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



MEDIA MONITORING

14 October 2015

GENERAL NEWS

An African story that deserves to be told

OPINION

Source: City Press via News24 (<http://www.news24.com/Opinions/An-African-story-that-deserves-to-be-told-20151012>)

By Mercedes Sayagues

12 October 2015 - Forget Europe. When last did you hear about the lengths poor countries go to in welcoming the unfortunate multitudes fleeing war, asks Mercedes Sayagues

Al Jazeera, my favourite TV news channel, annoyed me last week. It ran a story gushing about a tented camp for 150 Afghan refugees built in a small village in Bavaria.

“Exemplary!” the reporter enthused. “Germany is showing the world how to do it.”

Really? Efficient camp-building ought to be expected from Europe’s wealthiest and most technologically advanced country. And camps, unlike cars, don’t have to meet noxious-emissions standards. No need to cheat.

Instead, the media could look at east and central Africa – yes, Africa’s dark heart and the frequent source of newscast horrors – for leadership in welcoming refugees.

In April, Burundi exploded in political violence against the (eventually successful) attempt of President Pierre Nkurunziza to run for a third term, which violated the

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Constitution and the Arusha peace agreement of 2005 that ended a 12-year civil war. Street protests were met with heavy repression.

In four months, 193 000 Burundians, fearing another civil war, fled to neighbouring countries.

During the worst period, 3 000 of them were crossing daily into tiny Rwanda (with a population of 12 million).

Rwanda quickly set up three registration centres with cooking and sanitation facilities near the border, and built a camp, Mahama, with the capacity for 50 000 people. Today, 44 000 Burundian refugees live in Mahama's neat rows of white tents, with water, latrines and basic health services, and 22 000 are in the country's capital, Kigali.

Tanzania settled 95 000 Burundians in the Nyarugusu camp in the north, already home to 62 000 refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo. With Nyarugusu's capacity exceeded by three, new camp sites are being built. (Note: the UK says it will take a paltry 20 000 Syrians over the next five years.)

Uganda doesn't share a border with Burundi, but 14 000 Burundians made their way there – joining nearly half a million refugees from various countries. Uganda's policy is to settle refugees, providing basic services, plots of land and farming tools. Accordingly, most Burundian refugees are hosted in 11 villages at Nakivale, in the southwest.

Nakivale, the world's eighth-largest refugee settlement, shelters 82 000 refugees from 12 countries in 70 villages. Had you heard about this in the news? You might have seen a few stories about poor conditions and a cholera outbreak in Nyarugusu.

Yes, the camps are basic. There are no heated tents with desks and hot showers, and a monthly stipend of €143 (R2 160), as in Germany. But these are poor countries (see chart). Local resources are stretched and the humanitarian operation of the global refugee agency, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), is badly underfunded.

Here is the cost of one power-hungry president's folly: to assist Burundians inside and outside their country from September to December this year, the UNHCR appealed for \$221 million (R3 billion). Only 25% of that has been pledged.

Civil war in South Sudan has pushed 225 000 refugees to Ethiopia, 168 000 to Uganda, 193 000 to Sudan and 46 000 into Kenya – more than the numbers who reached Fortress Europe this year. The UN humanitarian operation requires \$779 million for this, but less than a third is covered.

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There is a positive side to this misery inflicted upon civilians. Says the UNHCR: “The most significant achievement to date is the unhindered access refugees have had to neighbouring countries’ territories. Governments are aware of and honour their responsibilities under international law to provide asylum to refugees, and they all abide by the principle of non-refoulement [a cornerstone of customary international law, which protects refugees from being returned to places where their lives or freedom could be threatened]. Refugees were quickly registered on arrival and, where possible, transported to more suitable locations, where the delivery of assistance and more detailed individual registration and data gathering takes place.”

This is a story that deserves to be told.

Sayagues is a journalist based in Pretoria consulting for the UN Population Fund on regional refugee issues

Refugees in southern Africa

Southern Africa, too, has a proud history of welcoming war refugees. In the late 1980s, and for more than a decade, Malawi hosted 1.1 million Mozambican refugees fleeing civil war. That is the equivalent of 10% of Malawi’s population. Zimbabwe, Swaziland and Tanzania sheltered smaller numbers.

Post-apartheid South Africa’s refugee situation is not comparable. The flow of asylum seekers and economic migrants is a constant trickle – not a huge, sudden wave of destitute people – and they don’t live in camps. In 2015, according to the UNHCR, 315 000 refugees are living in South Africa. Among them, 65 000 people have been granted recognised refugee status and 230 000 have pending applications, with a significant drop in the number of asylum seekers since 2013.

*Sources: World Bank 2014, Atlas method and UN Development Programme Human Development Report 2014

Africa Rising as a Competitive Continent

ANALYSIS

Source: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201510131075.html>

13 October 2015 - The World Economic Forum (WEF) last week announced the most globally competitive African nations in its 2015 Global Competitiveness Index. The Index, which looked at 140 countries, rates the top performing African countries as

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follows: Mauritius (46), South Africa (49), Rwanda (58), Botswana (71), Namibia (85), Côte d'Ivoire (91), Zambia (96), Seychelles (97), Kenya (99), and Gabon (103).

The WEF measures a nation's global competitiveness against 12 pillars, i.e. institutions, infrastructure, macroeconomic environment, health and primary education, higher education and training, goods market efficiency, labour market efficiency, financial market development, technological readiness, market size, business sophistication and innovation.

Each of the 10 best performing African countries have had mixed fortunes in the 2015 Index, with some moving up and others down in the ranks with each improving and declining according to the WEF's assessment pillars.

Two of Africa's 54 states, Mauritius and South Africa, are among the top 50 most competitive global nations with Rwanda following in third place. Rwanda's achievement is truly remarkable considering the tragedy experienced by that country only 21 years ago.

In addition to noting the improvements of individual countries the World Economic Forum's Africa Competitiveness Report 2015 observes the following about the African continent "... for five years, growth rates have averaged over 5%, and rapid population growth holds the promise of a large emerging consumer market as well as an unprecedented labour force that, if leveraged, can provide significant growth opportunities. Moreover, the expansion of innovative business models, such as mobile technology services, is indicative of the continent's growth potential."

The WEF report's observation with regards to technology, media and telecommunications is shared by the 2015 EY Africa Attractiveness Survey, which notes that these sectors are the most popular for investors and have attracted almost a fifth of all investment into the continent, followed by financial services in second place and consumer products and retail.

At the same time, the WEF report highlights persistent challenges in terms of socio-economic development: "Africa continues to be largely agrarian, with an economy that is underpinned by resource-driven growth and a large and expanding informal sector ... more than a decade of consistently high growth rates have not yet trickled down to significant parts of the population - nearly one out of two Africans continues to live in extreme poverty, and income inequality in the region remains among the highest in the world. What is more, across sectors--from agriculture to manufacturing and services--productivity levels remain low."

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This assessment suggests that more needs to be done to unlock the areas which will help build competitive knowledge-intensive economies. The areas identified by WEF's 2015 Global Competitiveness Index are universal, good quality education; a healthy citizenry with access to medical care; the use of ICTs and the ability to absorb new technologies; the capacity to innovate; and the development of a sophisticated business environment that supports both domestic and international corporations.

According to the World Economic Forum, low levels of competitiveness have two direct consequences - they render regional economies, in the immediate term, vulnerable to important economic downside shocks which include a slowdown in emerging markets to repercussions of the four-year low in oil prices and lower prices for other commodities for the region's resource-rich economies. In the medium term, they raise questions about whether Africa will be able to leverage its demographic dividend: the over 1 billion people on the continent represent a large emerging consumer market and labour force that provides significant growth opportunities.

The continent, led by the African Union (AU), and its leaders have been conscious of the urgency for African countries to raise their socio-economic levels, to deliver on the aspirations of citizens and to overhaul traditional perceptions of Africa thus building a positive reputation. Agenda 2063 provides the continent's vision for socio-economic development. In its implementation, Agenda 2063 will enable the building of national and therefore continental competitiveness by addressing issues identified by African leaders as well as the WEF.

The AU has also placed emphasis on good governance and leadership which have a positive impact on socio-economic levels and further impacts positively on the reputations of both countries and the continent as a whole. This bodes well for the continent as there is a positive relationship between a country's reputation and key factors that contribute to its competitiveness such as the nation's ability to compete for the global pool of investment, tourism and skills.

Increased competitiveness is important to ensure social equity which contributes not only to national stability but also to a country's ability to attract investment. This is becoming even more crucial because, while Africa is still an attractive investment destination, EY's 2015 Africa Attractive Survey has found that the continent is now the fourth fastest growing in the world, having lost its number two spot.

For Africa to reverse this regression and grow as a globally competitive investment destination, the implementation of Agenda 2063 is crucial along with each African nation making the right investments in growing the continent's human capital, particularly in

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knowledge areas that will be drivers of competitiveness in a global economy that is becoming more knowledge intensive.

The French Economist Thomas Piketty giving the Nelson Mandela Lecture said, "Africa is the future of the world". Moving with haste and with a collective determination to implement Agenda 2063, Piketty's words will soon be a reality.

Cameroon to host logistics base of AU Standby Force

NEWS STORY

Source: The East African

13 October 2015 - An African Union Standby Force (ASF) that would intervene to restore peace and security in member states will soon go operational.

Whereas it will come under the peace and security commission of the AU in Addis Ababa, its logistics headquarters will be based in the Cameroon port city of Douala, in the central African sub-region.

The basing agreement was signed in the Cameroon capital Yaounde on Monday by the AU peace and security commissioner Smail Chergui and Cameroon's defence minister Joseph Beti Assomo.

"It is a very important moment, not only for Cameroon, but for the whole continent to really have it signed so that we can now implement it and have the force ready as fast as possible. And we are determined to do so," Mr Chergui said.

The determination by the AU to get the standby force fully operational is coming at a time parts of the continent like the Lake Chad basin are facing serious security challenges posed by the Nigerian jihadist group, Boko Haram. No mention, though, was made on when the force will be activated.

The ASF will comprise military, police and civilian components drawn from all the five regional blocs of Africa: EASFCOM, ECCAS, ECOWAS, NARC and SADC.

Its operationalisation was initially meant for 2008, but was put off at least three times due to what observers described as political differences and disagreements between member states.

But given the state of insecurity especially the Lake Chad Basin, geopolitical strategists in the region are of the opinion that the force's operationalisation should be soonest.

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Disgruntled soldiers

Mr Chergui's visit to Yaounde coincided with the October 12 'deadline' which, according to local newspaper reports, was given the Cameroon government by a contingent of the country's soldiers who recently staged a public protest against unpaid allowances from the AU/UN peacekeeping mission in neighbouring Central African Republic.

A local tabloid, The Post, quoted an unnamed soldier as saying that they would "make ourselves heard in any other way that will be surprising to many" if the allowances were not paid by the Monday deadline.

Nonetheless, Mr Chergui told reporters that he had discussed the issue with the Cameroon defence minister at an earlier meeting prior to the signing of the ASF agreement.

"I informed him [the Cameroon minister] that this issue of paying the soldiers from Cameroon who helped us in the Central African Republic has now been finalised," the AU commissioner said.

"We also took the occasion to review our common endeavour in combating terrorism especially Boko Haram in this region," he added.

Cameroon president Paul Biya had ordered the payment of the allowances from state coffers awaiting reimbursement from the AU.

D.R. CONGO

Six killed in new DR Congo attacks blamed on Uganda rebels

NEWS STORY

Source: AFP World News

Goma, 13 October 2015 - Six civilians were killed on Monday in three separate attacks blamed on Ugandan rebels in the troubled east of the Democratic Republic of Congo, local authorities said.

The gun attacks happened within two hours of each other in the restive north of North Kivu province, from which many locals have been evacuated after a string of massacres blamed on the Ugandan Allied Democratic Forces (ADF).

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"We recorded six deaths yesterday," Amisi Kalonda, the administrator of the Beni area told AFP from the provincial capital Goma, blaming the ADF for the killings.

"Four civilians were killed at Tenambo, one at Mukoko and another at Linzo-Sisene," he added.

Army spokesman Lieutenant Mak Hazukay confirmed the shootings and also said the rebels were responsible.

The mainly-Muslim ADF are accused of slaughtering more than 400 villagers over the past year around Beni, mostly with machetes.

The group has been active in the region, which has been devastated by more than two decades of strife, since its fighters were driven out of their homeland in 1995.

In recent weeks they have switched to gun attacks mostly concentrated along National Road No. 4 which links Beni with Orientale province to the north, targeting drivers and passersby.

The leader of the rebels, Jamil Mukulu, was arrested in Tanzania in April and then extradited to Uganda three months later.

BURUNDI

Burundi asks Belgium to replace envoy, in latest sign of strained ties

NEWS STORY

Source: Reuters

By George Obulutsa; Editing by Kevin Liffey; Additional reporting by Alastair Macdonald in Brussels;

12 October 2015 - Burundi has asked its former colonial power Belgium to replace its ambassador because it has lost confidence in him, a senior official said on Monday.

Salvator Ntacobamaze, permanent secretary in Burundi's Ministry of External Relations and International Cooperation, gave no further explanation for the action.

A Belgian Foreign Ministry spokesman said Belgium viewed the request as an "unfriendly act" but had yet to decide on a course of action and would keep channels of communication open with Burundi's government.

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Bilateral relations have deteriorated since Belgium said this month it would halt some aid in protest at Pierre Nkurunziza securing a third term as president of the central African country.

"Through a verbal note, the government of Burundi asked its counterpart for the replacement of the Belgian ambassador to Burundi since it has no more confidence in him," Ntacobamaze told Reuters.

Belgium had summoned the Burundian ambassador in Brussels on Friday to explain reports that the accreditation of the envoy, Marc Gedopt, had been withdrawn. Gedopt is not in Burundi at present.

Belgian aid for Burundi was just under 50 million euros (\$56 million) in 2013, most of it going directly to the state.

Burundi has experienced turmoil and sporadic violence since April, when Nkurunziza announced he was seeking a third term, a move the opposition says violated the constitution and a peace deal that ended civil war in 2005.

He was sworn in on Aug. 20 after winning an election boycotted by his opponents.

Burundi: Cracks Widen Within Burundi's Army

NEWS STORY

Source: IRIN

By Ignatius Ssuuna

Bujumbura, 12 October 2015 - A central pillar of the peace accords that ended a civil war in Burundi a decade ago - integrating former Hutu rebels into the Tutsi-dominated army to create a more ethnically balanced force - is looking distinctly wobbly.

A recent post on a Burundi news blog by Thierry Vircoulon of the International Crisis Group (ICG) said the institution was "dangerously close to rupture."

IRIN's interviews with more than a dozen people, including leading Burundian civilians, analysts and members of the military, indicate that a faction of former Hutu rebels has embarked on a campaign of harassing, abducting, detaining, and in some cases killing, members of the army's old guard, as well as others perceived to oppose President Pierre Nkurunziza, himself a former rebel leader.

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Signed in 2000, the Arusha Accord for Peace and Reconciliation was a blueprint for sharing power in government and, with greater success, the military. Hutus make up 85 percent of the population and suffered two pogroms since independence: the first in 1965, when hundreds were murdered; then in 1972, when, after around 1,000 Tutsis were killed in a rebel attack, between 200,000 and 300,000 Hutus were slaughtered.

Various Hutu rebel groups took up arms from 1993 onwards to press for greater representation - especially in the security forces, which have been central to power in Burundi since independence from Belgium in 1962. Members of the defunct Armed Forces of Burundi (now known as ex-FAB) had almost entirely been drawn from the Tutsi minority. Ending the Tutsis' near monopoly of the army was a key component of the accord, which helped end the war six years after it was signed. By then some 300,000 people had been killed and more than half a million displaced.

"The Arusha agreement was the glue that held Burundi together," Yolande Bouka, of South Africa's Institute for Security Studies, told the Africa Times last month.

The National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy (known by its French acronym CNDD-FDD) is Burundi's ruling party. But during the civil war it was the political and military wings, respectively, of the main Hutu rebel group. It did not sign Arusha but went on to reach a separate peace deal in 2003. This accord added key power-sharing details, such as the requirement that at least four in 10 army officers come from CNDD-FDD ranks.

Nkurunziza's bid for a third term in office, announced in April (and accomplished in a July election), was widely seen as a violation of Arusha. It prompted street protests, a heavy-handed crackdown by police, and ultimately a botched coup attempt by former intelligence Chief General Godefroid Niyombare in May.

Tit-for-tat killings

There has been a spate of assassinations in recent weeks, targeting both Tutsis and Hutus in the high echelons of the military. There have also been several grenade and rocket attacks on police posts and military installations in and around Bujumbura. A month ago, army chief of staff General Prime Niyongabo narrowly escaped assassination. In late September, rockets were fired at the presidential palace.

"There is an increased crackdown on members of ex-FAB who are accused of being behind the killings of police and army officers in Bujumbura," Anschaire Nikoyagize, president of the Burundian League for Human Rights, told IRIN.

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"It's obvious that there are divisions within the army, as evidenced by ongoing defections or desertions of serving soldiers," added Nikoyagize, one of the few Burundian human rights activists who has not fled the country.

Patrick Ndiwimana, a Burundian journalist living in exile, described it as a purge of the old guard, of those loyal to Tutsi former president Pierre Buyoya who had opposed Nkurunziza's bid for a third term. Ndiwimana told IRIN that many ex-FAB members had been "eliminated" or forced to retire, while others had fled.

Late last month, two army officers, Major Emmanuel Ndayikeza, deputy commander of the Support Battalion for the First Military Region, an elite unit based in Bujumbura, and Colonel Edouard Nshimirimana, in charge of military transmissions and communications, absconded. Very little has been said about their whereabouts. Under the military code, they are now regarded as deserters. Sources within the army said they left with about 40 junior soldiers, together with weapons, ammunition and communications equipment.

Regional dimensions

Burundi has openly accused neighbouring Rwanda, whose president Paul Kagame is a Tutsi, of hosting and training a new Burundian rebellion led by the coup plotters. Rwanda denies Burundi's accusation. For its part, Kigali has long complained that Burundi has turned a blind eye to, or even encouraged, the presence on its territory of members of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), a rebel group led by remnants of those who carried out the genocide in Rwanda in 1994. The FDLR has since been based in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, which shares borders with both Rwanda and Burundi.

On 1 August, several Burundian opposition party and civilian leaders gathered in Addis Ababa and created the National Council for the Restoration of the Arusha Accords and the Rule of Law, with the stated aim of getting Nkurunziza out of power, by any means necessary, including, if it came to it, the use of arms.

The spokesman of Burundi's army, Col. Gaspard Baratuza, dismissed the idea of a crisis and denied widespread reports that the missing officers had joined a new rebellion.

"The army is still united and strong. Nobody can be able to cause insecurity or disturb the prevailing peace Burundians are enjoying," he told IRIN, adding that only "two or three soldiers out of 30,000 have run away."

But Thierry Vircoulon, ICG's project director for Central Africa, told IRIN the defections were clearly cause for concern because they showed the army was no longer unified.

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While the extent of the divisions is hard to determine, it is clear that ex-FAB soldiers have been sidelined since the failed coup in May, he added.

Many ex-FAB members of the elite Special Brigade of Institutional Protection (BSPI), which runs the security of top public officials and played a key role in putting down the coup, have recently been replaced by CNDD-FDD loyalists.

However, according to Vircoulon, there has been a bias in favour of the ruling party loyalists in the military that goes back much further than the coup.

"Whether [in regard to] training courses abroad or assignments of peacekeeping missions, former CNDD-FDD are often favoured over former ex-FAB soldiers. The army was therefore an integrated institution without actually being united."

Last month, several ex-FAB officers met Niyongabo to complain about harassment by Nkurunziza's security operatives and the police, one of those who attended the meeting told IRIN.

"When the police arrive at the home of a soldier, they ask if he is an ex-FAB or CNDD-FDD," Vital Nshimiyimana, another human rights activist, told IRIN. "If CNDD-FDD, they do not enter or come in and pretend to search. But if a former FAB, they search everywhere."

Since May, there have also been major changes in the barracks. Factions suspected of involvement in the attempted coup, namely the 11th armoured battalion and the 121st parachute battalion, were relocated at very short notice and their leaders assigned new duties. Other battalions have been phased out entirely and their mainly ex-FAB personnel ordered to join other units.

Burundi: post-election crisis forces UN and partners to seek \$32 million in revised relief plan

NEWS STORY

Source: UN News Centre

13 October 2015 – The United Nations in Burundi is calling for aid funding for the humanitarian crisis facing the country, which is facing its deepest political crisis since the end of the civil war after President Pierre Nkurunziza's decision to run for a controversial third term in office.

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The plan requires over \$32 million to ensure minimum preparedness measures and response. Some 500,000 people could be affected by the crisis, of which up to 400,000 are targeted for humanitarian assistance inside Burundi.

According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the UN Resident Coordinator, rather than consolidating “the fragile peace and stability that Burundi enjoyed in recent years, these latest elections seem to have further polarized political stakeholders and plunged the country into a new uncertainty.”

On 1 August 2015, a group of Burundian opposition figures, including former heads of state, met in Addis Ababa and decided to set up a National Council for the Respect of the Arusha Agreement and the Restoration of the Rule of Law (RNAREC). The group have elected Léonard Nyangoma as their leader.

OCHA and the UN Country Team in Burundi have noted that, “given the potential for the crisis to continue or even escalate, humanitarian agencies in Burundi have revised their plan to ensure adequate measures are in place to help save lives and alleviate acute suffering through the provision of necessary coordinated protection and assistance for people in need.”

“When the political and security situation improve, partners are also committed to restore self-reliance through recovery activities targeting the most vulnerable people to build their resilience to shock and lay the foundations for durable solutions.”

Burundi marks 54th assassination anniversary of its independence hero

NEWS STORY

Source: Xinhua News Agency

Bujumbura, 13 October 2015 - Burundians Tuesday marked the 54th anniversary of the assassination of Prince Louis Rwagasore, the east African country's independence hero killed weeks after the victory of his party in legislative elections under the Belgian colonial rule.

Commemoration ceremonies took place countrywide and in the capital Bujumbura, the country's top authorities and diplomats accredited to Burundi joined citizens in a church service at Regina Mundi Cathedral and then at Vugizo hill at Rwagasore's tomb where they paid tribute and laid flowers on the hero's tomb.

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Under tight security, both ceremonies were notably attended by Burundian President Pierre Nkurunziza, the two vice-presidents of the country, the speaker of the national assembly, the senate president, diplomats and members of Burundian royal families.

"Burundian people should follow the behavior of Prince Louis Rwagasore, the hero of Burundi's independence. Rwagasore did all his best for a good change for the Burundian nation," said Ngoyagoye during the church service.

At the end of the church service, the country's top leaders, diplomats and royal families went to Vugizo hill in Kiriri residential area where they laid flowers on the tomb of Rwagasore, his wife and his children who were also killed after his assassination.

Prince Louis Rwagasore was assassinated on Oct. 13, 1961 after the victory on Sept. 18, 1961 of his party - the Union for National Progress (UPRONA) - in legislative elections under the Belgian colonial rule.

Rwagasore, who was declared the country's prime minister one day after his party victory, was the son of King Mwambutsa IV and briefly attended university in Belgium, but left to spearhead his country's anti-colonial movement.

He was killed before Burundi could get its independence that was later grabbed on July 1, 1962.

Shootings, grenade attack in Burundi

NEWS STORY

Source: Reuters

Nairobi, 14 October 2015 - At least seven people were killed in shootings and a grenade attack on Tuesday in Burundi's capital, police and residents said, in a further spate of violence following the election of President Pierre Nkurunziza to a third term.

Residents of the Ngagara neighbourhood - a stronghold for opposition supporters - said two police officers and a television cameraman and his family were among the dead.

Residents identified the cameraperson as Christophe Nkezabahizi who worked with state-run RTNB radio and television station, who they said was shot dead along with his wife and two children.

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"Police found him [Christophe] with his whole family at home [and] killed him alongside other people who were fleeing shootings," said a neighbour and colleague who asked not to be named.

Another Ngagara resident said the two police officers had died in a grenade attack and that their colleagues had then shot dead the attackers in retaliation.

In a broadcast on state-run radio, Deputy Police Spokesperson Pierre Nkurikiye confirmed the deaths of the television cameraman, one police officer and five "criminals" but made no mention of the cameraman's family. He said one police officer had been injured in the grenade attack.

Activists and authorities have reported a number of apparently targeted killings in the central African country, which was thrown into crisis in April when Nkurunziza's plan to remain in office triggered weeks of protests and a failed coup.

Nkurunziza ultimately won in a disputed vote, but tensions have remained high in Bujumbura with frequent clashes between security forces and residents in anti-Nkurunziza strongholds.

Late last month, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein said there had been an "alarming upsurge" in the number of killings and arrests in Burundi after the president was sworn in for his third term.

CONGO (REPUBLIC)

[Exclusif] RFI dévoile le texte du projet de Constitution au Congo

INFORMATION

Source: RFI

RFI vous propose en exclusivité le texte intégral du projet de Constitution qui sera soumis à un référendum le 25 octobre au Congo-Brazzaville. Ce texte de 54 pages comporte 246 articles répartis en 21 titres.

13 octobre 2015 - Ce texte définit le cadre juridique des partis politiques, des collectivités locales et des institutions. Concernant le pouvoir exécutif, il consacre la réduction du mandat du président de la République, qui passe de sept à cinq ans. D'après l'article 65, ce mandat est renouvelable deux fois. Pour être éligible, il faut désormais être âgé de 30 ans révolus, contre 40 ans dans l'actuel texte. La limite d'âge,

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jusqu'à 70 ans, disparaît. Tout candidat doit toutefois jouir « d'un état de bien-être physique et mental constaté par un collège de trois médecins assermentés désignés par la Cour constitutionnelle ».

Autre changement : le retour de la fonction de Premier ministre. Enfin, concernant le pouvoir judiciaire, le Conseil supérieur de la magistrature est présidé par le président de la République. Le texte précise que le pouvoir judiciaire « ne peut empiéter ni sur les attributions du pouvoir exécutif ni sur celles du pouvoir législatif ».

Un projet déjà contesté à Brazzaville

L'opposition estime que ce projet de Constitution est taillé sur mesure aux ambitions politiques du président sortant, soupçonné de vouloir se maintenir au pouvoir. En atteste, selon l'opposition, la disparition de la limite d'âge, qui empêche Denis Sassou-Nguesso de se présenter au prochain scrutin. Depuis fin septembre, l'opposition a organisé deux grandes marches pour protester contre la tenue de ce référendum.

De son côté, le porte-parole du gouvernement, Thierry Mungala, estime que la « limite d'âge n'a pas de raison d'être ». Ce ministre dénonce une « personnalisation à outrance du débat ». « Je n'ai, assure-t-il, jamais entendu le président exprimer une quelconque intention que ce soit ». A ce stade, ajoute ce responsable, « l'enjeu c'est la modification de la gouvernance ».

Congo : le régulateur appelle les médias à défendre la démocratie pendant la campagne référendaire

INFORMATION

Source: Agence Ecofin

14 octobre 2015 - Au Congo, les médias ont reçu des instructions au lendemain de l'ouverture de la campagne électorale pour le référendum du 25 octobre 2015 sur la modification constitutionnelle. Des consignes ont en effet été données par le Conseil supérieur de la liberté de communication (Cslc). Au cours de la rencontre de ce 12 octobre, le président du Cslc, Philippe Mvouo, a dit ce que le régulateur attend des supports de communication.

« Maintenant que la campagne référendaire est ouverte, c'est de l'égalité qu'il s'agit d'appliquer : égalité en temps de passage, égalité en temps de parole », a déclaré Philippe Mvouo, avant de prescrire aux médias audiovisuels des débats contradictoires.

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Il a poursuivi par un plaidoyer sur la défense de la démocratie : « Soyez les défenseurs de la cité contre le mal politique qui ronge les espoirs des citoyens. Parlez, expliquez la démocratie, débarrassez-la des scories du mensonge, de l'imposture, de l'injustice, des contre-vérités, des dogmatismes et de la perversion intellectuelle qui plongent le peuple dans le vertige de la psychose, de la peur et du désespoir. Dites aux politiques que les démocrates ne sont pas des ennemis, qu'ils ne peuvent prôner la guerre que pour dominer ; point n'est besoin de recourir à une quelconque puissance. »

Le référendum du 25 octobre prochain porte sur la modification constitutionnelle par laquelle le président du Congo, Denis Sassou Nguesso, peut briguer un 3ème mandat en 2016. La vie nationale est désormais rythmée par des manifestations pour le oui et celles en faveur du non.

SOUTH SUDAN

IGAD: Creating New States in South Sudan Violates Peace Deal

NEWS STORY

Source: VOA

13 October 2015 - The East African bloc that led nearly two years of peace talks for South Sudan has called on President Salva Kiir to put on hold an order expanding the number of states in South Sudan from 10 to 28.

In a memo released on Saturday and seen this week by South Sudan in Focus, IGAD said the decision to reconfigure South Sudan's internal boundaries and expand the number of states violates the peace deal for the young country.

IGAD said the move detracts from the role that the transitional government of national unity is supposed to play once it is finally set up, and contradicts the position the government held during 19 months of peace talks.

Mr. Kiir's negotiating team at the talks rejected a proposal by the armed opposition led by Riek Machar side to increase the number of states from 10 to 21, IGAD said.

IGAD said it was agreed at the talks that creating more states and devolving power from the central government to the states was something that should be written into a permanent constitution. One of the main tasks of the transitional government will be to draft that new constitution.

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IGAD also said the two sides agreed at the talks that new states should be created with the consent and direct participation of the people of South Sudan - not by a presidential order.

IGAD warned that forging ahead with Mr. Kiir's Oct. 2 order to create more states could open a "Pandora's box of further and endless negotiations on the implementation of the peace agreement."

South Sudan cabinet validates state creation

In spite of IGAD's stern criticism of President Kiir's order, the South Sudanese cabinet adopted the order creating the new states during an extraordinary meeting of the council of ministers on Tuesday.

Information Minister Michael Makuei said the entire cabinet stands behind the president's decision to create new states.

The presidential order is supposed to take effect at the beginning of November - 30 working days after it was announced.

Security arrangements

IGAD also called in the memo for rebels loyal to Machar to join Mr. Kiir's government and agree to the security provisions that were hammered out at workshops in Addis Ababa last month.

Among those provisions is the demilitarization of Juba and the deployment in the capital of a joint force drawn from the government and opposition sides, to ensure security while the country works through a transitional period.

IGAD says that failure to accept the security arrangements will delay the delivery to the people of South Sudan of the peace dividend they deserve after nearly two years of conflict.

IGAD also called on the international community to give technical and financial support to the two sides in South Sudan's conflict so that they are able to implement the peace deal.

Both South Sudanese Vice President James Wani Igga and Machar told VOA last week during a visit to Washington that they cannot start implementing the peace deal - and particularly some of the transitional security arrangements - because they do not have the funds to do so.

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SUDAN

Sudan's al-Bashir hails "fruitful" Algeria visit

NEWS STORY

Source: Xinhua

Algiers, 13 October 2015 - Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir wrapped up his three day visit to Algeria on Tuesday, describing it as "fruitful," with both nations agreeing to expand cooperation in multiple fields.

During his visit, al-Bashir met with Algeria's senior leadership, including President Abdelaziz Bouteflika. The two leaders discussed many issues of shared interests.

Upon his departure, the Sudanese president told reporters at the international airport of Houari Boumediene in Algiers that his visit to Algeria was quite fruitful, as both nations are committed to enhancing their bilateral relations.

"Both nations already enjoy strong political ties, sharing compatible views on significant regional and international issues." He said.

Speaking of his talks with President Bouteflika, al-Bashir said they discussed many topics, including the situation in Syria, Iraq, Libya, Mali, and Yemen, and the solutions to these crises.

"We also agreed to cooperate closely in fighting terrorism, organized crime, drugs, weapons and human trafficking," he noted.

"Algeria is contributing positively towards the stability of Mali, Libya and the Arab region, and both countries are working conjointly to restore stability in Libya, Syria, Iraq and Yemen," he said.

He further specified that "Escalation of terrorism in Libya, Syria, and Iraq is a major threat to both regional and International security and stability, and we are intensifying our cooperation to tackle this complex situation."

As for economic cooperation, al-Bashir stressed that both countries "will consequently work on developing maritime cooperation along with air transport sectors, through opening direct sea and airlines between both countries, facilitating transportation for people, businessmen and goods, therefore ultimately boosting investments."

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Khartoum entreated Algeria to assist it overcome economic hardship due to a decade-long embargo imposed by the West. Two-way trade between the two nations is under 100 million U.S. dollars a year, according to official figures.

TANZANIA

EAC to send election observer team to Tanzania general elections

NEWS STORY

Source: APA

13 October 2015 - A 55 member East African Community (EAC) Elections Observer Mission is due to arrive in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania next Sunday to observe the General Elections slated for 25th October 2015 in both the Tanzania mainland and Zanzibar.

The EAC Mission is a response to the invitation of the National Electoral Commission of Tanzania as well as the decision of the EAC Council of Ministers on observation of elections in the partner states.

The Mission's mandate is to observe the overall electoral environment, pre-election activities, the polling day, the counting and tallying of results.

The Mission, which is being led by former Vice President of Kenya Awori Arthur Athansius Moody, will first undergo a pre-deployment training from 19th to 21st October 2015 in Dar es Salaam before deploying to the regions.

The members of the EAC Election Observer Mission have been drawn from different but complementary disciplines and include members of the East African Legislative Assembly as well as members of national assemblies from Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi, national electoral commissions, national human rights commissions, civil society organizations, and youth representatives from the EAC Youth Ambassadors Forum.

The exclusion of members from Tanzania is consistent with the adopted practice on the Principles of Election Observation and Evaluation which precludes nationals of the host country from participating as election Observers in their own countries.

Commenting ahead of the deployment, the EAC Deputy Secretary General in charge of Political Federation, Charles Njoroge says the Mission is being undertaken pursuant to

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Article 3 of the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community (Treaty) which requires "...adherence to universally acceptable principles of democratic governance and in line with the EAC Principles of Election Observation and Evaluation.

Njoroge asserts that "as the region moves deeper in the integration process with the ultimate goal of having a Political Federation, EAC partner states need to standardize their governance practices and should take keen interest in each other's political and electoral processes".

The Mission is expected to prepare a report that will be submitted to, among others, the National Electoral Commission of Tanzania, through the EAC Council of Ministers for consideration and implementation. The Mission is scheduled to depart Tanzania on 29th October, 2015.

AU to deploy election observers in Tanzania

NEWS STORY

Source: APA

13 October 2015 - Following an invitation from authorities in the United Republic of Tanzania, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, on Tuesday approved the deployment of forty (40) short-term election observers to the upcoming general elections in Tanzania scheduled to take place on 25 October 2015. A statement the AU issued on Tuesday said the deployment of African Union (AU) election observers to Tanzania is in line with the mandate of the African Union Commission as enshrined in relevant AU instruments.

The AU Election Observation Mission (AUEOM) to Tanzania will be led by Armando Emilio Guebuza, former President of Mozambique. The Mission will be deployed from 14 to 30 October 2015 to cover the final preparations and conduct of elections.

At the conclusion of the elections, the Mission will issue a preliminary statement on its findings and observations to be followed by a final report within two months after the elections.

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In Tanzania, No Shortage of Surprises as Poll Nears

ANALYSIS

Source: VOA

Nairobi, 13 October 2015 - Tanzania's presidential elections are less than two weeks away and analysts are debating whether the country's ruling party can retain the presidency. A party favorite was passed over for the nomination, so he defected and became the opposition party's candidate.

Tanzania's general election is fast approaching and is considered to be the country's most contested since the return of multiparty politics in 1992.

Incumbent president Jakaya Kikwete decided to step down after two terms in office, clearing the way for a campaign season filled with plenty of twists and turns.

Research associate Adjoa Anyimadu, with the Africa program at Chatham House in London, said, "What we have right now is an election that no one really could have predicted, I think, this time last year. Early on in the race, toward the presidential candidate being chosen for CCM, many people predicted that that candidate would be Edward Lowassa, because he has been a long-standing, prominent member of that party."

Relative unknown

But Chama Cha Mapinduzi, or CCM, the country's dominant ruling party, held its presidential primaries in July, and instead selected a relatively unknown candidate.

"The choice of John Magufuli, the minister of works, as CCM's candidate, came as a surprise to most people," said Anyimadu. "He was not necessarily very well known internationally. He was not someone who was considered to have an international profile, but within Tanzania he is very well respected for having been a successful minister of works, for having presided over a lot of the development that Tanzania really desperately needs, so road developments and this kind of thing."

Edward Lowassa was prime minister under President Kikwete from 2005 until 2008, when he stepped down after being implicated in the Richmond Energy scandal.

As a former party elite, Lowassa has remained popular and still retains support within CCM. But once he was passed over as CCM's presidential candidate, he defected to Chadema, Tanzania's main opposition party. In August, he was named the presidential candidate for Ukawa, a coalition of four opposition parties including Chadema.

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American University associate professor of government Adrienne LeBas said Lowassa is the candidate whose name has become synonymous with scandal.

“He does have a reputation for corruption, and when he was prime minister the opposition used to run on a sort of clean broom kind of campaign, citing corruption, inside the administration. So they have now placed this corrupt minister as their flag bearer.”

Campaign promises

LeBas said both of the leading candidates are promising to improve lives for ordinary Tanzanians.

“Both are really running on services provision, saying that they are going to bring water, education, or, you know, roads, or electricity or any of these things that voters want,” she said. “Now in the past in Tanzania, opposition parties have not really been able to run on that platform very effectively, they do not have any track record actually delivering services.”

But because Lowassa is a former prime minister, LeBas said he can tell voters he already has brought them services, whether building a dam or bringing them water.

Yet another unexpected occurrence in this year's election cycle.

Tanzanians head to the polls on October 25.