peace agreement to end the suffering of the South Sudanese people, saying that “the talks can’t continue without end,” an indication that Washington could impose sanctions on South Sudan. Despite many rounds of talks under the patronage of the IGAD, the two South Sudanese rivals have failed to reach a peace deal to end the conflict.

South Sudan plunged into violence in December 2013, when fighting erupted between troops loyal to President Kiir and defectors led by his former deputy Machar. The conflict soon turned into an all-out war, with the violence taking on an ethnic dimension that pitted the president’s Dinka tribe against Machar’s Nuer ethnic group. The clashes have left thousands of South Sudanese dead and forced around 1.9 million people to flee their homes.

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South Sudan Downplays Global Pressure to Reach Peace with Rebels

NEWS STORY

Source: Sudan Vision

1 August 2015 - South Sudan's president Salva Kiir has downplayed possibility of a peace agreement soon with the armed opposition faction led by his former deputy, Riek Machar, criticizing the compromise proposal from IGAD-Plus as a designed document to perpetuate the war in the oil rich Upper Nile region.

President Kiir told an audience on Thursday, predominantly members of his cabinet and party senior officials, that the power sharing proposal will not stop the war, arguing that minority groups in the oil-rich Upper Nile region will allegedly not be sharing power with the armed opposition fighters if Machar's faction will control 53% of power sharing to manage the resources and affairs of the three states of Unity, Upper Nile and Jonglei in the region.

President Kiir's deputy minister of foreign affairs and international cooperation, Peter Bashir Gbandi, who has been assigned a committee tasked to study the new peace proposal by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), said on Friday that the regional body had not changed any text from the previous proposal which both government and the leadership of the armed opposition had already rejected in the past.

"The committee looked at the documents of the new proposal and it found out that much as they tried to work around the documents, they did not do much to call it a compromised proposal. They just worked around the documents and called [it] compromised. Nothing has changed from the texts," Gbandi told Sudan Tribune on Friday.

Gbandi, who is one of the leading members for the government negotiating team, said the proposal sought to perpetuate the war and undermines unity of the country and efforts to arrest the conflict.

"If you look at the texts and examine them carefully, words by words and page by page, you will realize that nothing has changed. It has been drafted in a way that will perpetuate the war and undermine peace and unity of our people. It will not work. Our people will not accept to divide the country," he said.

"Yes they want peace but it must be a peace which promotes harmony and love, not more division."

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The official further narrated that the government had asked the international community to work together with the regime in Juba to convince the armed opposition faction led by Machar to show leadership and exhibit commitment to resolving the conflict through peaceful dialogue.

ARMY REJECTS IGAD PROPOSAL

Also, the South Sudanese army (SPLA) chief of general staff, Paul Malong Awan, warned on Wednesday at a function observing the red army day that he would not accept a security arrangement that replaces ethnic Nuer colleagues in the army whom the government had been using to fight in Upper Nile region against the armed opposition fighters.

“We are not going to discard and victimize the sons of Upper Nile who have remained defending the constitution,” said Awan.

“We are not going to accept to replace Stephen Buay, who has resisted in division one, and then Nhial, Batong, PulJang, and two sector commanders: Gong Biliu and Chathath Lam. We will not replace them with those who have rebelled,” he said, as he was naming senior ethnic Nuer army commanders who had been fighting on behalf of president Kiir’s government in Unity and Upper Nile states.

The comments from the senior government officials, including the president appeared to be a direct response to the remarks of the US president Barack Obama during his recent visit to the headquarters of the African Union in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where he argued the two principal leaders to end the conflict with the signing of a peace agreement next month. Obama warned of consequences should the two leaders refuse to sign a peace agreement by 17 August.

President Kiir was not invited to the IGAD leaders’ meeting with the US president Obama.

The US special envoy for South Sudan and Sudan, Donald Booth, also told journalists on Thursday that his country and the region had run out of patience and that the proposal was a good chance for South Sudanese leaders to make peace.

“We fully support this compromise proposal that has been put on the table. As I said if it can be improved upon by the South Sudanese parties, we will also support that,” Ambassador Donald Booth told a press conference in Juba.

“But otherwise, we expect that there will be an agreement by the 17th of August,” he added.

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He said his country and the international community was running out of patience, stressing the urgent need for a peaceful resolution of the 20-month old conflict in the young nation.

SUDAN

S. Sudan Foreign Minister to Visit Khartoum Soon

NEWS STORY

Source: Sudan Vision

Khartoum, 3 August 2015 - South Sudan Foreign Minister, Dr. Barnabas Benjamin will arrive here in the coming days on a several-day visit, during which he will hold talks with a number of state officials to discuss a number of important issues between Khartoum and Juba.

Benjamin affirmed to the Sudanese Radio, Sunday, the continuation of the dialogue between the two countries to resolve the outstanding issues, pointing to the eternal relations between the two countries, adding that the discussion on the joint cooperation agreement will continue in outstanding issues, expressing his hope that peace will be achieved in all over Sudan.

On the upcoming meeting between the parties in the State of the South under the auspices of IGAD, Benjamin said the meeting will discuss what has been reached to resolve points of contention between them, particularly the opposition's participation in the transitional government and the return of displaced persons and refugees to their areas.

Benjamin revealed reservations of Juba government to a draft agreement proposed by IGAD, referring to the impossibility of achieving some items, including giving the opposition 53 per cent in the three states.

"IGAD cannot impose peace agreement on the southerners, IGAD mission is only to facilitate the negotiation process between the parties in the south," Benjamin said.

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Sudanese security arrests another ISIS supporter

NEWS STORY

Source: Sudan Tribune

2 August 2015 - The Sudanese authorities on Saturday have re-arrested the Salafist Jihadist preacher and supporter of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Masa'ad al-Sidairah along with several of his disciples.

According to al-Sidairah's Facebook page, the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) arrested him and two others including the head of Jama'at al-I'tisam bil-Kitab wal-Sunnah (the group of adherents to the Quran and Sunnah), Omer Abdel-Khalig and al-Shaikh Salah al-Din besides several of their followers.

Al-Sidairah is running a religious school in Shambat suburb in Khartoum North where he teaches Hadith (a collection of traditions containing sayings of the prophet Mohamed).

However the authorities see his institution as a recruiting centre for the youth who seek to join Jihadist movements including ISIS, the Somali militant group, al-Shabab and the Malian Ansar al-Din group.

Al-Sidairah had openly pledged allegiance to ISIS' leader and the self-proclaimed Caliph, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, but he denies involvement in sending young people to Iraq and Syria to join the militant group.

ISIS presence in Sudan has made the headlines last March after British media outlets confirmed that nine medical students from Sudanese origins entered Syria via Turkey to work in hospitals under the control of ISIS. Also, last June, 12 other college students secretly left the country for Turkey to join ISIS.

The students are enrolled at the University of Medical Sciences and Technology (UMST) owned by the minister of health at the state of Khartoum Mamoon Humaida.

On 26 July 2014 Jama'at al-I'tisam bil-Quran wal-Sunna issued a statement signed by its former leader, Sulieman Abu Naro, pledging allegiance to al-Baghdadi and expressing support for the declaration of the Islamic Caliphate.

"We see in this event a great opportunity to unite Muslims and to strengthen their ranks in the battle against their enemies," the statement read.

Also, the group, under its current leader, Abdel-Khalig, expressed its support to the terrorist attack against the offices of the French magazine Charlie Hebdo in Paris, last January in which 12 people were killed and 11 others injured.

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It also supported the killing of the Royal Jordanian Air Force pilot, Muaz Kassasbe, who was burned to death by ISIS last February after his plane crashed over Syria.

It is worth pointing that al-Sidairah was released last January after he spent three months in detention against the backdrop of the demonstrations which broke out in protest of a cartoon satirizing Islam's prophet Mohamed. He had also been detained at Cairo airport in 2009.

On 30 June, NISS re-arrested the general coordinator of the far-right One Nation Movement group and the openly supporter of ISIS, Mohamed Ali al-Gizouli.

He was released a few days earlier after spending 8 months in detention against the backdrop of accusations pertaining to his support for ISIS.

In May, Sudan's minister of Higher Education Sumaya Abu-Kushawa accused unnamed circles of actively recruiting students to join ISIS.

At the time, Sudanese second vice-president Hassabo Abdel-Rahman blamed internal and external parties as well as international intelligence agencies for the phenomenon of extremism in the Arab and African communities.

Also, last July sources told Sudan Tribune that an ISIS cell comprised of three Middle Eastern men and an Eritrean were arrested by the Sudanese authorities in the coastal city of Port Sudan on 10 June.

ISIS announced that one of its Sudanese fighters nicknamed Abu al-Fida al-Sudani was killed in their stronghold of al-Riqa.

TANZANIA

Tanzania Opposition Lawmaker Demands Credible Elections

NEWS STORY

Source: VOA

1 August 2015 - A prominent Tanzanian opposition lawmaker has called on the National Electoral Commission to implement new and improved measures to ensure the October general election is free, fair, transparent and credible. This comes as the commission compiles a voter list that would be used for the elections.

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“We want to ensure the electoral commission supervises and manages the forthcoming general election in a manner that will ensure that the elections are as free and fair as they could be,” said Parliamentarian Tundu Lissu.

He says the electoral body has yet to administer credible elections, which he says could make prospective Tanzanian voters have confidence in the country’s electoral process.

Lissu says opposition groups have not been comfortable with the manner by which the National Electoral Commission has organized elections in the country.

“We are not confident considering the history of the electoral commission. But, what we are confident about is that this time around we are better prepared and ready to face the ruling party in a manner that we have not been since the onset of multiparty democracy 20 years ago,” he said.

“So even though the electoral commission is not what we would like to see it being, this time around we are prepared to fight it out regardless of the problem relating to the independence of the electoral commission.”

Lissu who is from the opposition Chadema party also says the defection of former Prime Minister Edward Lowassa from the ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi [CCM] or Party of the Revolution, to the group is a significant shift in the dynamics of the country’s politics.

He expressed confidence that the defection weakens the ruling party, which he says could enable a united opposition front to break the dominance of the CCM. The ruling CCM has been in power since the country gained independence in 1961.

Lissu says the former prime minister also defected with many supporters to join the ranks of the opposition Chadema party.

“He literally guts CCM of its considerable support. He is the most powerful figure in the CCM until a few days ago when he crossed over... We are stronger than we have ever been. There are still some considerable areas of the country where we are not as competitive as we would like to be. Former premier Lowassa will supplement our effort in those areas where we are not as powerful as we should be,” said Lissu.

But, some supporters of Chadema expressed their displeasure with the defection saying that Mr. Lowassa is tainted with corruption. Mr. Lowassa resigned as the country’s prime minister after being accused of corruption.

Lissu says he shares the concerns of the opposition supporters but added that Mr. Lowassa brings significant fire power to the arsenal in the party’s quest to wrestle power from the CCM. He also says Mr. Lowassa has yet to be convicted of any crimes. He

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adds that the former prime minister is innocent until proven guilty, a measure, he says is enshrined in the constitution.

“If we want to win this year’s general election, we have to make an honest assessment of our own power and our resources and our support across the country. The honest assessment that we made tells us that on our own and with CCM united, we can’t beat them,” said Lissu.

“With Lowassa out of CCM, our pollsters tell us that we can take CCM on and win. So, while it is very good to keep our innocence as it were to keep our clean record, if we want to do away with the CCM that bred and protects those [corrupt] elements in our society, this is the time.”

Tanzania’s ex-PM is running for president with the party that once called him corrupt

OPINION

Source: Quartz Africa (<http://qz.com/467729/tanzanias-ex-pm-is-running-for-president-with-the-party-that-once-called-him-corrupt/>)

By: Omar Mohammed

30 July 2015 - Imagine this scenario. After losing the Democratic Party nomination to Barack Obama in 2008, Hillary Clinton refuses to concede defeat. She then calls a press conference and announces that she will defect to the Republicans and run for the presidency as their candidate instead. In response, the entire GOP establishment rallies behind her: John McCain, the Koch brothers, Mitt Romney, the Bush family, Newt Gingrich, you name it. All of them stand beside her and declare Clinton the future of their party.

The scenario seems unlikely, but in Tanzanian politics that is, essentially, what’s just happened.

Former Prime Minister Edward Lowassa, after losing Chama Cha Mapinduzi’s (CCM) nomination, became the most senior ruling party official to move to the country’s opposition. He will now pursue the presidency as the party’s standard bearer in the upcoming general election in October.

Lowassa was, up until a few weeks ago, the leading candidate to be CCM’s presidential nominee. An unstoppable juggernaut, one commentator declared of his candidacy. But

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things did not go to plan. His forced resignation in 2008 after being implicated in a corruption scandal, an allegation he denies, made senior party figures pause.

So at the nominating contest earlier this month, CCM went a different direction and selected John Magufuli, the works minister, as the party's nominee. Lowassa did not take this well and reportedly complained bitterly to party leaders about the result. Nevertheless, the result stood.

And now, he has taken his talents elsewhere, doing something that he once said he would never countenance: To leave CCM.

But, as the saying goes, two months is a long time in politics. Lowassa has now joined forces with a party that once included him in the so-called "list of shame" that named him as one of the most corrupt figures in Tanzanian society.

But now, those same people are changing their tunes. "We can't go on with an old story that Lowassa is corrupt and yet we have no evidences that prove so," Chadema national chairman Freeman Mbowe told the press.

Meanwhile, another senior party official, while acknowledging how polarizing Lowassa is due to his alleged corrupt past, admitted that their desire to win supersedes its anti-corruption principles. "In the present situation, we need to decide who is a bigger enemy to our country and its welfare, is it Lowassa, a corruption suspect or CCM and its system which facilitates corruption," he said.

And for a party that claims to want to restore the governance values of revered first president Julius Nyerere, it seems odd that they will nominate a man whom the late president fought tooth and nail to keep from the presidency.

Winning is everything

It's that age old adage: power trumps all and political principles be damned. "It is also true the party is weak in some areas and so by welcoming Lowassa we effectively bring these areas into our political arena," the Chadema official said.

But CCM has ruled Tanzania since independence and the ruling party is once again likely to retain power. While the opposition has shown flashes of challenging this dominance, CCM has always been able to find a way to win.

The opposition is hoping that the former PM's enormous personal wealth, which he is prepared to spend to realize his dream of becoming president, will make a difference this time. Additionally, five years ago, the opposition as a collective, won almost 40% of the vote. They are hoping that Lowassa's popularity—a poll conducted in November last

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year had him leading the presidential field—can get them over the top. More importantly, they believe the war chest he brings will make the party even more competitive in parliamentary races than they were in 2010, when they won 24 seats.

The question is, with Lowassa at the helm, can Chadema argue that they are a party of change when their nominee has been in CCM politics for almost four decades? Well, on 25th of October, the voters will get a chance to have their say.