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



MEDIA MONITORING

15 July 2015

DRC

Success of UN DR Congo mission hinges on ‘constructive partnership’ with Government, Security Council told

ARTICLE

Source: UN News Centre

14 July 2015 - The capacity of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) to fulfil its mandate rests on “persistent engagement” with the authorities, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the Mission, Martin Kobler, told the Security Council today.

“The success of our mandate rests on a continued, constructive, partnership with the Government,” in particular regarding the security situation in the East and the electoral process.

On the security situation, there is “a ray of hope on one of the front lines”, he said, describing ongoing military cordon and search operations conducted by the national Congolese army (FARDC) supported by MONUSCO forces against the Force de résistance patriotique en Ituri (FPRI).

“While the priority is to ensure that the group disarmed voluntarily, the use of force proved inevitable after the lapse of three consecutive deadlines,” he explained.

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However, Mr. Kobler said, joint operations against the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) in North Kivu, South Kivu and Katanga had been at a standstill for five months. While the Congolese Government had made great strides in the past decade in restoring security, the population in East lived at the mercy of a number of armed groups, he explained.

Despite the progress in dislodging the FDLR from some of its strongholds, the FARDC was finding it difficult to consolidate its hold in liberated areas, he said, adding that paralysis had cascaded into other fields of operation. “Waiting is not an option,” he said.

DRC will hold presidential and legislative elections in November 2016, which under the imperatives of a Security Council resolution must be transparent, credible and respectful of the Constitution and the electoral calendar. The responsibility for such elections, however, ultimately rested with the Government and a number of actions were required, Mr. Kobler noted.

“Urgent needs include a budget and a realistic electoral calendar. The voters’ registry need to be updated and political space must be given to the opposition and civil society,” the Special Representative noted. Welcoming President Joseph Kabila’s initiative to reach out to a wide range of stakeholders to ensure consensus, he underlined that such consultations should not delay the elections.

While there had been progress in the fight against sexual violence in the country, violence against women and girls remained endemic, deplored Mr. Kobler. “We must ensure that the women’s bodies are not used as battlegrounds in never-ending wars,” he said, stressing the need to ensure victims had access to justice.

UN drops demand for Congo to replace generals accused of abuses

NEWS STORY

Source: Reuters World Service

By: Michelle Nichols

14 July 2015 - The United Nations has dropped a demand for two Democratic Republic of Congo generals accused of human rights abuses to be replaced before U.N. peacekeepers can resume cooperation with the Congolese army on operations against a Rwandan rebel group.

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Martin Kobler, head of the U.N. mission in Congo, said talks continued with the government on working jointly to tackle the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) rebels in the country's east, but that the two generals still remain in place.

"We do not request the replacement of the generals ... anymore," Kobler said on Tuesday, speaking after he briefed the U.N. Security Council, adding: "There are certain conditions which have to be fulfilled."

"I'm very confident we will have a solution soon," he said, without elaborating on what conditions needed to be met.

U.N. peacekeepers and the Congolese army (FARDC) had jointly planned a campaign to take on Rwanda's FDLR, which includes former soldiers and Hutu militiamen responsible for the Central African country's 1994 genocide, after it failed to meet a January deadline to disarm.

But the U.N. mission (MONUSCO) withdrew its planned support for the anti-FDLR operations in February, which would have ranged from food and transport to surveillance drones and attack helicopters, after Congo appointed two generals to head the offensive who are accused of rights abuses.

Under the United Nations human rights due diligence policy, the world body has to ensure its support to non-U.N. security forces does not contribute to grave human rights violations.

Kobler said the Congolese government had complained that it had been unaware which of its army officers were blacklisted under the policy, so the U.N. mission was now notifying them.

Western diplomats say a months-long FARDC campaign against the FDLR has achieved little and revived doubts about the will and capacity of Congo to defeat a group at the heart of decades of conflict in Africa's Great Lakes region.

DR Congo has a different view and has said it has been making progress in an offensive against Rwandan rebels in the country's conflict-torn east.

In March, the Security Council refused to cut the number of peacekeepers in Congo until progress is made in the offensive against the FDLR, snubbing government calls for a decrease.

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Progress in UN-Congo military action against rebel group

NEWS STORY

Source: Associated Press

14 July 2015 - A U.N. envoy says Congolese troops supported by U.N. peacekeepers have neutralized about 25 percent of a rebel group in northeast Congo -- but joint operations against the larger FDLR military group remain at a standstill.

Martin Kobler told the U.N. Security Council Tuesday that the success of the joint operation against the Ituri Patriotic Resistance Force, also known as FRPI, has shown what can be achieved when the Congolese army and the U.N. force work together.

He said the ongoing operations against FRPI are the most effective since the M23 rebel group was toppled in 2013.

The U.N. had hoped to be part of a joint operation against the FDLR but ended its support after two Congolese generals linked to human rights violations were picked to lead the government operation.

RWANDA

Rwanda's Main Opposition Disappointed by Term Limit Vote

NEWS STORY

Source: VOA

15 July 2015 - The president of Rwanda's small but main opposition Democratic Green Party said he's disappointed by parliament's vote Tuesday for a constitutional amendment to allow President Paul Kagame to run for a third term.

The parliament said it was acting on the wishes of 3.7 million Rwandans who signed a petition to amend Article 101 of the constitution, which limits the president to just two terms.

The Green Party had challenged the move to amend the constitution in the Rwandan Supreme Court, and the hearing is set for July 29.

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A week ago, the party said it was having trouble finding a lawyer to take up its case after most of the lawyers said they had either been threatened or did not want to go against the wishes of 3.7 million Rwandans.

Green Party President Frank Habineza said the parliament could have waited for the Supreme Court to first render its decision.

“We are very disappointed today because we don’t see any reason why the parliament rush[ed] into such a discussion because they know very well that the Supreme Court is set to hear our case on the 29th of July which is just two weeks away,” he said.

Habineza said his party hopes to use the parliament's vote as evidence before the Supreme Court that the constitution can only be revised to reduce the duration of the president’s mandate because all along people had said his case had no merit.

“We had gone to the Supreme Court first of all to ask the court to stop parliament from changing the constitution, and two, to ask the court to give a deeper understanding of Article 101 and 193. But we believe that these articles are intangible and cannot be changed, and we want the court to confirm that,” Habineza said.

Supporters of Kagame have said the president deserves another term because he has restored order and rebuilt Rwanda’s economy.

Habineza said 3.7 million petitioners, if that figure is true, are not a true representation of the Rwandan people’s wishes because the country has a population of about 11 million, and added he had gone to Nairobi, Kenya to find a lawyer to represent his party at the Supreme Court.

“We have got another lawyer right now, and we are trying to get another from Uganda. So this time around we believe that whatever happens, we shall have a lawyer, whether from Kenya, Uganda, or Rwanda,” Habineza said.

Rwanda parliament votes in support of Kagame third term

NEWS STORY

Source: AFP

14 July 2015 - Rwandan lawmakers voted Tuesday in support of a constitutional change to allow strongman Paul Kagame a third term in power as president, backing a petition signed by millions of citizens.

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The crowded parliament, packed with members of the public who had come to watch, cheered and chanted Kagame's name after all lawmakers present in both the lower and upper houses voted in the first step of the process for constitutional change.

"I want to thank all members of parliament for showing support to the people's wishes," parliament speaker Donatilla Mukabalisa said.

Any change must be also passed by a national referendum.

Over 3.7 million people -- well over half of the voters -- signed a petition calling for a change to Article 101 of the constitution, which limits the president to two terms, according to Rwandan media.

"There was a request that we engage the people and consult them about the amendment of 101, and other articles," Mukabalisa added. "I promise you we are going to fast track the process as requested."

Parliament was crammed to capacity Tuesday with both lawmakers and the public, with the two chambers holding separate, parallel debates.

Nkusi Juvenal, a member of parliament from the Social Democratic Party (PSD), said that "3.7 million Rwandans from different constituencies and walks of life have spoken, we are their representatives here, we have no option but to... listen to their pleas."

At one point, lawmakers and the public chanted slogans of support for Kagame.

"Paul Kagame, oyee! (oh yes)," they shouted.

The public were invited to watch the debate.

"I wanted to participate, so that is why I am here -- I am very proud," Alpha Mundendke said, a 23-year old student in parliament for the first time.

Elections in 2017

But Jean-Claude Nteziimana, from Rwanda's tiny but main opposition group, the Green Party, had complained that parliament should not vote on a decision to press ahead with any constitutional changes until their challenge opposing it had been heard in court.

Kagame, 57, has been at the top of Rwandan politics since 1994, when an offensive by his Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) rebels put an end to a genocide by Hutu extremists that left an estimated 800,000 people dead, most of whom were Tutsis.

As minister of defence and then vice president, Kagame was widely seen as the power behind the throne even before he took the presidency in 2003, winning 95 percent of the

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vote. He was re-elected in 2010 with a similarly resounding mandate. The next elections are due in 2017.

From the trauma of genocide, he has been painted as a guarantor of stability and economic development, earning praise from donors -- and his supporters say many in Rwanda view the prospect of his departure as a step into the unknown. Critics say he has silenced opposition and the media.

Kagame says the decision is for the "Rwandan people".

"I have not asked anyone to change the constitution and I have not told anybody how or what to think about 2017," Kagame said in April.

Any change to the constitution would require a vote in support by at least three-quarters of both parliamentary houses, followed by a national referendum.

The move comes amid a wider controversy in Africa over efforts by leaders to change constitutions in order to stay in office.

Neighbouring Burundi has been in turmoil since April when President Pierre Nkurunziza announced his bid to stand for a third term in polls, a move branded by opponents as unconstitutional and a violation of a peace deal that paved the way to end civil war in 2006.

BURUNDI

Burundi crisis gets serious for regional leaders

NEWS STORY

Source: IRIN News

14 July 2015 - Burundi's political crisis is centred on a leader who is refusing to leave office after almost 10 years. The man sent in to mediate has been in power for almost 30. Apart from that irony, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni's arrival in Bujumbura underlines just how high the stakes are for regional leaders.

As the increasingly violent events in Burundi continue to unfold, its neighbours are watching ever more closely. Since President Pierre Nkurunziza announced he would seek a third term in April, protests have killed dozens and displaced more than 145,000.

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In addition to confrontations between security forces and demonstrators, clashes between the military and armed groups have reached a new peak with a report from the army spokesperson on Monday claiming that 31 rebels had been killed in northern Kayanza province, close to the Rwandan border.

Concern goes further than refugees spilling across borders. Several heads of state in the Great Lakes region are seeking third terms or have been in power for more than 10 years. What happens in Burundi, a member of the East African Community (EAC) since 2007, could have serious ripple effects.

The presidential election has been postponed until 21 July, after African leaders called for a two-week delay to the original 15 July poll date.

Local and parliamentary elections were held on 5 July. Nkurunziza's ruling CNDD-FDD party overwhelmingly won, taking 77 out of a possible 100 seats. The elections were boycotted by the opposition, and the European Union and the African Union withdrew their election monitors, claiming the election could not be free or fair.

As tensions build ahead of the presidential poll, IRIN looks at the positions of the key regional and international actors:

Uganda

On 6 July, President Museveni was appointed lead mediator by EAC heads of state. He arrived in the Burundian capital Bujumbura on Tuesday to begin mediating a new round of talks. While he has the blessing of the president, the opposition has so far rejected his nomination as mediator.

Museveni, who has now been president of Uganda for 29 years, is a problematic choice. In 2005, he eliminated term limits through a constitutional amendment. In 2016, he will seek his seventh term in office. At home, the Ugandan leader also frequently clamps down harshly on opposition groups and those opposed to his rule. Even since assuming his role as Burundi mediator, he has arrested two prominent opposition leaders in Uganda.

"Domestically, Museveni does not have a track record of being conciliatory to his own opposition. And so the Burundian opposition is looking at his track record in Uganda when they think of his role as mediator," Yolande Bouka, researcher in conflict analysis and risk prevention at the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), told IRIN. "I'm not quite sure that the process will go further with him at the helm."

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However, Bouka noted that the opposition is unlikely to be able to persuade the Burundian government and the EAC to change mediator, partly because of disunity in its own ranks but also because Museveni is unlikely to be moved by their demands.

“I would be very surprised if Museveni recused himself because of opposition pressure,” Bouka said. “I don’t think the EAC is as responsive to this kind of pressure as the United Nations.”

Two UN-appointed mediators to the Burundi crisis have already stepped down following government pressure.

Tanzania

Tanzania has historically played a large role in peace negotiations in Burundi and the country has seen an influx of nearly 77,000 refugees since the crisis in its much smaller northeastern neighbour began.

Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete hosted the latest EAC peace talks, and Nkurunziza was in the Tanzanian city of Dar-es-Salaam for a heads of state summit on the Burundi crisis in May when army leaders staged their abortive coup.

Analysts suggest that Tanzania crucially shifted its position on the crisis.

“Initially Kikwete had been saying that Nkurunziza had to leave, but it is Tanzania that at that critical moment at the end of May stopped insisting on Nkurunziza’s departure,” said Devon Curtis, senior lecturer in Politics and International Studies at the University of Cambridge, speaking at a Rift Valley Institute (RVI) event in Nairobi.

“There’s animosity of course between Tanzania and Rwanda, and I think that Tanzania thought that the coup attempt on the 13th of May was supported by Rwanda.”

Since mid-May, Tanzania has stopped talking about the issue of term limits and instead focused on attempting to find a negotiated, political solution.

Meanwhile, the Tanzanian ruling party appears able to change leadership smoothly – it has nominated John Magufuli as its leader for upcoming elections, replacing Kikwete after two terms in power.

Rwanda

Since the crisis began, Rwanda has become increasingly vocal in its criticism of Nkurunziza. Paul Kagame, however, is quick to stress that his concern is not with term limits (indeed, he too will be seeking a third stint as president in the next general election in 2017, and parliament on Tuesday voted to support a change in the constitution to

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allow him to do so*). Instead, he points to the performance of the Burundi president, accusing him of being ineffective and unpopular.

In May, he stated to China Central TV that: “If your own citizens are telling you, 'we don't want you to do this or to lead us,' it is because they are saying you are not delivering much to us. So how do you say, 'I am staying anyway whether you want me or not?' This is a serious problem.”

“Rwanda is saying that the Imbonerakure, the youth wing that's tied to the ruling party, has been receiving arms from the FDLR (rebel group) in Congo,” noted Curtis. But the accusations go both ways.

See: Who are the Imbonerakure and is Burundi unravelling?

In recent days, Rwanda has been accused by the governor of Kayanza province of involvement in a series of attacks there. “There's been a lot of speculation for the last couple of months about Rwanda supporting parts of the opposition,” said Bouka. “Obviously, Rwanda has a history of supporting dissident groups in places like the DRC so it's definitely in the realm of possibility.”

Nonetheless, Bouka cautioned that Rwanda is hosting a large number of journalists, opposition leaders and refugees, and therefore some of the support might be explained by their presence.

“If it is true that the government is involved, it would definitely change the dynamics,” she said.

DRC

The crisis in Burundi will undoubtedly be affected by the situation in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo – where regional actors were involved in a protracted civil war.

“Both CNDD-FDD and FNL [a Burundian opposition group that in previous years had fought in eastern Congo] parties have – in their days as anti-government militias – operated in and from rear bases around Uvira (in the eastern DRC),” Christoph Vogel, associate lecturer at the Institute for African Studies, University of Cologne, told IRIN.

“More recently, UN reports have accused the CNDD-FDD government of organising military trainings of parts of the Imbonerakure youth wing in the Ruzizi plain (which runs along the border between Burundi and the DRC),” Vogel said.

“Over the past months, the security situation in South Kivu along the Burundian border has been rather calm, but bearing in mind historical spill-overs, regional escalations should not completely be ruled out.”

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However, Vogel noted that the size of Burundi, which is very small, means that it is at least for now, unlikely that the crisis could escalate to levels similar to what has been seen in eastern Congo.

Congolese President Joseph Kabila will also be watching events in Burundi closely. He too faces the possibility of a third-term vote next year. In January, he cancelled an initiative for a country-wide census, a move that would have effectively postponed the elections, after widespread protests in the country's capital Kinshasa.

South Africa

President Jacob Zuma was personally involved in the 2000 Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement – which helped Burundi eventually emerge five years later from civil war. While initially strongly against Nkurunziza's third-term bid, Zuma has also softened his stance since April.

“I think that the South Africans are leading from behind, and it's quite unfortunate given that along with the African Union, they are guarantors of the Arusha Agreement,” said Bouka.

“Zuma at first publicly enunciated that position [against a third-term bid]. But now his officials seem to be prevaricating, wondering if the Burundi constitutional court's decision to validate Nkurunziza's third-term bid should be respected, for fear of undermining Burundi's sovereignty and rule of law,” wrote Peter Fabricius, an ISS consultant.

“This ambiguous position of the South African government betrays more sympathies to the ruling parties than to the Arusha Agreement,” added Bouka.

South Africa played a crucial role in the 2000 Arusha Agreement.

“Arusha would not have happened, I think, had it not been for the South African involvement. In particular, South Africa had a protection force to protect politicians that were returning from exile to take their place in the transitional institutions after the signing of the peace agreement and then there was the very first African Union peacekeeping mission that was in Burundi from 2003-2004,” said Curtis.

Of late, perhaps due to increased domestic concerns, there has been less focus on Burundi from the South Africans. “South Africa has to some extent disengaged from the Great Lakes region,” noted Bouka. She predicted that any solution to Burundi would contain greater engagement from Burundi's more immediate neighbours, and the role of South Africa would be diminished.

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African Union

By contrast to some of the regional actors, the African Union, at least through its chairperson, has remained fairly consistent in calling for respect of the Arusha Agreement and an electoral environment that is genuinely free and fair. The Arusha Agreement, most agree, is categorical in its requirement of two-term presidencies, and has come to be seen as a proxy for expressing displeasure with Nkurunziza's decision.

In a press statement on 26 April, the chairperson of the AU, Dlamini Zuma, "called on all stakeholders to strictly respect the 2000 Arusha Agreement, the constitution and the electoral law." In mid-June, the African Union reiterated this position.

The strongest indication of AU intent is that they refused to send observers to the June parliamentary and local elections, stating that there was no way they could be free or fair. The Burundian government appears to have fallen out of favour with the AU and, for now, seems unwilling to accept its mediators.

However, not everyone within the African regional bloc is so opposed to Nkurunziza's bid. Zimbabwean leader Robert Mugabe, the current chair of the AU, recently dubbed the two-term limit "a rope around our own neck."

Therefore, at least in the short-term future, the role of the AU is likely to be more limited.

For now, the situation seems to be at an impasse. No clear negotiator or regional leader has emerged, and Nkurunziza seems unwilling to step down. The opposition, meanwhile, is very fragmented, while some elements appear to be becoming more radicalised and violent.

"There's a risk of economic paralysis as a result of the suspension of aid, together with the drastic reduction of internal revenue," Willy Nindorera, an independent consultant based in Bujumbura, Burundi, said at the RVI event in Nairobi. "We risk seeing the questioning of the Arusha accords and democracy, and the risk of return to armed conflict."

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UGANDA**Chrétiens et musulmans mobilisés pour la démocratie en Ouganda**

ARTICLE

Source: <http://www.bonnenouvelle.ch/bn2/index.php/en-bref/item/1017-chretiens-et-musulmans-mobilises-pour-la-democratie-en-ouganda>

14 Juillet 2015 - Le Conseil interreligieux d'Ouganda, IRC, composé de dirigeants chrétiens et musulmans du pays, a exhorté les partis politiques à soutenir la démocratie. Dans une déclaration en seize points publiée par le quotidien ougandais «The Monitor», l'IRC a appelé les jeunes à refuser d'être manipulés à des fins politiques. Ils ont en outre invité les médias à cesser le journalisme sensationnaliste, tout en exhortant le gouvernement à accélérer les réformes électorales constitutionnelles. Les dignitaires chrétiens et musulmans ougandais ont mis en garde contre les risques d'achat de votes lors des élections de 2016, estimant que cela constituerait un désastre pour le pays.

Le religieux pas séparé du politique

Les responsables religieux ont déclaré, lors d'une conférence de presse au siège de l'IRC, dans la capitale Kampala, que malgré les appels répétés de personnalités politiques leur demandant de rester loin de la vie politique, ils étaient des «citoyens de l'Ouganda» et qu'ils avaient un rôle à jouer dans l'élaboration de l'agenda du pays. Les dignitaires ont indiqué s'être mis d'accord sur quelques points destinés à guider leur action pour assurer la paix et la stabilité dans le pays. Le plan de travail de l'IRC prévoit notamment des rencontres avec les candidats aux élections pour les interpeller sur leur programme.

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CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

UN warns against excluding refugees from C. Africa elections

NEWS STORY

Source: AFP

14 July 2015 - The UN on Tuesday said it was "alarmed" that authorities in the Central African Republic planned to block refugees from voting in October polls, with nearly 200,000 mostly Muslims citizens facing exclusion.

Hundreds of thousands of people have fled deadly civil unrest in the landlocked nation since 2013, with the upcoming vote seen as a key test for the prospects of reconciliation.

"We believe it would be a serious setback, not to say dangerous, to exclude refugees from the elections," Leo Dobbs, spokesman for the UN refugee agency UNHCR, said in Geneva.

The UN has previously said that organising inclusive elections in the troubled nation was crucial to restoring peace.

Dobbs' comments followed a decision from the country's National Transitional Council to reject a draft electoral bill that would allow absentee voting.

The UN estimates that one tenth of the country's population (roughly 460,000 people) has fled the country.

Among that group, the UNHCR said 190,000 people should be eligible to vote, 80 to 90 percent of whom are Muslim.

With sectarian violence persisting, it was unrealistic to expect the displaced to return home for polling day, the UN said.

"We are concerned that this decision... will exclude a significant section of the electorate from taking part in the political process that should lead to democratic and inclusive elections," the agency added.

The Central African vote is currently set for October 18, but the polls have already been pushed back three times as the former French colony grapples with its worst crisis since independence in 1960.

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Centrafrique: L'ONU condamne l'exclusion des réfugiés des futures élections

ARTICLE

Source: UN via Journaldebangui.com

Le Coordonnateur humanitaire de l'ONU en République centrafricaine, Aurélien A. Agbénonci, a exprimé lundi sa profonde préoccupation face à la décision du Conseil national de transition.

14 Juillet 2015 - Le Coordonnateur humanitaire de l'ONU en République centrafricaine, Aurélien A. Agbénonci, a exprimé lundi sa profonde préoccupation face à la décision du Conseil national de transition (CNT) du pays de refuser le droit de vote aux futures élections présidentielles à l'ensemble des réfugiés centrafricains ayant fui dans les Etats voisins.

«J'attire l'attention de chacun sur les conséquences d'une telle exclusion pour la crédibilité et le caractère inclusif des prochaines élections que nous souhaitons tous transparentes, libres, inclusives et ouvertes à toutes et tous», a déclaré M. Agbénonci dans un communiqué de presse publié à Bangui.

Depuis décembre 2013, a-t-il rappelé, environ 25% de la population centrafricaine a été déplacée à l'intérieur du pays et plus de 460.000 personnes se sont réfugiées au Cameroun, au Congo, en République démocratique du Congo (RDC) et au Tchad.

Le Coordonnateur humanitaire a estimé que cet électorat potentiel de taille significative ne pouvait pas être ignoré au simple prétexte que les réfugiés ne sont toujours pas retournés en République centrafricaine.

«Le retour des réfugiés dans leur pays d'origine est strictement volontaire et ce principe ne peut être violé. Il est vrai que le processus de réconciliation est amorcé mais la décision du retour relève des réfugiés eux-mêmes», a affirmé M. Agbénonci, précisant que le Haut-Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés (HCR) et toute la communauté humanitaire présente en République centrafricaine partagent actuellement ses inquiétudes.

La date du premier tour des élections présidentielle et des élections législatives est fixée au 18 octobre et celle de l'éventuel second tour pour la présidentielle au 22 novembre.

Au cours des dernières années, le pays a connu une crise politique majeure qui a débouché sur un conflit violent. Environ 2,7 millions de personnes, soit plus de la moitié

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de la population centrafricaine, ont actuellement besoin d'une assistance humanitaire d'urgence.

RCA: qui finance la guerre?

ANALYSE

Source: BBC Afrique

Le rapport publié ce mercredi 15 juillet par l'ONG britannique Global Witness est intitulé: " Bois de sang. Comment l'Europe a aidé à financer la guerre en République centrafricaine".

14 Juillet 2015 - Le document démontre, témoignages et documents à l'appui, de quelle manière les entreprises européennes, après avoir été rançonnées, ensuite pillées pour certaines par les rebelles de la Séléka, monnaient par la suite leur sécurité en finançant la présence sur leurs concessions de forces de protection issues des rangs des belligérants.

L'ONG déplore que ces entreprises signent des contrats lucratifs d'exploitation forestière avec des miliciens.

Elle dit avoir identifié des opérateurs français, allemands, chinois et libanais qui ont payé des millions de dollars aux rebelles armés.

Le groupe d'experts sur la Centrafrique mandaté par le Conseil de sécurité des Nations Unies note dans un rapport qui date de juillet 2014, que « des entreprises forestières ont payé des commandants de la Séléka jusqu'à 6.000 dollars américains par mois pour la protection de leurs installations à Bangui ».

Dans un nouveau rapport, Global Witness a également accusé l'Union Européenne de ne pas empêcher le commerce du bois illégal en Europe.

Des milliers de personnes ont été tuées ces dernières années en République centrafricaine au cours d'un conflit entre les rebelles de l'ex Séléka et les Anti Balaka.

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REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Congo: le dialogue national s'interroge sur l'avenir des institutions

REPORTAGE

Source: RFI

Au Congo-Brazzaville, les travaux du dialogue national sur l'avenir des institutions, voulu par le président Denis Sassou-Nguesso, ont démarré ce lundi 13 juillet en fin de journée à Sibiti, dans le sud-ouest du pays. Les opposants, qualifiés de radicaux, manquent à l'appel. Les travaux seront dirigés pendant cinq jours par le président du Sénat, André Obami Itou.

14 Juillet 2015 - Prévues pour 15h, heure locale, la cérémonie d'ouverture a commencé avec une heure et demie de retard. Le protocole a tenu à vérifier minutieusement, sur la liste, le nom de chaque participant et a ainsi constaté que les représentants de l'opposition, regroupés au sein du Frocad – Front républicain pour le respect de l'ordre constitutionnel et l'alternance démocratique – ont manqué à l'appel. L'ordre du jour, notamment le point sur l'avenir des institutions, n'est pas de leur goût.

A l'ouverture du dialogue national, le directeur de cabinet du président congolais a exclu surtout le diktat. Les discussions doivent être donc totalement ouvertes entre les 500 participants qui représentent différentes sensibilités.

Les travaux vont être dirigés cinq jours durant par André Obami Itou, président du Sénat. Il est à la tête d'un présidium des travaux composé de sept membres. A ce dialogue, tout le monde va rechercher le consensus autour de deux questions d'intérêt général: « Comment organiser au mieux les scrutins à venir dans notre pays » et faut-il faire « évoluer les institutions de la République? ».

Au Congo-Brazzaville, la Constitution, adoptée en 2002, limite à deux le nombre de mandats que peut exercer un président. Elle stipule aussi que nul ne peut être candidat à la fonction suprême s'il a plus de 70 ans. Agé de 72 ans, le chef de l'Etat Denis Sassou-Nguesso cumule plus de trente ans à la tête du pays. Il a dirigé le Congo à l'époque du parti unique, de 1979 jusqu'aux élections pluralistes de 1992 qu'il a perdues. Il est revenu au pouvoir en 1997 à l'issue d'une violente guerre civile et a été élu président en 2002 et réélu en 2009.

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KENYA

Feds issue travel warning ahead of Obama's trip to Kenya

NEWS STORY

Source: <http://thehill.com/policy/national-security/247697-feds-issue-travel-warning-ahead-of-obamas-trip-to-kenya>

14 July 2015 - Weeks before President Obama is set to make a historic visit to Kenya, the State Department is warning Americans about the risks of crime and terror attacks in the country.

On Monday, the State Department issued a travel alert notifying Americans that the Global Entrepreneurship Summit in Nairobi could turn them into targets.

“As with all large public events, there is the opportunity for criminal elements to target participants and other visitors,” the State Department said in its Monday warning.

“Large-scale public events such as this summit can also be a target for terrorists.”

Obama is scheduled to visit the summit later this month, in his first visit to his father's homeland as president.

“I'll have the opportunity to meet some of the brilliant young entrepreneurs from across Africa and around the world,” he said earlier this year.

Hopefully, he added, “we'll be able to announce new investments and commitments that will pay off for years to come.”

Among other steps, the State Department on Monday encouraged travelers to register with the U.S. Embassy in Kenya and stay on the lookout for possible criminals and terrorists.

Despite its growing economy and status as a regional hub, Kenya has been hampered by spillover violence from neighboring Somalia, where al Qaeda affiliate al-Shabaab controls large swaths of the country.

In April, al-Shabbab gunmen killed 148 people — many of them students — at the Garissa University College, 230 miles east of Nairobi. A 2013 attack at Nairobi's Westgate Shopping Mall left at least 67 people dead and injured five Americans along with hundreds of other people.

The State Department's alert expires on July 30, after the summit ends.

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SOUTH SUDAN

Soudan du Sud: Ban Ki-moon appelle une nouvelle fois à un arrêt du conflit

ARTICLE

Source: Centre d'actualités de l'ONU

New York, 13 Juillet 2015 - Le Secrétaire général de l'ONU, Ban Ki-moon, a appelé une nouvelle fois lundi à un arrêt du conflit au Soudan du Sud, en marge d'une conférence sur le financement du développement à Addis-Abeba, en Ethiopie.

« Nous sommes d'accord. Le conflit au Soudan du Sud doit cesser », a dit M. Ban lors d'une conférence de presse à l'issue d'une rencontre sur la situation dans ce pays avec le Premier ministre d'Ethiopie, Hailemariam Desalegn, et la Présidente de la Commission de l'Union africaine, Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma.

« Aujourd'hui, j'appelle de nouveau le Président Kiir et l'ancien Vice-Président Dr. Riek Machar à abandonner la guerre, pour le bien de la population et l'avenir du Soudan du Sud », a déclaré le chef de l'ONU. « Je les exhorte au compromis, à forger un accord et à respecter leurs promesses de protéger la population du Soudan du Sud ».

M. Ban a rappelé que la situation humanitaire dans le pays était catastrophique, alors que plus de 1,6 million de personnes ont été déplacées, que plus de 600.000 autres ont fui dans les pays voisins et que près de 4,6 millions de personnes sont confrontées à l'insécurité alimentaire.

C'est dans ce contexte que le Soudan du Sud a célébré le 9 juillet le quatrième anniversaire de son indépendance.

« Le Soudan du Sud peut encore être sauvé si les deux parties dépassent leurs propres intérêts, montrent du courage et du leadership », a souligné le Secrétaire général.

Selon lui, la paix au Soudan du Sud nécessite aussi le soutien de ses voisins. « J'exhorte le Président (d'Ouganda) Museveni et le Président (du Soudan) Bachir à exercer leur influence sur les parties afin de les aider à mettre fin à ce conflit », a-t-il ajouté.

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Ban urges South Sudan leaders to ‘give up war’ and forge a political agreement

NEWS STORY

Source: UN News Centre

13 July 2015 - Just days after marking the somber fourth anniversary of South Sudan’s independence, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today urged the leaders of the country to end hostilities and to move beyond their “partial interests” and show courage and leadership.

“Today, I repeat my call to President Kiir and former Vice-President Dr. Riek Machar to give up war – for the sake of the people and future of South Sudan. I urge them to compromise, forge a political deal and make true on their promises to protect their people,” declared Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon from Addis-Ababa, where he is attending the Third International Conference on Financing for Development.

Speaking to the press after a “productive” meeting with Hailemariam Desalegn, Prime Minister of Ethiopia, and Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, he said the United Nations is offering full support to Intergovernmental Authority on Development Partners Forum (IGAD), “so that collectively we show the parties a single way forward.”

“We are in agreement. The conflict in South Sudan must stop,” Mr. Ban stated.

Recalling vividly the high hopes invested in this new nation at its birth four years ago, he said he was “heartbroken” for the people of South Sudan whose aspirations for a peaceful and prosperous future have been “shattered so unnecessarily, so tragically.”

The humanitarian situation in the country is “appalling”, with over 1.6 million displaced people and over 600,000 refugees in the neighboring countries, and close to 4.6 million facing severe food insecurity. Parties must respect international humanitarian law and enable unfettered access to those in need of assistance, stressed the Secretary-General.

Deeply disturbed by the level of violence and the unspeakable atrocities committed against civilians, he reminded all parties to the conflict that those responsible for serious human rights violations will be held accountable.

“True leadership means making compromises. It means stopping the fighting, stopping the killing and raping, stopping the destruction of the country.”

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Convinced that peace in South Sudan also requires support from its neighbors, the UN top official also urged Uganda President Yoweri Museveni and Sudan President Omar Al-Bashir to use their influence on the parties to help end this conflict.

The UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) is now accommodating more than 150,000 internally displaced persons, which is a figure that it was never deal with in the first place. Despite this difficult position, UNMISS is doing its best to provide life-saving support to them, added the Secretary-General, expecting South Sudan authorities to “fully” cooperate and provide support.

SUDAN

Security Council extends UN peacekeeping force in Abyei through December 2015

NEWS STORY

Source: UN News Centre

14 July 2015 - The United Nations Security Council has extended the mandate of the Organization’s interim peacekeeping force in Abyei – a resource-rich area contested by Sudan and South Sudan – as part of ongoing efforts to maintain peace and protect civilians in the disputed territory.

Using language similar to their previous action on the issue, the 15-member body adopted the resolution in a unanimous vote held earlier today while recognizing that the continuing tensions in Abyei and along the border between Sudan and South Sudan constituted “a serious threat to international peace and security.”

The mandate of the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) was extended until 15 December 2015. The force, set up by the Council in June 2011 following an outbreak of violence after Sudanese troops took control of the oil-rich area in the weeks before South Sudan became independent, is tasked with overseeing the demilitarization of the area and maintaining security.

Among other measures, the Council welcomed the resumption of the work of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee, otherwise known as the AJOC in March 2015. The UN body had previously declared the AJOC’s functioning as important “to ensure steady progress” on the implementation of the 20 June 2011 Agreement, which provides for

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temporary administrative arrangements for Abyei and the withdrawal of troops by both sides.

At the same time, the Council condemned the “intermittent presence” of South Sudan security service personnel and the deployment of Diffra Oil Police units in the Abyei area and reiterated its demands that the Government of South Sudan “immediately and without preconditions” redeploy such units away from Abyei.

The Security Council also underscored that UNISFA’s protection of civilians mandate required the peacekeeping force to take “necessary actions” in order to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence.

TANZANIA

Police: 7 Killed in Gun Attack on Tanzania Police Post

NEWS STORY

Source: AP

13 July 2015 - Tanzania's police chief says gunmen attacked a police station in the city of Dar es Salaam, killing seven people and injuring four others.

Ernest Mangu told reporters Monday that four of the victims were police officers. Three civilians were also killed in the attack on Sunday night, although the police believe one of them was among the attackers.

Mangu said the gunmen ran away with an unknown number of firearms and ammunition.

There have been at least three attacks on Tanzanian police stations this year.

Last month a police officer was killed in an attack on a police station in the Mkuranga district of Tanzania's coastal region.