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



## **MEDIA MONITORING**

**3 September 2015**

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**DRC**

### **DR Congo's Bosco Ntaganda pleads not guilty at ICC trial**

NEWS STORY

Source: BBC

**Former Congolese rebel leader Bosco Ntaganda has pleaded not guilty to all charges at the start of his war crimes trial at the International Criminal Court (ICC) at The Hague.**

**2 September 2015** - The 18 charges include murder, rape and the recruitment of child soldiers.

Evidence has been gathered from more than 2,000 alleged victims, including former child soldiers.

Nicknamed "The Terminator", Gen Ntaganda's trial is the biggest and most complex case in the ICC's history.

He fought for different rebel groups as well as the Democratic Republic of Congo's army.

He made his not guilty plea in a barely audible voice, standing in the dock with his signature pencil moustache, reports the BBC's Anna Holligan from court.

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The start of the trial was a historic moment for international justice and for the Democratic Republic of Congo, our correspondent adds.

The 41-year-old is accused of killing at least 800 civilians during separate attacks on a number of villages between 2002 and 2003.

He is also accused of raping girl soldiers and keeping them as sex slaves.

"Humanity demands justice for these crimes," ICC chief prosecutor Fatou Bensouda told the court.

The prosecutor used her opening statement to describe the experience of one witness in chilling detail. It was the aftermath of an attack on a village in the Ituri region of eastern DR Congo.

Ms Bensouda said the witness searched through a pile of bodies, and found his wife, toddler son and daughter, whose head was punctured and her throat slit. Then, he discovered his remaining two children who had been killed in the same way. He gathered the bodies of his family and buried them in a field.

According to the prosecutor, the rape and sexual enslavement of girls was so prevalent in Gen Ntaganda's Union of Congolese Patriots (UCP) rebel army, that girls were referred to as "a large communal cooking pot" - commanders, she alleged, could pass the girls around and use them for sex whenever they pleased.

Human rights groups here in The Hague have celebrated Gen Ntaganda's appearance, saying it is proof that even the most powerful leaders may one day be brought to justice.

In 2013, Gen Ntaganda handed himself in at the US embassy in the Rwandan capital, Kigali.

He had evaded capture for seven years after the ICC first issued warrants for his arrest.

Bosco Ntaganda was part of the UCP rebel group, led by Thomas Lubanga, who in 2014 became the first person to be convicted by the ICC.

Gen Ntaganda was one of the leaders of the M23 rebel movement, which had fought government troops until signing a peace deal in 2013.

Eastern DR Congo has suffered two decades of violence linked to ethnic rivalries and competition for control of the area's rich mineral resources.

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**Who is Bosco Ntaganda?**

- Born in 1973 in Rwanda.
- Fled to DR Congo as a teenager after attacks on fellow ethnic Tutsis.
- At 17, he begins his fighting days - alternating between being a rebel and a soldier, in both Rwanda and DR Congo.
- In 2006, indicted by the ICC for allegedly recruiting child soldiers in Ituri.
- In 2009, he is integrated into the Congolese national army and made a general.
- In 2012, he defects from the army, sparking a new rebellion which forces 800,000 from their homes.
- In March 2013, hands himself in to US embassy in Kigali.

**Congo-Kinshasa: Statement by Prosecutor on Opening of the Trial against Bosco Ntaganda****PRESS RELEASE**

Source: [http://www.icc-cpi.int/EN\\_Menu/icc/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.icc-cpi.int/EN_Menu/icc/Pages/default.aspx)

**Statement of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Fatou Bensouda, at the Press Conference on the Opening of the Trial against Bosco Ntaganda:**

**2 September 2015** - Good morning and thank you all for coming.

Your presence here today is a testament to the importance you attach to international criminal justice and to bringing accurate information to the world about the Court's proceedings. I thank you once again for being here, and the critical role you play in this regard.

Tomorrow, as you know, the trial starts against the accused, Bosco Ntaganda, a notorious and powerful leader of the UPC (Union des Patriotes congolais) and of its armed branch, the FPLC, a militia from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Indeed, Bosco Ntaganda is not only known by those who closely follow the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, but also outside the region due to his reputation as a notorious person whose behaviour has raised alarm far beyond the Great lakes region.

Bosco Ntaganda is accused of a total of eighteen charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Based on the evidence, during the bloody year-long conflict in Ituri which raged between 2002 and 2003, Bosco Ntaganda along with others, allegedly planned and carried out a ruthless campaign of criminal violence. We believe he

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ordered his troops to attack, pillage, rape, persecute and kill civilians belonging to Lendu, Ngiti and other ethnic groups. And we believe he recruited hundreds of children into the UPC and used them to kill and to die in the fighting; and girl soldiers to be routinely raped.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

An important goal of dispensing justice is uncovering the truth. I know that to many, the process of justice can seem slow. But our investigations, all our activities must be impartial and independent, and thoroughly and conscientiously done; everything we do must be strictly in accordance with the law.

Bosco Ntaganda, as an accused, has rights under the law, including due process guarantees, which must be respected. His guilt or innocence will be decided by the Judges of the Court at the end of the trial process.

As with any trial dealing with such serious matters, his trial will no doubt take time, but the truth will be uncovered and the thousands of victims affected by these crimes will finally see justice done.

Before we turn to questions from the floor, I would like to directly address the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the wider Great Lakes Region of Africa, and more specifically the people of Ituri. I want to answer some of you who have asked questions about our focus on Ituri, when there are also victims of terrible crimes committed in other parts of the country, and beyond.

When my Office started investigating in Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2004, we prioritised, based on our analysis of information collected, the area where the gravest crimes had been or were still being committed, which at the time were against local populations in the district (now the Province) of Ituri. This Court has already tried three other leaders, from several sides of the bloody conflict of 2002-3, namely Thomas Lubanga Dyilo, Germain Katanga, and Mathieu Ngudjolo Chui. You might not remember now, but these people made the headlines at the time, and their trials were widely reported around the world.

I want to make it clear though that the trial which is about to start is not a trial of one or the other community. It is not a trial about ethnicity or an ethnic group. It is about an individual, Bosco Ntaganda and how he took advantage of the ethnic tensions in Ituri for his own purposes, to gain power and wealth, and in that process committed atrocity crimes. It is my job as Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court to make sure that those most responsible for such crimes are held accountable and prosecuted, no matter how powerful, and no matter which side of a conflict they may be on.

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Our investigations now extend far beyond Ituri. Tomorrow, we try Bosco Ntaganda, but Sylvestre Mudacumura must also be arrested and brought to justice, for crimes we allege he committed in the Kivus.

Sooner or later his victims too, will have justice.

I want to be clear on this. We continue to investigate in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We will not abandon the victims of atrocity crimes, not in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and not in any of the 123 countries around the world which are members of the ICC, or anywhere else we may have jurisdiction under the Rome Statute. Thank you and I welcome your questions.

## **Kidnapped imams escape as FDLR abductors clash with Congolese army**

### NEWS STORY

Source: International Business Times

By Ludovica Iaccino

**2 September 2015** - Between six and eight Tanzanian imams previously kidnapped by Rwandan militias in the Democratic Republic of Congo have managed to escape, Congolese officials have said. The religious leaders were abducted between the North Kivu's villages of Katwiguru and Rutshuru by suspected members of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda in July of this year. There are conflicting reports regarding the number of the imams kidnapped, which varies from six to eight.

The abductors had previously contacted the Islamic community of Goma, eastern Congo, and asked for \$40,000 (£256090) ransom in order for the hostages to be released. However, the imams managed to escape shortly after fighting broke out between FDLR and the ethnic Congolese army, provincial governor Julien Paluku told AFP. Paluku added that he is confident the kidnappers were FDLR members because "as soon as the fighting broke out, they fled". It is not yet clear where the imams are. IBTimes UK contacted Paluku and is waiting for a response.

Kidnappings for ransom are common in the North Kivu. In April 2014, members of the FDLR kidnapped three UN private agents who worked for UN anti-mine service Unmas.

### **FDLR**

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Members of the FDLR militant group, mainly composed by Hutu, include some Interahamwe, which translates from Kinyarwanda as "those who stand together".

The Interahamwe is a Hutu paramilitary organisation which was behind the Rwanda genocide, in which more than 800,000 people – mainly Tutsi and moderate Hutu – were killed by Hutu extremists in 1994. During the massacres, the Interahamwe received large support by the Congolese government of Joseph Kabila.

Following the end of the genocide, Hutu extremists fled to Congo where they formed the FDLR in 2000. The group was used by Kabila to fight the Rwandan Patriotic Army and other foreign troops in the country during the Second Congo War, erupted in 1998. Following the end of what has been dubbed the deadliest conflict in Africa in 2003, FDLR continued to carry out attacks against Tutsi in Congo and along the border with Rwanda. The group is allegedly responsible for several terror attacks that killed dozens of people in eastern Congo.

## **Ntaganda: DR Congo's ruthless wartime 'Terminator'**

### NEWS STORY

Source: AFP

By Habibou Bangre

**Kinshasa, 2 September 2015** - War crimes suspect Bosco Ntaganda is the feared former commander of a ruthless rebel group that pillaged and raped in DR Congo's mineral-rich east, earning him the nickname "The Terminator."

Tall, smug, and said to be trigger-happy too, the 41-year-old Ntaganda fought for different rebel groups as well as for the Democratic Republic of Congo's army from his late teens.

He faces 18 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity for the deaths of hundreds of villagers, rape, recruiting child soldiers, and keeping girls under 15 for himself as sex slaves.

The fifth former Congolese warlord in the dock before the International Criminal Court, he is the first to have given himself up as his M23 rebel army foundered and signed a peace deal with government troops in 2013.

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His lawyer Stephane Bourgon describes him as a family man separated from his children "for over two years" who hasn't seen his wife in nine months which is "very hard on him."

Behind ICC bars he "keeps himself busy", says Bourgon, "regularly taking part in sports activities, reading a lot and going to English classes".

"He's also learning the piano," he added.

**- 'Kills people easily' -**

Born in 1973 in Rwanda but brought up in DR Congo, Ntaganda often criss-crossed the border, again leaving Rwanda in the 1980s for the eastern Congo as an adolescent following attacks on his fellow Tutsis.

In 1990, in his late teens, he joined the Rwandan Patriotic Front, which was based in Uganda at the time and which put an end to the 1994 Rwanda genocide, under current President Paul Kagame's leadership.

Since then Ntaganda has alternated between fighting in the national army and rebellions, including in the second five-year DR Congo war from 1998 to 2003 that drew in the entire region.

In an anecdote showing Ntaganda's willingness to get his hands dirty, one woman from Birambizo in North Kivu told HRW that Ntaganda himself visited her village to recruit.

"He asked us to give our children, our students, to him to fight. He came to our village himself," the woman said.

In the words of a child soldier who testified against Ntaganda in The Hague, he is known as someone who "kills people easily".

**- 'Flaunting his impunity' -**

The war crimes and crimes against humanity charges he faces are over violence committed in 2002 and 2003 in the Ituri region.

The ICC issued a warrant in 2006 but Ntaganda managed to evade arrest after becoming a powerful military commander for the National Congress for the Defence of the People (CNDP), an ethnic Tutsi rebel group in DR Congo led by Laurent Nkunda.

Their insurgency was ended by a peace deal that integrated the ex-rebels into the army. Ntaganda was made a general and began building a parallel command in the military.

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He activated that network to help form the M23 in 2012 which turned away from President Joseph Kabila.

Kabila signalled he was ready to comply with the ICC warrant and have him arrested and Ntaganda eventually fled to Rwanda in 2013 when splits emerged with the M23.

Until then Ntaganda had "boldly walked around the restaurants and tennis courts of Goma flaunting his impunity like a medal of honour while engaging in ruthless human rights abuses," said HRW senior Africa researcher Anneke Van Woudenberg.

According to UN investigators, he managed to amass considerable wealth by running a large empire in North Kivu, manning rogue checkpoints and taxing the area's many mines.

One report said he once earned \$15,000 a week from just one border crossing.

## BURUNDI

### Four killed in fresh Burundi unrest: police, witnesses

#### NEWS STORY

Source: AFP

**2 September 2015** - At least four people have died in renewed clashes in Burundi, where tensions remain high following President Pierre Nkurunziza's controversial re-election, officials and witnesses said Wednesday.

Police and witnesses said clashes erupted overnight in several parts of the central African nation's capital Bujumbura, with the night marked by sporadic gunfire and explosions. Police blamed armed "insurgents" for the violence.

"Two insurgents were killed this morning when they fired on police in Jabe (district) and their weapons were seized," deputy police chief Godefroid Bizimana told AFP, adding that search operations were ongoing.

Two more bodies were found on Wednesday between the districts of Musaga and Kanyosha, witnesses and official sources said.



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"Since this morning, the district of Musaga is ringed by police and the army. The security forces are carrying out a systematic search of the area to look for weapons," Bizimana said.

Witnesses said the fresh unrest, which comes after several days of relative calm, was sparked by the alleged killing of two opposition activists by police on Sunday.

The president won a highly-controversial third term in July in polls the United Nations said were not free or fair, and which sparked an attempted coup and months of civil unrest led by opposition groups who condemned his re-election bid as unconstitutional.

There has also been a string of killings since his re-election, including the assassination of his top security chief in a rocket attack last month.

Nkurunziza won over 69 percent of the vote in July's presidential election, giving him a landslide first round victory. The poll, however, was boycotted by the opposition.

Burundi's constitution only allows a president to be elected twice -- for a total of 10 years in power -- but Nkurunziza argued ahead of the poll that he had only been directly elected by the people once.

In power since 2005, when he was selected by parliament, he then was re-elected in 2010.

## Advancing the Prospect for Peace in Burundi

### PRESS STATEMENT

Source: US Department of State

John Kirby

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC

**2 September 2015** - Fifteen years ago, the spirit of the Arusha Agreement transformed the landscape of Burundi by enshrining the conviction that the government must represent and serve all Burundians. Today Burundi faces a renewed challenge: to end violence and achieve lasting stability by coming together in a dialogue that builds on the spirit of Arusha. This is not the work of one group, but of every person and party. We call on President Pierre Nkurunziza and his government, on opposition leaders, and on

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all the people of Burundi to join now in an open, comprehensive, and representative national dialogue to achieve a political solution by consensus that is consistent with Arusha. This is not a challenge for Burundi alone. The United States reiterates its support for regional leadership, including Uganda and the East African Community, to convene and mediate a political dialogue and urges them to do so soonest. We believe continued high-level engagement by the African Union and the United Nations, and positive action by all states in the region, are critical to bring Burundi back from the path of violence. We remain committed to holding accountable human rights violators and abusers and all those who seek to undermine stability in Burundi.

Last week, President Nkurunziza, in his post-inauguration speech to the nation, addressed the need for unity and an end to violence. He noted the importance of Arusha and the Constitution. But he also injected a call for “security committees” to work together with Burundi’s security agencies. That statement was very worrisome, particularly as it includes the “Imbonerakure” armed youth militia. An armed Imbonerakure cannot be a part of any credible government-supported process and would undermine efforts to re-establish stability in the country. Over the past year, Imbonerakure violence and intimidation have profoundly increased tensions and aggravated the crisis that has driven almost 200,000 Burundians to take refuge abroad. To prevent further violence, Imbonerakure and all militias must be disarmed immediately, with the coordination and oversight of the African Union. We call on all Burundians to oppose any further acts of unlawful violence and to join together now, in the spirit of the Arusha Agreement, to reach consensus and a peaceful path forward for Burundi.

## **Burundi: four suspects in assassination of former spy chief being questioned**

### NEWS STORY

Source: APA

**2 September 2015** - Burundi’s Public Prosecutor, Valentin Bagorikunda has announced that four people suspected of involvement in the assassination of Burundi’s former internal security chief, General Adolphe Nshimirimana were heard on Tuesday evening by officers of the Public Prosecutor of Bujumbura.

They are listed as Sergeant Cadeau Bigirumugisha and auxiliary police officers Chief Mathias Miburo, Renovat Nimubona and Philibert Nimubona.

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The Chief Prosecutor also indicated that investigations into the assassination of Colonel Jean Bikomagu were also continuing. Bikomagu, a former Chief of Staff throughout the civil war (1993-2006), was murdered on 15 August in Bujumbura.

They reiterated the call for the public to give information related to the assassination..

## UGANDA

### Uganda: Government Asked to Name DRC Looters

#### NEWS STORY

Source: The Monitor (Uganda)

By Yasiin Mugerwa

**2 September 2015** - Government was yesterday [1 September] asked to name the perpetrators of atrocities and the plunder of natural resources in the DR Congo, which has now led to a Shs80 trillion war reparations demand from the neighbouring country.

MPs also voiced fears that Uganda could be "mortgaged" for failure to pay reparations for crimes committed in the DR Congo by Ugandan troops and other officials.

Rubaga South MP Ken Lukyamuzi and other lawmakers, quoting an August 27 Daily Monitor story, demanded to know who was behind the plunder of DRC.

"We would like to know the people who committed these atrocities in DRC and how we are going to pay DRC before our country is mortgaged," Mr Lukyamuzi said.

He added: "Our country is about to be mortgaged and none of us can afford to pay Shs82.8 trillion because we are one of the poorest nations."

Deputy Speaker Jacob Oulanyah then asked acting Leader of Government Business Ruth Nankabirwa to explain DRC's \$23.5 billion claim.

"Uganda as a sovereign country has a system of facing challenges like the one Hon Lukyamuzi put on table. This country will not be mortgaged. We have alternative dispute resolution mechanisms to deal with these matters," Ms Nankabirwa told the House.

#### What they want

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Daily Monitor reported last week that talks between Uganda and DRC about the disputed reparations for plunder and atrocities committed by top Ugandan government and military officials collapsed after the two sides failed to overcome hurdles to a final agreement. Solicitor General Francis Atoke told the Public Accounts Committee last week that talks hit a snag after the DRC government demanded \$23.5b (about Shs82.8 trillion) for the plunder of its resources and compensation for atrocities committed yet Uganda had offered \$25m (about Shs88.12b) in reparations.

## ANGOLA

### Defense Ministry Discusses Peace in Great Lakes Region

#### NEWS STORY

Source: Angola Press

**Luanda, 1 September 2015** - Issues related to the current situation of peace and security in the Great Lakes region were discussed at a meeting, held Monday, in Luanda, between the Minister of National Defense, João Gonçalves Lourenço, and the special envoy for this region of the Central Africa, Thomas Perriello.

Speaking to the press at the end of the meeting held on the premises of the National Defense Ministry, Thomas Perriello said that the talks focused on crisis in the Republic of Burundi, before and after the legislative and presidential elections held recently.

The special envoy said he came to Angola to discuss with the Angolan Defense minister issues related to peace, defense and security of the region since Angola holds the presidency of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR).

Thomas Perriello praised the efforts of the Angolan Government in helping the countries in conflict (Burundi, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan) to seek consensus in the search of peace.

ICGLR was created after the political conflicts that marked the Great Lakes region in 1994, resulting in the recognition of its dimension and the need for a concerted effort aimed at promoting peace and development in the region.

ICGLR comprises Angola, Burundi, the Central African Republic (CAR), Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Sudan, South Sudan, Tanzania and Zambia.

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## CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

### UN rights chief arrives in Central African Republic

#### NEWS STORY

Source: <http://www.worldbulletin.net/africa/163846/un-rights-chief-arrives-in-central-african-republic>

**2 September 2015** - Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein, the UN's high commissioner for human rights, arrived in Bangui, the capital of the Central African Republic (CAR), for a four-day visit Tuesday.

During his visit, al-Hussein will meet CAR officials and religious leaders to discuss human rights violations said to have occurred in the country, which in recent years has been plagued by recurring sectarian conflict.

He is also expected to address recent allegations of human rights and sexual abuse committed by UN peacekeeping forces deployed in CAR.

Amnesty International recently accused members of MINUSCA, the UN's peacekeeping force in CAR, of having raped a 12-year-old girl and killing two civilians during an operation in capital Bangui early last month.

In July of last year, a Paris prosecutor launched a formal investigation into an earlier raft of allegations that at least 14 French soldiers deployed in CAR had sexually abused Central African children.

MINUSCA currently has over 12,000 troops from 40 countries deployed in the poverty-stricken country. Last month, it dismissed 20 peacekeepers accused of using excessive force against civilians.

### UN Rights Chief Alleges French Soldier Sexually Abused Girl

#### NEWS STORY

Source: Associated Press

**3 September 2015** - The U.N.'s human rights chief says United Nations staff have turned up a case of alleged sexual abuse of a girl by a French soldier in Central African Republic.

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The announcement by U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein follows other allegations of child sexual abuse by French soldiers in the African country that are currently under investigation in France.

Zeid announced Thursday during a trip to Central African Republic that the girl was in her teens at the time of the abuse about a year ago, and gave birth to a child in April. She and the soldier were not identified in a statement released by Zeid's office.

France deployed troops to Central African Republic in late 2013 to help stem sectarian violence.

## **The CAR's rushed elections are a dangerous gamble**

OPINION

Source: <http://africanarguments.org/2015/09/02/the-cars-rushed-elections-are-a-dangerous-gamble/>

**The Central African Republic cannot afford to bet on its future for the sake of the international community's need to show progress.**

**2 September 2015** - The Central African Republic (CAR) is at a critical juncture. The country is preparing for elections this October. But it is also facing a severe humanitarian crisis and is struggling to end a brutal civil war that has claimed more than 6,000 lives and displaced at least 1 million people. That's nearly one quarter of the population.

However, few in the country believe that the timing for the elections to replace its transitional government, which has been led by President Catherine Samba-Panza since January 2014, is right. Many warn that the premature timetable could even drive CAR back into widespread violence.

Armed groups across the country face little resistance and continue to terrorise civilians. The peace process, especially its crucial disarmament component, is moving at a snail's pace. Yet international diplomats led by France and the International Contact Group on the CAR demand elections now.

There is still time make a course correction and postpone the elections, but this window is closing quickly.

The external push towards elections has left local leaders, armed groups, and ordinary Central Africans behind. Grassroots consultations around the country culminated in

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May's Bangui Forum, which provided an important avenue for citizen participation and was widely recognised as a success. But there has been no meaningful follow up and it is likely the Bangui Forum's 400 pages of recommendations will be stranded on the shelf of good intentions – not because it was a bad strategy, but because it will never be put into practice.

**The story in Bambari**

The CAR, which is ranked 185 out of 187 on the Human Development Index, was thrown into turmoil in March 2013 when the Séléka rebel alliance ousted then President François Bozizé. Responding to widespread killings and lootings, local militias known as the anti-Balaka rose up against the Séléka.

The Séléka alliance was largely Muslim and the anti-Balaka mostly drawn from the CAR's majority Christian population. And although many Christian and Muslim communities lived as friends and neighbours before the war, the conflict became coded in religious terms and vicious inter-communal violence between Christian and Muslim groups broke out.

French soldiers and African Union forces finally deployed in December 2013 and gradually contained the deadly cycle of revenge killings though violence continues.

Now, a nearly year-old UN peacekeeping mission is still seeking to stabilise the country and lead the political peace process. But its deployment has been slow and the mission struggles to control areas outside the capital city Bangui and other major towns.

While Bangui has stabilised somewhat, the situation outside the capital remains volatile. Fragmented authority in CAR's third largest city Bambari, for example, reflects both the underlying tension in the country and its main structural political problem – the relationship between centralised power in Bangui and the threadbare state that stretches across 16 prefectures.

Government officials – most of them untrained political appointees – are now timidly trickling back into Bambari after fleeing Séléka attacks in December 2012. While they never had much power, these stranded bureaucrats hold absolutely no sway over rebel strongman Ali Darrassa and his Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique (UPC), the dominant faction of the Séléka in Bambari.

Darrassa, a Muslim and ethnic Peul of unknown national origin, maintains firm control over the taxing of a lucrative trade in coffee, cattle, gold, and diamonds that runs through a corridor up to Sudan or south to Bangui – money that should be going into government coffers.

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Darrassa's dominance does not sit well with Bambari's other armed groups, which are divided along ethnic and religious lines. For instance, ethnic Goula members of Joseph Zoundeko's Séléka faction, the Front populaire pour la renaissance de Centrafrique (FPRC), await the unfolding peace process, but are frustrated by its slow pace. They sustain themselves with sporadic cash influxes from Bangui elites and by occasionally selling protection to trade convoys.

Across Bambari's main bridge meanwhile, anti-Balaka militias occupy the city west of the river. They resent what they see as unfair treatment by the government and international forces. Despite the deployment of Congolese peacekeepers and French soldiers, they note that Darrassa's business interests are thriving and armed Séléka fighters roam Bambari freely.

Against the backdrop of these tensions, Bambari is relatively depopulated, and the presence of armed fighters deters many from coming home. While trade in the Muslim quarter is visibly rebounding, the concrete stalls of the city's large Christian market are all but empty. Outside Bambari in Ouaka Prefecture's rural villages, some farmers are returning to their destroyed villages and fallow fields to take advantage of the crucial growing season. But much of the population remains displaced in the bush where they have been since February. In some villages, the NGO Médecins Sans Frontières is finding that severe malnutrition of children under five is reaching 24% – far beyond emergency thresholds.

**Too much too soon**

In spite of these real human challenges, ordinary Central Africans tend to support the idea of elections in a country where political authority has typically been a form of kleptocratic autocracy. Since independence in 1960, CAR has only had four multiparty presidential elections, most of questionable character and interspersed by military coups and rebellions. Yet over time, the machinery of regime politics in Bangui has changed little, only occupied by different sets of elite operators that view access to the state as a way to attain privilege and accumulate personal wealth. The current Transitional Government has slotted nicely into this pattern, with President Samba-Panza stocking her government with close associates, recycled elites, and members with ties to the Séléka and anti-Balaka.

However, with the exception of France, which seeks a politically expedient exit from CAR, almost no one wants elections this October. To begin with, the sheer logistics of operating within this timeframe are categorically unrealistic.

The country's national election authority (ANE) is woefully understaffed and faces a budget shortfall of nearly half. Furthermore, while the ANE was able to register 320,000



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Bangui residents in July, the process sputtered towards the end as registration supervisors went on strike over the fact they had not been paid for two weeks. With less than two months before elections, the ANE must now train and deploy registrars to places like Bambari during the rainy season, which renders barely accessible roads even less so. Add to that the status of CAR's 461,000 refugees. While their right to vote was (correctly) upheld by CAR's constitutional court against the objections of the Transitional Council, no one has a real plan for them.

Besides a risky electoral timeline and obvious logistical challenges, the biggest elephant in the room is that it will be essentially impossible to implement any meaningful disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) programme in the two short months remaining.

The office of the Prime Minister and the UN mission are leading the DDR efforts, but UN officials are realising that the clock is ticking and are now seeking \$10 million from donors for a "pre-DDR programme" to target 8,000-10,000 combatants. The programme will unfold in three stages: 1) Registration of combatants in roughly 50 towns across CAR; 2) Provision of food for those registered; 3) Collection of arms in a container with a double locking system (with one key held by UN peacekeepers and the other by an armed group commander). The goal is to complete the pre-DDR before the elections and then kick-start a full DDR programme, with integration of eligible combatants into a reformed national army and community income projects for those that do not qualify.

**A dangerous gamble**

Bambari is a microcosm of CAR's myriad armed groups. Without DDR, these groups will maintain the capacity to disrupt the elections if they don't sway in their favour. In addition, fighters have high expectations. Many were lured into armed groups with the promise of DDR packages and hope this will be a life-transforming event for them. But resources are limited and the army cannot absorb all the country's different fighters.

To be sure, well-executed and timely elections in CAR could provide the opportunity for real democratic representation. A potential downside of postponing them therefore would be that it would draw out the current transition, which only serves to maintain the position of unelected elites who seem more interested in jockeying for lucrative sinecures than developing a national strategy. Moreover, it is possible that treating the imposed October deadline as a *fait accompli* could compel CAR's political players to act now instead of delaying indefinitely.

However, most people in towns like Bambari are incredulous at the planned date, and few believe the elections will happen on time. Above all, the fear of election violence eclipses any fear of instability associated with their postponement. It is crucial to make

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substantial progress on disarmament and to foster local reconciliation before people go to the polling stations. Just last week, more than 20 people were killed in Bambari in clashes between Séléka and anti-Balaka members.

Elections before DDR represent a major gamble. Fighters will hand over some of their arms, but not all. It is unlikely they are willing to surrender control with uncertainties surrounding their own security, particularly when they are unsure about who will be leading the country after October. Furthermore, elections open up the political space for renegotiations and provide an avenue for contestation of the country's already fragile power structures.

It is still possible to postpone. Disarmament before elections should be the guiding principle. The international community – particularly France and the UN – must back off, allow for a more realistic timetable, and instead focus on security, stability, and the restoration of state authority. Bringing the CAR back from decades of misrule and the country's most violent conflict to date requires patience and broad-based development efforts. No one can afford to gamble on the future of the CAR for the sake of the international community's need to show progress through speedy elections.

## KENYA

### Kenya government makes major security reshuffle

#### NEWS STORY

Source: AFP

**Nairobi, 2 September 2015** - Kenya's government on Wednesday announced major changes in its administrative and security personnel, with a clear focus on tackling the worsening insecurity linked to Somalia's Al-Qaeda-affiliated Shebab rebels.

Interior minister Joseph Nkaissery said the changes will "strengthen efforts to combat the threat of terrorism and the creeping threat of violent extremism, bring an end to the menace of cattle rustling and enhance the campaigns against illicit alcohol, drug trade and substance abuse."

The reshuffle is "crucial to responding effectively to the current security threats facing us," he added.

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The movements bring in a new Nairobi police chief and county commissioner, as well as the county commissioner and other key positions in the counties of Mandera, Wajir and Garissa, which border Somalia.

A new police chief was also appointed in the restive port city of Mombasa, where police are struggling to tackle both a Shebab recruitment drive in the Muslim-majority coastal region -- something which has dented the key tourism sector -- as well as a worsening drugs problem.

Nkaissero was appointed interior minister in December last year, after his predecessor Joseph Ole Lenku was sacked following a wave of attacks and massacres carried out by Somalia's Al-Qaeda-affiliated Shebab rebels.

Kenya has been battling an upsurge in cross-border attacks by the Shebab, which have seen the militants carry out several massacres with apparent ease -- including the mass murder of 148 people, most of them students, at Garissa University earlier this year.

The Shebab also killed at least 67 people in the September 2013 suicide assault on the Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi.

The upsurge in cross-border attacks and the emergence of Kenya-based Shebab cells is now seen Kenya's number-one security headache, and a strategic blow given that Kenya deployed troops into southern Somalia in 2011 in the hope they would serve as a buffer and protect the long, porous border.

## SOUTH SUDAN

### South Sudan Moves Forward on Ceasefire, Transitional Security

#### NEWS STORY

Source: Voice of America

By Philip Aleu

**Juba, 2 September 2015** - Four generals from the South Sudanese military will attend a workshop in Addis Ababa this week on implementing the days-old ceasefire and transitional security arrangements for South Sudan, an army spokesman said Wednesday.

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SPLA spokesman, Col. Philip Aguer, said President Salva Kiir nominated the officers at a meeting with senior military officials in Juba on Tuesday. Aguer did not name the four officers.

At the workshop in Addis Ababa, the military officers will meet with their counterparts from Riek Machar's SPLM-in-Opposition group and IGAD mediators who crafted the peace deal for South Sudan.

Among items they will discuss are security arrangements during a 30-month transitional period in South Sudan, including the drawdown of forces throughout the country, the creation of demilitarized zones and the cantonment of troops who fought in the young nation's recently ended conflict.

**Troops to be removed from Juba**

One provision of the security arrangements is that all military forces that are currently in Juba will be redeployed to at least 25 kilometers (15 miles) outside the center of the capital.

The proposed redeployment was at the top of a list of reservations that the government raised with the IGAD-brokered peace agreement, which Mr. Kiir signed last week -- nine days after Machar signed it on behalf of the armed opposition and Pagan Amum signed on behalf of a group of former political detainees.

The government argued that redeploying SPLA forces would undermine South Sudanese sovereignty and could cause instability in military ranks.

The United Nations Security Council last week gave the government of South Sudan until Sept. 1 to withdraw its reservations with the peace deal, and threatened to impose targeted sanctions on leaders from both sides in the conflict, and an arms embargo, if it did not.

The deadline came and went with no indication that the government intended to rescind its objections to the agreement. The U.N. Security Council has not scheduled any meetings in the coming days to discuss South Sudan.

**South Sudan president denies killing of over 600 political prisoners****NEWS STORY**

Source: Sudan Tribune

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**2 September 2015** - South Sudanese president Salva Kiir has dismissed as “utopian” reports quoting his former deputy in government and party turned rebel leader, Riek Machar, accusing his government and army loyal to him of allegedly slaughtering more than 600 political prisoners.

President Kiir, according to the statement from his office, said it was unbelievable and puzzling learning about serious allegations labeled against his administration at the time his leadership has demonstrated political will to implementing the peace deal which he signed with the rebel leader despite reservations.

“The office of the president has received the news of the press conference recently in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, by the rebel leader, Riek Machar, in which he accused the government for slaughtering more than 600 political detainees with disbelief and utter puzzlement,” the statement dated September 2, 2015, and bears the official seal and logo of the office of the head of state reads in part.

The truth of the matter, according to the statement, is that South Sudan had no political detainees.

The statement explained that the only time when South Sudan had political detainees was in the aftermath of the failed coup attempt when 10 former government officials believed to have perpetuated the attempted coup were detained but later on released on bail and handed over to Kenya more than a year ago.

“Since then, South Sudan did not have any single detainee. This is a serious negative campaign even at the time when the government has expressed political will in the implementing the compromised agreement. The allegations of the rebel leader against the government of slaughtering more than 600 political detainees are utopian and exceedingly farfetched and wanting,” it added.

Kiir, according to the presidential spokesperson, Ateny Wek Ateny, challenged the rebel leader to disclose the names of the alleged slaughtered political prisoners, the family of the victims and where the alleged political prisoners were kept before being slaughtered without being felt by the population of Juba.

“It is unfortunate for the rebel leader to accuse the government of slaughtering none existing political detainees,” the statement noted.

South Sudan’s rebel leader, Machar, was quoted in the media as saying that over 600 prisoners were slaughtered on 25 August in Juba, a day before president Kiir signed the peace deal. However, no details of evidence about this serious allegation has come out from the rebels’ leadership.

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**VICTIM OF MASS TORTURE SPEAKS OUT**

However, one of the survivors of an alleged mass murder on 25 August said he narrowly escaped death after all his colleagues were killed by security agents in the country's capital, Juba.

A 42-year old victim from Eastern Equatoria states, Buddi County, said he was arrested with Dominic Lodai and Clement Lokeya, both were killed, together with many others in Juba by government security through collaboration with Ugandan authorities.

The victim, nicknamed John Simon, said they were detained in a place called White House (torture center) for a number of days before execution began.

"We were arrested in Kabong District of Uganda by Ugandan People's Defence Forces when we were trying to seek asylum in Uganda. We were tortured and taken to Acholi Pii military barracks in Pader District," Simon, who is currently in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi, narrated to Sudan Tribune on Wednesday what he described as a horrible scene.

"We were then transferred to Gulu military headquarters where we were handed over to government of South Sudan's security who took us to Juba and detained us in White House military detention center. We found over 900 other inmates. We were subjected to severe torture in the White House including physical assault, arm and finger twisting, burning, cold water. We were forced to sit on chair fitted with needles, they pricked our testicles and they sexually abuse us at night," he said.

He said while in the Whitehouse (torture center) he used to see one of their inmates taken away at night and they never returned.

"At night twenty of us were taken to Rajaf near the River Nile and they twisted the neck of everybody and strangle us and threw us in the river. I was the last to be strangled but I did not die. When I was thrown in the river I struggled and came out alive," Carter said, with visible wounds below his ribs and eyes turned blood red.

**GOVERNMENT ACCUSED**

The rebels newly appointed governor of Imatong state, curved from Eastern Equatoria state also confirmed the arrest and murder of hundreds of innocent civilians from Eastern Equatoria.

"Indiscriminate arrests are going on in Magwi, Torit, Ikwotos, Buddi Lafon and Kapoeta counties. There are also massive arrests in the other two states of Equatoria. The government of South Sudan is guilty of mass extermination. I urge the human rights

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bodies to intervene and bring perpetrators to justice,” said Oyet Nathaniel, opposition governor in Eastern Equatoria.

“South Sudan should be suspended from Human Rights Council pending investigation of all cases of genocide and human right violations and torture,” he said.

Rebels said the over 600 killed were people, mostly young men, randomly arrested over a period of two years and accused by government of supporting the opposition group.

## **S. Sudanese president briefs military officers on peace accord**

### NEWS STORY

Source: Sudan Tribune

**1 September 2015** - South Sudan’s President Salva Kiir, his defense minister and members of the government negotiating team have briefed country’s top military officers about the peace agreement recently signed with the armed opposition faction.

The meeting, officials said, took place on Tuesday in the South Sudanese capital, Juba.

According to the army spokesperson, Col. Philip Aguer three officers from the country’s two main rival faction are due to take part in a will participate in a military workshop due in Addis Ababa this week.

“Today the commanders of the army in all the sector divisions and specialist units were ordered to come for briefing and the briefing was all about the peace agreement and the implementation particularly the issue of ceasefire,” Auger told reporters in Juba.

The defense minister, in a statement on the state-owned SSTV, urged the military to respect the cessation of hostilities agreement. This notion was echoed by information minister, Michael Makuei Lueth.

“These consultations with the military should have been the first thing to do before signing the peace agreement, but the IGAD [Intergovernment Authority on Development said no,” said Lueth.

On security arrangements, the peace agreement stipulates that the capital, Juba, be declared demilitarised zone, with a radius of 25kms. Foreign troops, particularly from the IGAD countries and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) will take charge of Juba for 30 months of the transition period until elections are conducted.

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The two rival armies, according to the peace agreement, will also maintain separate commands for a period of transition with president Kiir being the commander-in-chief of the South Sudan army (SPLA) and rebel leader Machar also as the commander-in-chief of his forces until a unification process is completed as per the recently signed accord.

## SUDAN

### **Bashir's plane forced to make emergency landing in Pakistan en route to China: reports**

#### NEWS STORY

Source: Sudan Tribune

**2 September 2015** - The plane which carried Sudanese President Omer Hassan al-Bashir to China this week was forced to make an emergency landing in northwest Pakistan according to newspaper reports.

Pakistani newspapers said that the plane's fuel levels reached critically low levels forcing it to land in Allama Iqbal International Airport in Lahore.

It is not clear why the unexpected shortage occurred for a trip that had to be planned beforehand.

The Governor of Punjab province Rafiq Rajwana and Lahore's District Coordination officer (DCO) Muhammad Usman went to the airport to greet Bashir before he left after the refueling stop.

Stringent security arrangements were made during the plane's stop at Lahore airport, Pakistani media reported.

Sudan Tribune could not confirm speculations that the situation came about because one or more countries denied air passage to the plane. Sudanese state media made no mention of the stop.

Bashir was subject to an embarrassing situation in June 2011 on his way to China for a state visit when Turkmenistan and Tajikistan refused to grant permission to his plane. As a result, he was forced to return to Tehran where he was attending a summit there in order to decide on a new route to reach Beijing.



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Last April, government sources told Sudan Tribune that Bashir was forced to cancel a trip to Indonesia at the last minute after several countries refused to grant passage to his plane. The names of these nations and reasons behind their decision were not disclosed.

Also in August 2013, Saudi Arabia blocked his flight to Iran citing failure to obtain prior clearance.

Bashir's trips are generally carefully planned in light of him being wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) on charges of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

## **PROTECT CHINESE INVESTMENTS IN SUDAN**

In Beijing, the Sudanese president pledged to protect Chinese companies and investments in Sudan and to undertake all necessary measures to ensure their success.

Bashir witnessed on Wednesday in Beijing the signing of several agreements and memorandums of understanding between Chinese and Sudanese companies, describing the establishment of the strategic partnership between Sudan and China as a "great leap forward in relations between the two countries".

"China is the largest investor in Sudan and it is a true friend and partner who seeks to secure the mutual benefits without imposing conditions that could negatively impact on the interests of the African [countries]", he added.

The Sudanese president added that ties between his country and China have been growing in various political, social, trade, cultural and military areas since 65 years ago, describing relations between the two countries as an excellent and successful example for cooperation among nations.

Meanwhile, the Sudanese president told the Chinese Central Television (CCTV) that national dialogue conference would convene on October 10th and continues for three month at the latest.

He reiterated that dialogue is open for all political forces without pre-conditions, stressing his government's commitment to offering the necessary guarantees for the rebel groups and political opposition abroad to take part in the national dialogue conference inside Sudan.

Bashir further said that his country plays important role alongside the African Union (AU) and the neighbouring countries in resolving the ongoing crisis in South Sudan.

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Sudan's president and his accompanying delegation including ministers of foreign affairs, oil and transport among others arrived in China on Monday to participate in celebrations marking the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II.

Despite the ICC warrant and criticisms of the visit by the United States, Chinese president Xi Jinping described Bashir as an "old friend".

The spokeswoman for the Chinese Foreign Ministry Hula Chunying told reporters that people were "over thinking" the issue of Bashir attendance at the commemoration of world war II event where war crimes were committed.

"The people of Africa, including Sudan, made an important contribution in the victory in the World Anti-Fascist War. China's invite to President Bashir to the commemoration activities is reasonable and fair. While he is in China we will give him the treatment he should get," Chunying told reporters.

"As China is not a member of the ICC, relevant issues will be handled "on the basis of the basic principles of international law," she added.

China is not an ICC member and had made it clear in the past that it does not approve of the warrant even though it chose not to veto the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) 2005 resolution empowering the Hague-based court to investigate crimes in Sudan's western region.

China's non-veto on that resolution has angered Sudanese officials who expressed shock that despite their close relationship with Beijing, the latter did not stand up at the UNSC to defend Khartoum at that instance.

## **Mediation Calls on Juba to Set Date for Meetings with Khartoum**

### **NEWS STORY**

Source: Sudan Vision

**2 September 2015** - African Union asked the State of South Sudan to determine the suitable date to hold the meetings of the political-security committee with Sudan, after Juba declared that it is not ready for the meetings, which the African mechanism had set the end of August for its convening.

Chairperson of the AU liaison office in Khartoum, Mahmoud Kan revealed that the State of the South Sudan was addressed officially to determine the definitive date for the meeting of the joint security committee.

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He explained that Khartoum told them their willingness to attend the meeting at any time to be agreed upon by the African Union and Juba.

He said that the AUHIP had set the end of August as a date for the start of the meetings in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, but the South state declared its non-readiness.

"This time we asked the State of the South to determine the date suitable for them for holding the meeting, which discusses security issues between the two countries, along with support and shelter, define zero line and secure area issues.

## **Sudanese poachers kill elephants amid Central Africa chaos: UN experts**

### NEWS STORY

Source: Reuters

By Louis Charbonneau

**2 September 2015** - Sudanese poachers have been taking advantage of the chaos in conflict-torn Central African Republic and are killing elephants for their ivory and other wild animals, an expert panel that monitors U.N. sanctions said in a confidential report seen by Reuters.

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

Although rival armed groups agreed to a peace accord in May, the conflict has continued at a lower intensity, and a transitional government has been unable to assert its authority over CAR's vast, mineral-rich territory. One of the main problems is trafficking in "blood diamonds."

In May two groups of some 200 poachers from Sudan were active in eastern CAR, killing elephants and other wild animals, according to the report.

"They usually establish a base camp from where they split into smaller groups of 20 to 30 poachers," the panel said.

"The drastic decrease in the pachyderm population – approximately 400 savannah elephants remain in eastern CAR – is obliging poachers to remain longer in the CAR than before, including during the rainy season," it added.

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The panel said the Sudanese poachers were experienced, well-armed with AK-47 assault rifles, and feared. There were also instances in which the poachers have attacked members of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a rebel group that rose up against the Ugandan government in the 1980s and is active in CAR.

The experts said the poachers assumed that the LRA "always transports elephant tusks, gold and other valuables."

"Even though poachers are reported to have robbed and regularly harassed civilians, no killings or acts of sexual violence have been reported," the report said, adding that the poachers likely wanted to avoid drawing attention of an African Union military force seeking to neutralize the feared LRA.

Sudan's U.N. mission did not respond immediately to a request for comment.

The experts said the LRA "remains one of the main threats to peace and security in the east and southeast of the Central African Republic, in particular in the provinces ... bordering Sudan, South Sudan and (Democratic Republic of the Congo)."

"LRA operations are still primarily focused on generating revenues from the exploitation and trade of natural resources, specifically ivory and gold," it said.