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



MEDIA MONITORING

3 September 2014

Burundi: l'opposant Léonce Ngendakumana assume ses déclarations

Source : RFI

2 septembre 2014 - Au Burundi, Léonce Ngendakumana, président de l'Alliance démocratique pour le changement, ADC-Ikibiri - une coalition qui regroupe neuf partis d'opposition au Burundi - risque cinq ans de prison ferme. Il a comparu, ce mardi 2 septembre, devant le tribunal de grande instance de Bujumbura pour « imputations dommageables, dénonciations calomnieuses et aversion ethnique ». Il lui est reproché d'avoir adressé une lettre au secrétaire général de l'ONU, en février, dans laquelle il tirait la sonnette d'alarme sur les risques de voir le Burundi retomber dans les violences politiques et même le génocide. Léonce Ngendakumana a profité de la tribune qui lui était offerte pour dénoncer ce qu'il a qualifié de « procès politique » mais aussi pour assumer le contenu de la lettre envoyée à Ban Ki-moon.

Le président de l'ADC-Ikibiri n'a voulu rien céder. Léonce Ngendakumana, en vieux routier de la politique, a tenté de démonter l'accusation point par point. Et parfois les échanges avec le ministère public ont été surréalistes. Sur l'accusation d'aversion raciale ou ethnique par exemple, Léonce Ngendakumana a contre-attaqué en demandant au ministère public de dire « envers quelle communauté, hutue ou tutsie, j'ai exprimé du mépris ou du dégoût dans la lettre adressée au secrétaire général de l'ONU ». Réponse du jeune substitut du procureur, Éric Ndikumana : « *On ne parle pas d'ethnies ici. Il connaît ceux qui ont porté plainte contre lui* ». Une réplique accueillie par des rires dans la salle.

Quant aux autres accusations, elles sont tout aussi absurdes, selon l'avocat de la défense, maître François Nyamoya. « *C'est un procès de l'absurde. L'infraction d'imputations dommageables, mais tout le monde est d'accord que ça ne touche qu'une personne physique. Dénonciations calomnieuses, on ne passe pas par le secrétaire général des Nations unies, on sait par quelles autorités judiciaires on passe. C'est un procès politique* », a-t-il lancé.

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« *Faux* », a rétorqué une des parties civiles, la radio Rema FM, réputée proche du parti au pouvoir au Burundi. Elle réclame l'équivalent de 60 000 dollars de dommages-intérêts. Son avocat Me Alexis Nduwimana se dit confiant. « *Le dossier a été pris en délibéré. Nous sommes sereins, nous sommes sûrs au vu du déroulement du procès que justice sera faite et que la radio Rema FM sera dédommagée* », confie-t-il. Léonce Ngendakumana, l'un des rares leaders de l'opposition burundaise à être encore libre de ses mouvements, risque cinq ans de prison. Le verdict sera rendu dans un mois.

Burundi lawyers demand jail for opposition chief for 'genocide' warning

Source: AFP World News

Bujumbura, 2 September 2014 - Lawyers in Burundi called Tuesday for an opposition leader to be jailed for five years for accusing the ruling party of preparing a "genocide".

Leonce Ngendakumana, president of the main coalition opposition party, is accused of making "damaging allegations, false accusations and racist incitement," in a letter he penned in February to UN chief Ban Ki-moon.

He accused the ruling CNDD-FDD of preparations similar to that which took place in neighbouring Rwanda before the genocide of 1994.

Prosecutor Eric Ndikumana, reading excerpts of the letter, said the politician had warned of "political-ethnic genocide in Burundi."

He also likened the party's Imbonerakure youth wing to Rwanda's 1994 genocidal Interahamwe militia, and a radio station to Kigali's Radio Mille Collines, which 20 years ago broadcast encouragements to the kill.

Ngendakumana, chairman of the Democratic Alliance for Change (ADC), which includes nine opposition parties, is accused of tarnishing the image of the ruling party of and Rema-FM radio, prosecuting lawyers said.

The CNDD-FDD party and Rema radio have demanded over \$66,000 in damages.

Burundi emerged in 2006 from 13 years of brutal civil war, and its political climate remains fractious ahead of presidential polls due in June 2015.

Ngendakumana, who denounced what he called a "political trial", repeated allegations of "extrajudicial killings", torture, and moves to quash the constitution, a key part of the peace deal that ended over a decade of war.

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Rights groups including Amnesty have said the Imbonerakure group has strong links to the security service, accusing it of "perpetrating human rights abuses with impunity."

The government has denied the report.

A United Nations official was expelled in April after a confidential note reporting the distribution of weapons by the government to the Imbonerakure was leaked.

UN commander announces strikes against DR Congo Ituri militia "very soon"

Source: Radio Okapi (DRC)

Text of report by DR Congo's UN-sponsored Radio Okapi on 30 August 2014

[Presenter] The commander of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in DR Congo's [Monusco] force has announced that targeted strikes are very soon set to be launched against Cobra Matata and his Front for Patriotic Resistance in Ituri [FRPI] rebel group.

General Alberto Dos Santo Cruz considers that crimes and human rights abuses committed by FRPI rebel fighters against civilians in province Orientale have become unbearable.

He made the statement on Saturday 30 August in Goma, upon his return from an operational tour respectively held in Bunia in province Orientale and then Beni in Nord Kivu province.

[Cruz] I was in Bunia to specifically plan joint military operations with the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo [FARDC] against the FRPI rebel group. We are envisaging these military operations because it is not normal to have crimes and human rights abuses being committed against civilians by this rebel group on a daily basis.

[Reporter] But other armed groups are also being talked of too.

[Cruz] Yes there are other armed groups such as Mayi Mayi militias and others around Dungu but my visit to province Orientale was aimed at planning military operations against the FRPI of Cobra Matata because the people are tired and traumatized.

After one year of crimes against civilians, it is now time for strong and robust actions against the FRPI.

[Presenter] Note that the Monusco's force commander has not given a specific date for the launch of the joint FARDC Monusco attacks against the FRP in Ituri district.

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Les déclarations de Nairobi évaluées à Kinshasa sans le M23

Source: Le Phare, via mediacongo.net

Par Tshieke Bukasa

Kinshasa, 2 septembre 2014 - Le coordonnateur du Mécanisme national de suivi des engagements pris par la Rd-Congo pour la paix dans la région des Grands Lacs, François Muamba Tshishimbi ; le Haut représentant du chef de l'Etat au Mécanisme régional de suivi de la mise en œuvre de l'Accord cadre, le général Kalume ; ainsi que le secrétaire exécutif de la Conférence internationale sur la région des Grands Lacs (CIRGL), le Pr Ntumba Lwaba, ont passé en revue, hier lundi 1er septembre 2014, la feuille de route se rapportant à la mise en œuvre des déclarations de Nairobi. Il s'agit, rappelons-le, d'un panel d'engagements de fin de guerre pris, dans la capitale kenyenne, par le gouvernement congolais et la rébellion du M23 et dont le MNS est chargé du suivi avec l'appui de la CIRGL.

Concrètement, a déclaré François Muamba, la rencontre s'est penchée sur deux points, notamment l'évaluation générale de la feuille de route concernant les déclarations de Nairobi et aussi l'examen du processus de rapatriement des ex-combattants éligibles à l'amnistie. « *Nous avons souhaité que notre point focal du côté du M23, René Abandi, soit présent pour ce qui est de l'évaluation, mais il est retenu à l'étranger. Donc, loin de Kinshasa. Qu'à cela ne tienne, il sera donc le bienvenu la prochaine fois...* », a-t-il indiqué.

Concernant, le processus de rapatriement des ex-combattants M23, François Muamba a rappelé qu'ils ne sont pas tous éligibles car certains ont pour destination finale la justice, tandis que d'autres qui ne sont pas congolais, auront pour destination finale leurs pays d'origine. Quant aux congolais réellement amnistiés, ils vont entrer dans un processus DDR qui commence par le rapatriement. « *Le gouvernement avait promis qu'avant le mois d'octobre, il y aura une feuille de route et cette réunion nous a permis de démarrer ce processus d'évaluation qui sera finalisé, notamment, à l'occasion de l'évaluation qui se fait fin septembre à New-York...* ».

Pour le coordonnateur du MNS, ce processus prendra fin avec la phase de la réinsertion des ex-combattants éligibles à la vie civile. Il y a maintenant lieu de maîtriser les choses à travers une feuille de route qui sera fin prête le 22 septembre 2014 à New-York. « *Ça a pris un peu de temps, mais nous avons maintenant pris la vitesse de croisière. Que les congolais fassent confiance à leur gouvernement...* », a conclu François Muamba.

Nord-Kivu : soupçons d'une présumée reconstitution du M23 à Rubaya

Il convient de noter que cette rencontre au MNS s'est tenue au moment des bruits qui courent sur la reconstitution de l'ancien mouvement rebelle du M23. A en croire la radio onusienne, cela s'est fait depuis 3 mois à Rubaya, à environ 60 km au nord-est de Goma (Nord-Kivu). Selon des sources sécuritaires, ces anciens rebelles procéderaient à des recrutements en vue de créer un

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nouveau mouvement, le M27. La Mission de l'ONU en RDC (Monusco), pour sa part, reconnaît des mouvements suspects dans la région, sans pouvoir les déterminer pour l'instant.

Pour le chef du bureau de la Monusco à Goma, Ray Virgilio Torres, d'anciens rebelles du M23 sont en activité dans cette région. Il se dit cependant incapable de confirmer s'il s'agit d'une réorganisation de ce mouvement rebelle. « *Nous avons essayé de voir ce qu'est en réalité ce groupe M27. Ce que nous, nous savons, c'est ce que vous, vous savez, de ce qui s'est passé à Remeka. Et que des ex-M23 s'étaient organisés en groupe et semblaient vouloir se diriger vers le sud de Masisi et peut-être au-delà, à Walikale notamment, pour une raison que nous, nous ne savons pas* », a-t-il expliqué.

Début août, un groupe de gens présentés comme d'anciens rebelles du M23, a attaqué le poste de police de Remeka, au sud de Masisi, dans le groupement d'Ufamandu 1. Sept personnes, suspectées d'activités militaires, ont été interpellées à cette occasion et remises aux Forces armées de la RDC (FARDC), puis transférées à Goma.

Ray Virgilio Torres assure que la Monusco suit de près toutes les activités des groupes armés dans la zone de Masisi.

Intervenant le 8 août dernier devant le conseil de sécurité, le représentant permanent de la France à l'ONU avait dit redouter une réorganisation militaire des rebelles du M23, défaits par l'armée congolaise appuyée par les casques bleus de la Monusco fin novembre 2013 au Nord-Kivu. Pour parer à toute éventualité, Alexis Lamék avait appelé la RDC à redoubler d'efforts sur l'opérationnalisation du programme de désarmement, démobilisation et réinsertion (DDR).

Rwanda: UN Turns to Rwanda for More Female Peacekeepers

Source: The New Times

By Athan Tashobya

3 September 2014 - The United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations has organised an all-female training course for Rwanda National Police aimed at assessing individual officers to serve in UN peacekeeping missions and special political missions.

The 12-day training, which started yesterday, is the first of its kind, and Rwanda National Police is the first Force to benefit from the programme, according course director, Lanyuy Marti, who is also an instructor and senior planning officer for Monusco.

During the opening of the training, Lanyuy said the choice of Rwanda for the maiden training was because of the "valuable lessons" offered by Rwanda National Police.

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"From what we have seen and heard about Rwanda National Police, we are convinced that the choice of their country was no mistake," he said.

"Many Police contributing countries have valuable lessons to learn from Rwanda's policing tradition in terms of discipline, organisation and the continuous search for excellence."

The training, being attended by 166 women officers, is being held at Police headquarters in Kacyiru.

Exams to select the best candidates for the operations will be conducted next month but the organisers said there is no definite number of officers they would be taking.

UN pro-women officers drive:

The United Nations in August 2009 launched a campaign aimed at recruiting more female officers both in national police services and into UN Police operations around the world.

The target is to increase female officers by 20 per cent by the end of 2014, and, according to Lanyuy, the target will be attained.

Rwanda has more than 75 women Police officers deployed in six countries, including Haiti, Mali, South Sudan, Ivory Coast, Liberia and Central Africa Republic.

Juvenal Marizamunda, the deputy Inspector General of Police in charge of administration and personnel, said the training will enhance capacity building as well increase the number of Rwanda's women officers in peacekeeping operations.

"Trainers come from various countries, with vast experience in policing, which will benefit our female officers. Piloting this training in Rwanda is a great opportunity for our country, since women have also contributed in different national development agendas," said Marizamunda.

On Sunday, Police announced its latest peacekeeping deployment in Central African Republic (CAR).

Looking up to Rwanda:

A contingent of 140 Police officers under Rwanda Formed Police Unit (RWAFFPU) started departing yesterday in four shifts to the CAR for a one-year peacekeeping mission.

The contingent, led by CSP Benoit Kayijuka, includes 14 females.

"The UN department of peacekeeping operations is looking up with expectations that the Republic of Rwanda will contribute in reducing the current wide gap existing between male and female police officers deployed in police operations," Lanyuy said.

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"In these crucial areas, there are tasks that female police officers have a comparative advantage over their male colleagues in addressing, including investigating gender-based violence-related cases, counselling, among others."

Rwanda is the first country to deploy Police peacekeepers under the United Nations Multi-dimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in CAR.

Rwanda: UN Lauds RNP Deployment in CAR

Source: The New Times

1 September 2014 - The United Nations has welcomed efforts by the Government of Rwanda to restoring peace in restive countries and early Police deployment in Central African Republic (CAR).

The advance team of the Rwanda Police peacekeepers, under Rwanda Formed Police Unit One (RWAFFPU), arrived in CAR yesterday morning for a one-year peacekeeping mission under the United Nations Multi-dimensional Integrated mission in Central African Republic (Minusca).

The RWAFFPU1 contingent of 140 officers, including 14 females, will be deployed in the restive country in four phases.

Paolo Bonanno, the acting chief of operations Standing Capacity-Police Division in the UN, while receiving the advance team at its base in the capital Bangui, said their arrival brings hope to the people of CAR.

"In the meeting in New York, when we requested countries that were willing and ready to deploy FPU contingent in the CAR, Rwanda immediately expressed her will and ability both logistical and personnel, and we are happy today they lived to their promise," Bonanno said.

"I believe Rwanda is ready to face security challenges to accomplish their mission mandate such as protection of civilians, and restoring stability, justice and human rights."

He said the important part is for all peacekeepers, both army and police from all contributing countries, to harmonise their activities to restore stability and hope in this country.

Chief Supt. Benoit Kayijuka, RWAFFPU contingent commander, who was part of the advance team, said Rwanda is ready to deal with the security challenges.

"It has always been Rwanda's desire and willingness to share its best practices and use its success stories to bring about peace in other countries and Rwanda is always prepared to play its part to help make Africa and the world a safer place for all," Kayijuka said.

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Rwanda became the first nation to deploy a contingent of FPU under Minusca, which also boasts of a Rwanda Defence Forces contingent.

Death toll from Congo Ebola outbreak rises to 3

Source: Reuters

Reporting by Bienvenu-Marie Bakumanya

Writing by Matthew Mpoke Bigg

Editing by Emma Farge

Kinshasa, 2 September 2014 - The death toll from an outbreak of the Ebola virus in the Djera region of northern Democratic Republic of Congo has risen to 31, Minister of Health Felix Kabange Numbi told Reuters on Tuesday.

The outbreak in Congo's Equateur province is thought to be separate from an epidemic in the West African nations of Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia that has killed more than 1,550 people since March.

Ebola cases in DR Congo unrelated to West Africa outbreak — WHO

Source: Itar Tass

Geneva, 2 September 2014 - The World Health Organization (WHO) confirmed on Tuesday that the newly-identified Ebola cases in the Democratic Republic of Congo are genetically unrelated to the disease outbreak in West Africa.

“Results from the virus characterization, together with findings from the epidemiological investigation, are definitive: the outbreak in DR Congo is a separate and independent incident, with no relation to the outbreak in west Africa,” the UN health agency said.

The WHO said 53 Ebola cases were reported in the DRC, including 31 deaths. Seven of the victims were healthcare workers.

Meanwhile, the Ebola Virus Disease outbreak in Liberia, Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Nigeria has already killed more than 1,500 people.

The WHO warned last week that the number of people affected by the Ebola virus could reach 20,000 within nine months. The organization said that \$490 million were needed to fund efforts aimed at stopping the Ebola spread.

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Somali president in Kenya for anti-terror conference

Source: SomaliCurrent

1 September 2014 - A delegation led by Somali president Hassan Sheikh Mohamud has reached Kenyan capital Nairobi to attend anti terror conference which is expected to kick off on Tuesday 2nd September.

According to Somali ambassador to Kenya Mohamed Ali Nur the president is among African heads of states officially invited by Kenyan president Uhuru Kenyatta to the conference which is meant to discuss the role of the African leaders against fight of terrorism and threat it poses to the society.

The president is accompanied in the journey Somali foreign and international cooperation minister Dr. Abdirahman Baileh and other key officials.

President Mohamud is from Turkey where he attended the inaugural ceremony of President Reccip Tayyip Erdogan in Ankara, Turkey.

The conference comes as the Somali government forces and African union peace keeping troops in Somalia are battling Al Shabaab militant group in a recently launched offensive meant to cut off the supply of the group along the coast.

Somali terror leader behind Kenya shopping mall massacre 'killed in US drone strike'

Source: The Telegraph

By Colin Freeman

2 September 2014 - The Somali Islamist leader who ordered last year's Westgate shopping mall massacre in Kenya is believed to have been killed in a US drone strike.

Ahmed Abde Godane, the leader of the al-Shabaab militant group, is thought to have been targeted by a salvo of missiles as he left a meeting of the group's senior leaders on Monday night. The US military said it was still trying to verify whether the 37-year-old had died in the attack, but witnesses spoke of a sound like an "earthquake" as missiles hit a forested region in Somalia's Sablale forest district, 105 miles south of Mogadishu.

Godane, who is one of al-Shabab's most feared figures, gave his personal backing to last September's Westgate atrocity, in which 67 people were killed when al-Shabab gunmen armed with grenades and assault rifles attacked a shopping mall in Nairobi.

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In a statement released shortly after the attacks, he threatened further terrorist mayhem in Kenya unless it agreed to pull its troops out of Somalia, where they have been trying to oust al-Shabaab from its southern heartlands.

The attack was one of the worst terrorist acts in Kenyan history, and marked al-Shabaab's arrival on the world stage as one a fully-fledged member of the international jihadist terror movement. Previously it had focused mainly on establishing a Taliban-style regime in Somalia, but under Godane, who pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda, it adopted a transnational agenda.

Godane, who also went by the name Abu Zubayr, was also listed by by the US State Department as one of the world's most wanted terror fugitives, with a \$7-million price tag on his head.

On Tuesday, al-Shabaab officials declined to confirm whether Godane had indeed been killed. "Let the Americans say that they have killed Shebab's leader. So far the Americans just gave us rumours," a senior Shebab official told the AFP news agency.

Another al-Shabaab spokesman, Abu Mohammed, told The Associated Press on Tuesday that Godane was in one of two vehicles hit in the attack, which he said killed six militants, but declined to say if Godane was among them.

Somali officials said the first they knew about Monday's drone attack was when government and African Union forces patrolling in the area heard a series of huge explosions in the Sablale forest area.

The strike came as local al-Shabaab forces were on the back foot from a government offensive aimed at seizing key ports under militant control.

"The Americans carried out a major air strike targeting a gathering by senior Al-Shabaab officials, including their leader Abu-Zubayr," said Abdukadir Mohamed Nur, governor for southern Somalia's Lower Shabelle region. "They were meeting to discuss about the current offensive in the region. There were casualties inflicted on the militants, but we don't have details so far."

If confirmed as dead, Godane becomes the latest in a long line of al-Shabaab commanders to be killed in US airstrikes. A US missile strike in January killed a high-ranking intelligence officer for the group, while last October one of its top explosives experts died in a hit on a vehicle carrying senior fighters. Godane himself is known to have taken extensive security precautions to avoid being targeted, following the death of one of his predecessors as leader of al-Shabaab, Adan Hashi Ayro, in a US missile strike in 2008.

Godane's death would be a severe blow for the group, which has lost much of its terror in Somalia in the last two years as a result of successful offensives by Somalia's US and UN-backed government. From having once controlled much of the capital, Mogadishu, it is now confined mainly to isolated rural areas, although it still launches numerous hit-and-run attacks.

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On Sunday, seven heavily-armed Islamic militants attacked a high-security prison in Mogadishu in an apparent attempt to free comrades held there. Somali officials claimed that all seven attackers were killed, along with three government soldiers and two civilians.

After the US airstrike on Monday night, locals in the Sablale area said that masked Islamic militants in the area arrested dozens of residents they suspected of spying for the US and searched nearby homes.

"Mass arrests just started, everyone is being detained," said Mohamed Ali, who lives in Sablale district. "They even searched nearby jungles and stopped the nomads transporting milk and grass to the towns for questioning."

As of Tuesday there was still no confirmation of Godane's death.

However, Mr Nur said he believed Godane and other senior al Shabaab members had been killed. "We understand a U.S. drone killed Ahmed Abdi Godane and other seven senior members last night near Hawaay area around Barawe town," Sidii told Reuters. He did not say how he got the information on the attack, given the location is in an area still under al-Shabaab control.

National peace and reconciliation conference kicks off in Wau

Source: Sudan Tribune

2 September 2014 - A three-day national dialogue on peace and reconciliation kicked off in South Sudan's Western Bahr el Ghazal capital, Wau, on Tuesday amid calls for unity among citizens.

The country's vice-president, James Wani Igga officially opened the conference organised with support from South Sudan Peace Commission.

In his remarks, Igga urged the population in Western Bahr el Ghazal region to unite with one another to avoid a repeat of last year's violence outbreak.

"We are right now moving cross the regions of south Sudan collecting your views to find out the lasting solution to the conflict in our country," he said.

Igga said the ongoing peace conference remains government's priority as it amicably resolves its political differences with the Sudan People's Liberation Movement in Opposition (SPLM-IO)

"Your views will later help us in resolving these crisis, if not, some of your ideas will be refer to referendum as an option to determine the best way of handling these crisis," he stressed.

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The vice-president urged the people of Western Bahr el Ghazal to freely express their views without fear at the conference as part of reconciliation.

“You have to speak out all your differences which need to be addressed for the sake of reconciliation,” said Igga.

Zackaria Joseph Garang, the deputy state governor assured the vice-president of support in his campaign to achieve peace and reconciliation.

Chol Rambang, the chairperson of South Sudan Peace Commission said the conference would help restore peace and confidence-building among citizens.

“The conference aims at accountability, identifying the dispute cause and gathering common ground solutions to the current crisis,” said Rambang.

A number of church leaders, civil society activists and stakeholders are participating on the three-day national peace and reconciliation dialogue on the theme, ‘one people, one nation’.