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



MEDIA MONITORING

30 April 2015

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Ugandan ADF Rebel Commander Killed in Congo

Source: VOA

Beni (DRC), 29 April 2015 - The Democratic Republic of Congo's army says it has captured a key base of the Ugandan Islamist ADF rebels in the eastern DRC, and killed an ADF chief of staff.

The attack on the base was a continuation of Operation Sokola, an offensive against the ADF launched by the Congolese army in Beni territory in January 2014. Sokola means "clean-up" in the Congolese language, Lingala.

Most of the ADF's main camps were overrun in the first few months of the operation and about 60 prisoners were taken; but United Nations experts concluded at the end of last year that the ADF had been weakened, not wiped out, and had lost few of its commanders.

Since October, more than 300 civilians have been murdered in Beni territory in a series of massacres that have been widely blamed on the ADF and its allies.

The DRC army, however, has now struck at the ADF's inner core, according to army spokesman Major Victor Masandi.

He told VOA that on the night of April 24 and 25, the Congolese army killed Kasadha Kalume, a Ugandan national who was the number three person in the ranks of the jihadi Islamist ADF.

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DRC Special Forces reached the ADF camp at Baruku between the Bango and Semliki rivers on April 22 and captured it after heavy fighting, according to the army.

Masandi said Kasadha's body was identified by a captured bodyguard to Seku Baluku, the number two person in the ADF. He adds that Baluku and some of his lieutenants and dependents managed to escape from the camp during the fighting.

The army found four common graves near the camp containing bodies of hostages, ADF casualties and dependents who were unable to flee, said Masadi.

Local civil society officials say the ADF had kidnapped nearly a thousand people in Beni territory since 2010.

Common graves were found at several other ADF positions captured in the earlier phases of Operation Sokola.

Various experts agree that by the middle of last year, the ADF had split into a number of small groups and had only a few hundred combatants.

Masandi said the movement had reorganized into an inner core, led by the ADF's founder, Jamil Mukulu, and seconded by Seku Baluku, with a coordinating headquarters headed by Kasadha. He said there were eight satellite groups.

Masandi said the camp at Baruku consisted of 104 houses, including the headquarters, and was located inside the Virunga National Park in the foothills of the Ruwenzori mountains.

He added that the Congolese army is more determined than ever to finish off the ADF.

The U.N. mission in Congo, MONUSCO, has been supporting Operation Sokola, with logistics, intelligence and the intervention brigade comprised of Malawian, Tanzanian and South African troops.

There have been rumors and press reports in recent days that ADF founder Jamil Mukulu has been arrested in Tanzania, but official sources in Uganda and the Congo have not confirmed these reports.

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Julien Paluku : « Il y avait des réunions secrètes en Ouganda pour la reconstitution de l'ex-M23 mué en MCRC »

Source: Le Potentiel, via mediacongo.net
(<http://www.mediacongo.net/show.asp?doc=82458>)

Kinshasa, 29 avril 2015 - Le gouverneur du Nord-Kivu (Est de RD Congo) affirme avoir appris la tenue de « réunions en Ouganda pour la reconstitution de l'ex-M23 mué en MCRC ».

« Depuis bientôt une semaine, nous avons appris qu'il y avait des réunions secrètes en Ouganda pour la reconstitution de l'ex-M23 [qui] se serait mué en Mouvement chrétien pour la reconstruction du Congo (MCRC). C'est le nouveau nom qu'on veut donner à ce mouvement rebelle », a-t-il déclaré à Radio Okapi.

« Et nous nous interrogeons si la présence de l'armée rwandaise sur le sol congolais ne constitue pas une diversion pour permettre à ce mouvement de nous infiltrer lorsque nous aurons tous l'attention focalisée sur cette incursion », a-t-il ajouté.

Les FARDC déployées à la frontière avec le Rwanda et l'Ouganda S'agissant de l'incursion d'une centaine de militaires rwandais dans le parc des Virunga, Julien Paluku a annoncé le déploiement des Forces armées de la RDC pour sécuriser les frontières avec le Rwanda et l'Ouganda.

« Parmi les mesures prises il y a notamment la sécurisation de nos frontières, parce que depuis bientôt une semaine, nous avons appris qu'il y avait des réunions secrètes en Ouganda pour la reconstitution de l'ex-M23 », a affirmé le gouverneur du Nord-Kivu.

Par ailleurs, a-t-il entrevu, « il peut y avoir des forces négatives qui pourraient éventuellement profiter de ces genres de climat de tension pour entrer au Rwanda et amener ce pays à dire qu'il a reçu des FDLR qui sont entrés chez nous et usons du droit de poursuites ».

Toutefois, a rassuré le gouverneur du Nord-Kivu, « cette situation ne va pas perturber les élections et le processus de développement de la province ».

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BURUNDI

Burundi sends college students home amid unrest

Source: Associated Press

Bujumbura, 30 April 2015 - Burundi's national university has been unexpectedly closed amid protests in the capital.

Bujumbura has been hit by street protests since Sunday as the security forces confront demonstrators who say a third term for President Pierre Nkurunziza would violate the country's constitution. The university's dorms have been closed and students are returning home.

Nkurunziza was nominated by his party on Saturday and presidential elections are scheduled for June 26.

The government is accused of clamping down on communications, with platforms such as Twitter and Facebook having been blocked by authorities, according to the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

On Thursday, protesters were still on the streets, some erecting barricades and burning tires.

Burundi Elections 2015: President Blocks Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, Tango Mobile Access in Protest Crackdown

Source: International Business Times

29 April 2015 - The government of Burundi has blocked mobile access to social media networks -- including Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp and Tango -- in an effort to crack down on growing protests over President Pierre Nkurunziza's re-election efforts. Protesters in the southeast African country have used the various messaging services on the social media sites to coordinate demonstrations in the capital city Bujumbura this week, after Nkurunziza announced his decision to seek a third term in June.

“Government restrictions on communications not only violate basic media freedom but deprive many Burundians of the right to information about events that affect them directly,” said Daniel Bekele, Africa director at Human Rights Watch.

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Nkurunziza and his ruling party, the National Council for the Defense of Democracy-Forces for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD-FDD) have also cut Burundian phone lines and nonstate media, including African Public Radio, a leading independent radio station, the rights group said. Nkurunziza has banned protests and deployed government forces to stop people from demonstrating.

“These radio stations in Burundi are doing their job by covering the news,” Bekele said in a statement this week. “The Burundian authorities should respect people’s right to demonstrate peacefully.”

At least three people were killed and others injured Sunday as police fired rounds of ammunition on crowds, BBC News said. More than 24,000 people have fled the African country this month as tensions escalate and the date for the presidential polls approaches, the United Nations refugee agency said.

The president’s decision to seek re-election triggered widespread protests in Bujumbura since Sunday. Both the Burundian constitution and a peace agreement that ended 12 years of civil war state that no president may be elected for more than two terms in office. But CNDD-FDD supporters have said Nkurunziza's first term does not count because he was appointed by Parliament rather than elected. Nkurunziza, an ex-rebel leader, took office in 2005 following the peace deal.

Britain issues Burundi travel warning after protests in capital

Source: Reuters

29 April 2015 - Britain warned its citizens on Wednesday to avoid "all but essential travel" to Burundi, where protesters have taken to the streets of the capital for four straight days to protest at President Pierre Nkurunziza seeking a third term.

Since Sunday, police have clashed with protesters who say Nkurunziza's plan to run again in the June 26 election threatens a peace deal that ended an ethnically fuelled civil war in 2005.

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U.S. diplomat in Burundi amid anti-president protests

Source: Reuters World Service

By: Edmund Blair and Patrick Nduwimana; Additional reporting by George Obulutsa in Nairobi and Michelle Nichols in New York; Writing by Edmund Blair and Drazen Jorgic; Editing by Tom Heneghan

Bujumbura, 29 April 2015 - A U.S. diplomat arrived in Burundi on Wednesday to try to help halt escalating unrest and defuse the country's biggest crisis in years set off by President Pierre Nkurunziza's decision to seek a third term.

Police in the east African nation have clashed for four days with protesters who say Nkurunziza's plan to run again in the June 26 election violates the constitution and threatens a peace deal that ended the ethnically fueled civil conflict.

Before arriving, Tom Malinowski, U.S. assistant secretary of state for democracy, human rights and labor, wrote on Twitter: "Disappointed President Nkurunziza violating Arusha Accord." He added it was not too late for a "peaceful democratic path."

In response, presidential media adviser Willy Nyamitwe told Reuters: "This is not neutral but we are in a democratic process and anyone is free to have his own point of view."

The U.N. Security Council expressed concern on Wednesday about the escalation of hostilities and restrictions on freedom of expression and assembly. It urged all parties to refrain from violence and intimidation.

Bujumbura's streets were calmer on Wednesday. Police fired teargas when protesters approached them but both sides mostly kept behind makeshift barricades of stones, smoldering tires and sticks.

"I want to fight for the right of people, and I reject the third term that the president is taking by force," said Innocent Miturizo, 27, a student in a suburb that has seen regular protests.

Said Djinnit, the U.N. Special Envoy for the Great Lakes region, met Nkurunziza on Monday. Djinnit was in Burundi to ensure there was space for dialog, the United Nations said.

Police say two people have been killed in this week's violence. Civil society groups say the death toll is five. Scores more have been injured and more than 250 arrested.

About 25,000 people have fled across the border fearing a resurgence of ethnic killings.

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The 12-year civil war pitted the army, then led by the ethnic Tutsi minority, against rebel groups of majority Hutus. The army is now fully mixed, while the opposition includes coalitions of Hutus and Tutsis.

Diplomats say escalating violence could reopen old wounds and trigger ethnic bloodletting.

The constitution and Arusha peace accords set a two-term limit, but Nkurunziza's supporters say he can run again because his first term, when he was picked by lawmakers and not elected, does not count.

The African Union's Peace and Security Council on Wednesday said both sides should await Burundi Constitutional Court's decision his eligibility.

Protests in Burundi as court examines President's third term bid

Source: AFP

29 April 2015 - Protest-hit Burundi on Wednesday took the controversial question of President Pierre Nkurunziza's third term bid to the constitutional court but opposition supporters dismissed the move and said demonstrations would go on.

At least five people have died since unrest broke out at the weekend, when the ruling CNDD-FDD party designated Nkurunziza its candidate for the presidential election to be held in the central African nation on June 26.

Demonstrators and police faced off in the capital Bujumbura Wednesday, but the city was far quieter than in previous days, with some shops reopening and a heavy police deployment on the streets.

The authorities cut mobile access to several social networks and messaging applications including Twitter, Facebook and WhatsApp, which have been used to coordinate protests.

"All the roads are blocked by police... but the protests will not stop until he gives up the third term," said Thierry, a demonstrator.

Opposition figures and rights groups say Nkurunziza's attempt to stand for a third consecutive term goes against the constitution as well as the peace deal that ended a civil war in 2006.

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The Senate has submitted a motion has to the constitutional court seeking interpretation of the issue.

But opposition leaders such as lawmaker Jean Minani were dismissive of what they said was a court loyal to the president.

"It is as if the Senate had asked Nkurunziza himself to interpret the constitution," Minani told AFP. "The opposition... will continue to say no to the third term."

But Nkurunziza has remained defiant: his communication chief has insisted it was "out of the question" that he would back down on his bid for a third term.

- Roads blocked by police -

Amid international concern, UN chief Ban Ki-moon dispatched his envoy Said Djinnit to Burundi, urging "all sides to reject violence" and hate speech.

US Assistant Secretary for Democracy and Human Rights Tom Malinowski was also due in Bujumbura.

Hundreds of thousands of people were killed in the 13-year civil war, which divided the country along ethnic lines, between the Hutu majority and Tutsi people.

The government has banned all protests and deployed large numbers of police and troops on the streets since Sunday, firing live ammunition, tear gas and water cannon.

Hundreds of stone-throwing protesters have been arrested.

Some of those killed were shot at close range, while the police said at least 37 officers have been wounded.

The main independent radio station has also been shut down, while the attorney-general has set up a special commission to identify and arrest those accused of sparking an "insurrection" through the protests.

The president, a former rebel leader and born-again Christian from the Hutu majority, has been in power for two terms since 2005.

His supporters say he is eligible to run again, as his first term in office was after he was elected by parliament -- not directly by the people as the constitution states.

The constitution says the president is elected by universal direct suffrage, "for a mandate of five years renewable one time".

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The country is also holding parliamentary elections on May 26, a month ahead of the presidential vote.

Some 25,000 Burundians have fled the country in recent weeks, according to the UN refugee agency, which has warned the numbers could rise.

Many are fleeing threats by the pro-government militia Imbonerakure, the youth wing of the ruling party.

Rights groups allege that the militia has been armed and trained over the past year in order to help Nkurunziza remain in office.

The United Nations warned Wednesday up to 400,000 people could be affected in a worse case scenario should the upcoming elections turn violent, in an appeal to donors for extra cash to prepare.

"Tensions continue to increase and the political landscape is marred by polarisation and limited political space," according to a report by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

"These persisting challenges could potentially trigger electoral violence, with massive humanitarian impact for Burundi and the neighbouring countries in the Great Lakes region."

UN warns of 'massive' impact should Burundi polls turn violent

Source: AFP

29 April 2015 - The United Nations warned Wednesday that up to 400,000 people could be affected in a worse case scenario should upcoming elections in Burundi turn violent, calling for extra cash to prepare.

"Humanitarian partners anticipate that some 50,000 people would be likely affected during the first eight weeks of possible election-related political violence — or up to 400,000 people might be affected with the first six months in the worse scenario," said a planning report released by UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

It appealed to donors for \$11.6 million for initial preparations.

"Urgent additional resources are required to increase the current in-country capacity," the report added, saying up to \$58 million would be needed for a six-month response.

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Preparations are also being made for possibly thousands of people who may seek refuge in the neighbouring countries, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda, it added.

Some 25,000 Burundians have already fled the country in recent weeks, according to the UN refugee agency, which has warned the numbers could rise.

At least five people have died since unrest broke out at the weekend, when the ruling CNDD-FDD party designated President Pierre Nkurunziza its candidate for the presidential election on June 26.

The capital Bujumbura was far quieter on Wednesday.

Parliamentary elections are to be held one month earlier, on May 26.

“Tensions continue to increase and the political landscape is marred by polarisation and limited political space,” the report said.

“These persisting challenges could potentially trigger electoral violence, with massive humanitarian impact for Burundi and the neighbouring countries in the Great Lakes region.”

Après le Burkina, le Burundi avant le Congo ?

Source: RFI

29 Avril 2015 - Burundi: une contestation qui se construit dans la rue Au Burundi, les manifestants sont une nouvelle fois sortis dans la rue pour le troisième jour consécutif, ce mardi. Ils s'opposent à une nouvelle candidature du président Pierre Nkurunziza à l'issue de son deuxième mandat à la tête du pays. Pour l'instant, la mobilisation ne faiblit pas et les manifestants sont de plus en plus organisés.

Des manifestations quotidiennes, des scènes de guérillas urbaines. Dix ans après la fin de la guerre civile au Burundi, on assiste aujourd'hui à une contestation inédite. Dimanche 26 avril, en l'espace d'une heure, on est passé de petits rassemblements à une confrontation directe avec la police.

Un mouvement que les autorités qualifient de soulèvement ou d'insurrection. Elles ont publiquement pointé du doigt des partis politiques d'opposition qui, selon les autorités, auraient tout à perdre à aller aux élections à venir, mais également des responsables de la société civile, comme le militant des droits de l'homme Pierre-Claver Mbonimpa, la plus célèbre radio du Burundi, la Radio publique africaine aujourd'hui fermée, et plus

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officieusement le Mouvement pour la solidarité et le développement (MSD) de l'opposant et fondateur de la radio RPA, Alexis Sinduhije aujourd'hui en exil.

Les manifestants, eux, rejettent ces accusations: « Ce sont des mensonges. Moi, jésuis frodebiste [Front pour la démocratie au Burundi]. Lui il est MSD et lui, il est Uprona [Union pour le progrès national]. Celui-là il est Agathon Rwaswa. Tous les partis politiques, toutes les ethnies, nous luttons ensemble pour que Pierre Nkurunziza quitte le pouvoir. »

Une jeunesse dans la rue

Alors que la police mène des opérations dans son quartier Musaga, un jeune manifestant explique les raisons de cette nouvelle mobilisation: « Maintenant, ce sont des manifestants vraiment politiques. C'est presque la première fois, donc c'est quelque chose vraiment de nouveau ici au Burundi, parmi la jeunesse bien sûr. Les jeunes se sont éveillés en fait parce que la démocratie commence à être un peu pratiquée, parce qu'il y a les sociétés civiles, il y a les médias, il y a tout ça qui fait éveiller les consciences de la jeunesse. Ils essaient de leur montrer comment ils peuvent défendre leurs droits pacifiquement. C'est ça qui se passe ici-même. »

Plus loin, un autre manifestant fait part de son récent engagement: « On ne peut pas respecter quelqu'un qui a violé la Constitution. Donc nous sommes dans les rues et on ne va pas retourner à la maison. Nous allons rester ici. Nous allons prendre l'itinéraire [vers] la place de l'Indépendance. Et on ne va pas retourner à la maison. »

Dénoncer la pauvreté et l'injustice

Pourquoi cette contestation se limite à quelques quartiers seulement, et uniquement dans la capitale Bujumbura? Un jeune de Nyakabiga, autre quartier contestataire situé près de l'Université du Burundi, s'est fait sa propre opinion: « Ici à Nyakabiga, ce sont des Hutus et Tutsis, mais c'est un quartier avec des intellectuels et des étudiants. Ils consultent des informations sur Internet. Les gens de la campagne, ils ne savent rien. Lorsqu'on leur demande s'ils sont d'accord avec le président, ils te disent avoir besoin de la paix, tout simplement. »

Parmi les manifestants, en majorité des étudiants, des élèves, mais aussi beaucoup de jeunes sans emploi. Manipulés, disent les autorités. Eux qui sont Issus de quartiers populaires de Bujumbura dénoncent au-delà du troisième mandat de Pierre Nkurunziza, la pauvreté et l'injustice. Et cette injustice, à leurs yeux, s'incarne dans la police qu'ils accusent d'être à la solde du parti au pouvoir. Déployée au lendemain des violences de dimanche dernier, l'armée, en revanche, est perçue comme une force neutre, elle est quotidiennement acclamée.

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UGANDA

Grands Lacs: les acteurs de la société civile à Entebbe pour évaluer l'accord d'Addis-Abeba

Source: Radio Okapi

29 Avril 2015 - Le cadre de consultation régionale des délégués des organisations des sociétés civiles de la région des Grands Lacs [s'est ouvert] ce mercredi 29 avril à Entebbe en Ouganda. La rencontre vise à accompagner l'initiative régionale de la société civile en vue de l'application, du suivi et de l'évaluation de la mise en œuvre de l'accord cadre pour la paix, la sécurité et la coopération pour la RDC et la région.

Ce cadre, qui va réunir les représentants des sociétés civiles de la RDC, du Burundi, du Rwanda et de l'Ouganda, vise à mettre en place des groupes capables d'influencer les gouvernements de la région en faveur de l'application de l'accord cadre d'Addis-Abeba.

Il s'agit également de renforcer le forum de la société civile de la Conférence internationale sur la région des Grands Lacs (CIRGL), mais aussi la confiance entre les pays concernés.

A la veille de l'ouverture de cette rencontre, l'équipe pédagogique a procédé à la validation des matières à débattre, selon les six thématiques inscrites dans leur agenda de travail. Seuls, les points focaux du Burundi n'ont pas été présents à cause de la situation politique tendue qui prévaut dans leur pays.

Pour Thomas D'Aquin Muiti, président de la société civile du Nord-Kivu, les organisations de la société civile sont des acteurs de changement. Et pour ce faire, elles doivent amener les gouvernements de leurs pays respectifs et la communauté internationale à s'acquitter de leurs engagements dans le cadre de l'accord cadre d'Addis-Abeba signé le 24 février 2013.

Cette réunion est organisée par le bureau de l'Envoyé spécial du Secrétaire général des Nations unies pour la région des Grands Lacs. Ouverte mercredi 29 avril, elle va se clôturer jeudi 30 avril.

Onze pays africains ont signé l'accord-cadre d'Addis-Abeba le 24 février 2013 pour permettre le retour de la paix dans la région des Grands Lacs et dans l'Est de la RDC en proie à des groupes armés nationaux et étrangers. Les chefs d'État de Grands Lacs s'étaient engagés à respecter la souveraineté et l'intégrité territoriale des pays voisins ; et à ne pas soutenir, de quelque façon que ce soit, les groupes armés.

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Uganda says checking whether Islamist rebel leader arrested in Tanzania

Source: Reuters

30 April 2015 - Ugandan authorities said on Friday they were trying to verify whether a man arrested in Tanzania was Jamil Mukulu, the leader of an Islamist rebel group blamed for various deadly attacks in Western Uganda and eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.

The Ugandan government has said that Mukulu's organisation -- the Alliance of Democratic Forces - National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (ADF-NALU) -- is allied to elements of Somalia's al Qaeda-linked al Shabaab insurgents.

"We got information from Tanzania of someone arrested there a couple of days ago," Uganda police spokesman, Fred Enanga, told Reuters on Thursday.

"They wanted us to provide photographs and facial impressions of Jamil Mukulu ... We have provided them with that information and we're now waiting."

Forced out of Uganda in the mid-2000s, the ADF-NALU operates from bases in the mountains of eastern Congo and U.N. officials estimate that it has between 1,200 and 1,400 fighters.

Rights groups have accused it of mass civilian killings and kidnappings.

Enanga did not say where exactly they believed Mukulu had been arrested and there was no immediate comment from Tanzanian authorities. A source in the Ugandan military told Reuters the man in Tanzanian custody had been confirmed as Mukulu.

Uganda has long worried that ADF-NALU could pose a security threat to its oil fields if left unchallenged in Congo's loosely governed east.

The east African country discovered commercial hydrocarbon deposits in its Albertine rift basin which straddles its border with Congo. Production is expected to start in 2018.

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CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

UN peacekeeping chief wraps up trip to Central African Republic as Mission reaches full strength

Source: PR Newswire

28 April 2015 - The United Nations peacekeeping chief finished a four-day trip to the Central African Republic today, his visit to the country coinciding with the UN stabilization Mission there achieving full operational capability for the first time.

“I leave the Central African Republic calm and reasonably optimistic,” said Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations during a press conference in the capital, Bangui, today at the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA).

“Protection of civilians is improving continuously because we have developed targeted actions and coordinated protection,” he added.

Reaching full operational capability with the deployment of additional capabilities authorized by the Security Council after the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the country (BINUCA) was subsumed by MINUSCA, the Mission, set up in September 2014, has developed an emergency operational plan to support national authorities in ensuring the holding of elections in a secure and timely manner before August this year.

Six months after the military and police components of MINUSCA began their work and on the day the Mission's mandate was renewed by the Security Council in New York, Mr. Ladsous recalled that it was a time to measure the achievements of the Mission and he welcomed the work done by the Mission so far.

Reiterating the determination of the Mission to meet the challenge that is still posed in the security realm, he looked forward to improvements, saying that the arrival of attack helicopters and drones would help. He added that he hoped the political transition would be significantly boosted by the Bangui Forum.

“This momentous event will launch major reforms to the Central African people and will allow the Transition to give way to a democratically elected regime,” he said. “The Bangui Forum, followed by inclusive and credible elections, will be a key element in the successful conclusion of the transition,” he said, referring to the national gathering that will take place on 4 May.

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He also pointed to the international community's mobilization to deal with the crisis, saying it “reflects a unity of purpose to tackle the country's long-standing crisis and treat the root causes of the conflict.”

French soldiers accused of raping and abusing refugee children in Central African Republic in exchange for food in 'leaked UN report'

Source: The Independent (UK)

29 April 2015 - French soldiers working as peacekeepers for the UN in the Central African Republic have been accused of raping and abusing desperately poor young children in exchange for food.

According to an alleged internal report seen by The Guardian entitled Sexual Abuse on Children by International Armed Forces, children told human rights investigators they were sexually exploited, including rape and sodomy, in the capital Bangui in early 2014.

One nine-year-old boy reportedly described how French soldiers at a camp for internally displaced people forced him and his friend to perform a sex act when they went to look for food.

The leaking of the alleged report via the advocacy group Aids Free World comes as the UN Security Council approved maintaining the international force in the Central African Republic for another year.

In March it approved measures to provide an additional 1,000 personnel to the 12,000-strong peacekeeping force, which has been tasked with protecting the most vulnerable since it was set up in late 2013 following an unprecedented surge in violence between Christians and Muslims.

But besides the potential implications in the country for the report on abused children, it also threatens to cause a diplomatic row in Europe after a senior UN aid worker was suspended for allegedly passing it on to the French authorities.

Anders Kompass, a Swedish international, has been told “it was his duty to know and comply” with UN protocols that meant the report should have remained confidential, the Guardian reported.

An investigation by the French into allegations “of a very serious nature” is reportedly under way in the Central African Republic, while a spokesperson for the UN Office of

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the High Commissioner for Human Rights confirmed to The Guardian that a probe into “the leaking of confidential information by a staff member” was ongoing.

Centrafrique: l'ONU a enquêté sur des abus sexuels sur des enfants par des soldats français

Source: AFP

L'ONU a confirmé mercredi avoir mené au printemps 2014 une enquête sur des "accusations graves d'exploitation sexuelle et d'abus commis sur des enfants par des militaires français" en République centrafricaine avant le déploiement de sa mission dans ce pays (Minusca).

29 Avril 2015 - Selon le porte-parole adjoint de l'ONU Farhan Haq, un responsable de l'ONU a été suspendu pour avoir transmis en juillet 2014 les résultats de cette enquête aux autorités françaises au mépris des procédures.

Il a expliqué que le rapport transmis officieusement à Paris par ce responsable, sans en référer à sa hiérarchie, n'était pas expurgé des noms des victimes, témoins et enquêteurs, ce qui pouvait "mettre en danger" ceux-ci.

Le responsable en question, dont l'ONU ne donne pas l'identité, a donc été placé "en congé administratif avec plein salaire", en attendant les conclusions d'une enquête interne sur "ce grave manquement aux procédures" en vigueur.

"Notre conclusion préliminaire est qu'une telle conduite ne peut pas être considérée comme celle d'un lanceur d'alerte", a souligné le porte-parole.

La Minusca ne s'est déployée qu'en septembre 2014 en RCA donc cette affaire concerne des militaires français de l'opération Sangaris qui opéraient alors à

Bangui, ont souligné des responsables onusiens. L'enquête a été menée sur place par le Bureau des droits de l'homme de l'ONU à Bangui.

Une source à l'ONU a expliqué sous couvert de l'anonymat que le responsable sanctionné, employé au Haut commissariat aux droits de l'homme de l'ONU à Genève, avait fait fuiter le rapport une semaine seulement après qu'il ait été fourni par les enquêteurs et que son action ne pouvait donc pas s'expliquer par une frustration devant un manque de réactivité de l'ONU.

La justice française a de son côté ouvert une enquête préliminaire sur cette affaire.

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Les sanctions "les plus fermes" seront prononcées envers des soldats français si les soupçons d'abus sexuels sur une dizaine d'enfants en Centrafrique entre décembre 2013 et juin 2014 sont confirmés, a indiqué mercredi le ministère français de la Défense.

"Nous n'avons aucune raison de douter de la volonté des Français d'aller jusqu'au bout de leur enquête", a commenté un responsable de l'ONU.

Centrafrique: 16 soldats français accusés d'abus sexuels sur des enfants

Source: Le Monde

29 Avril 2015 - Un rapport interne de l'Organisation des nations unies (ONU) sur des abus sexuels supposés commis par des soldats français sur des enfants en République centrafricaine (RCA) a été transmis aux autorités françaises, rapporte mercredi 29 avril le Guardian.

Anders Kompass, directeur des opérations de terrain au Haut-Commissariat de l'ONU pour les droits humains, à Genève, accusé d'avoir fait fuiter ce document confidentiel et d'avoir court-circuité sa hiérarchie, a été suspendu.

Le rapport d'enquête, que le quotidien britannique dit avoir consulté, porterait sur des soupçons d'abus commis entre décembre 2013 et juin 2014 dans un centre pour déplacés situé dans l'aéroport M'Poko de Bangui, la capitale centrafricaine. La France intervenait sur place dans le cadre de l'opération Sangaris pour mettre fin aux massacres commis sur des civils tant par la rébellion Séléka, qui visait les chrétiens, que par les milices anti-bakala, qui s'en prenaient aux musulmans.

Dans le rapport figurent des témoignages recueillis sur place par des enquêteurs de l'ONU de jeunes garçons accusant des soldats français de les avoir violés et d'avoir abusé d'eux en échange de nourriture ou d'argent. L'un d'eux est âgé d'à peine 9 ans. Selon un haut responsable de l'ONU, joint par Le Monde, 16 soldats, tous Français, sont concernés par cette affaire.

« Une atteinte intolérable aux valeurs du soldat »

L'ONU a confirmé mercredi avoir enquêté au printemps 2014 sur des « accusations graves d'exploitation sexuelle et d'abus commis sur des enfants par des militaires français » en République centrafricaine avant le déploiement de sa mission dans ce pays (Minusca). Le porte-parole adjoint de l'ONU, Farhan Haq, confirme également que

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ce responsable de l'ONU a été suspendu pour avoir transmis en juillet 2014 les résultats de cette enquête aux autorités françaises au mépris des procédures. « Notre conclusion préliminaire est qu'une telle conduite ne peut pas être considérée comme celle d'un lanceur d'alerte », a souligné le porte-parole.

Le ministère de la justice a confirmé mercredi à l'agence Reuters que le parquet de Paris avait ouvert le 31 juillet 2014 une enquête préliminaire portant sur ces accusations après avoir pris connaissance du rapport des Nations unies. « L'enquête est en cours, nous n'avons pas de commentaire à faire », s'est contenté de déclarer un porte-parole du ministère.

Le ministère de la défense a quant à lui déclaré que l'armée française « a[vait] pris et prendra[it] toutes les mesures nécessaires pour la manifestation de la vérité ».

« Si les faits étaient avérés, il veillera [it] à ce que les sanctions les plus fermes soient prononcées à l'égard des responsables de ce qui serait une atteinte intolérable aux valeurs du soldat. »

L'ONU aurait tardé à agir

Les faits auraient eu lieu avant et après la mise en place de la mission des Nations unies dans le pays, la Minusca. Le rapport avait été commandé par le bureau du haut-commissaire des Nations unies pour les droits de l'homme, à la suite de rumeurs d'abus dans le camp de M'Poko. Trois enquêteurs de l'ONU ont alors travaillé sur ce dossier en juin 2014 et rencontré une dizaine de victimes, tous des garçons. L'enquête aurait été bouclée dès la fin du mois de juin.

Anders Kompass, travailleur humanitaire suédois, a transmis le rapport à des enquêteurs français après avoir constaté que l'ONU tardait à agir, selon le Guardian. Une version contredite par le haut responsable de l'ONU qui assure au Monde que si Kompass avait voulu accélérer le processus, il aurait pu envoyer le rapport au Guardian dès le mois de juillet. Cadre de l'ONU depuis 30 ans, Kompass connaît les procédures, notamment l'édition nécessaire des rapports pour protéger les victimes, poursuit ce haut responsable.

C'est la deuxième fois qu'Anders Kompass est soumis à une enquête de l'ONU. Des cables Wikileaks avaient révélé un conflit d'intérêt sur la question du Sahara Occidental. Il était soupçonné d'avoir informé les Marocains sur la question et d'avoir empêché des enquêtes sur la question des droits de l'homme sur place. Convoqué, Kompass avait nié. Son ordinateur de travail avait été saisi mais n'avait rien révélé. L'enquête a été confiée au bureau des services de contrôle interne des Nations unies. Dans l'attente de

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ses conclusions, Anders Kompass est toujours en disponibilité des Nations Unies avec plein salaire.

Centrafrique: bientôt des drones pour la mission onusienne

Source: Koaci.com

Hervé Ladsous, le Secrétaire général adjoint aux opérations de maintien de la paix de l'ONU, a annoncé hier à Bangui, lors de la cérémonie consacrant le premier anniversaire de la MINUSCA, l'envoi prochain des drones de surveillance en République centrafricaine, précisant que ces derniers «seront, comme pour d'autres missions onusiennes, un outil extrêmement utile pour mieux suivre les évolutions sur le terrain ».

29 Avril 2015 - Après son premier anniversaire, la Minusca, mission onusienne en République centrafricaine, sera bientôt dotée de drones, avons-nous appris.

Hervé Ladsous, secrétaire général adjoint aux opérations de maintien de la paix de l'Onu, a annoncé ce mardi, l'envoi prochain de drones [...] desurveillance en RCA.

L'annonce d'Hervé Ladsous a été faite ce mardi Bangui, lors de la cérémonie consacrant le premier anniversaire de la Minusca Search Minusca en terre centrafricaine.

Selon Hervé Ladsous, c'est par coïncidence que le conseil de sécurité va décider de renforcer son soutien à la Minusca, le jour de la célébration de son premier anniversaire, «les circonstances ont fait que ce soit aujourd'hui que le Conseil de sécurité des Nations Unies va voter la résolution pour le renouvellement du mandat de la Minusca Search Minusca », va-t-il déclarer.

Avant d'ajouter que, « bientôt, la Minusca Search Minusca sera dotée de drones Search drones de surveillance qui seront comme pour d'autres missions onusiennes, un outil extrêmement utile pour mieux suivre les évolutions sur le terrain ».

Voici un an que la Minusca Search Minusca est déployée en Rca. Comme bilan, la situation sécuritaire du pays, s'est améliorée a rappelé le responsable onusien.

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Centrafrique: le Conseil de Sécurité proroge pour un an le mandat de la MINUSCA

Source: ONU

28 Avril 2015 - Le Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU a adopté mardi une résolution prorogeant jusqu'au 30 avril 2016 le mandat de la Mission multidimensionnelle intégrée des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation en République centrafricaine (MINUSCA).

Dans cette résolution, le Conseil a également décidé que l'effectif maximal autorisé de la MINUSCA est fixé à 10.750 militaires et 2.080 policiers. Il a demandé aux Etats membres de fournir des contingents et du personnel de police ayant les capacités et l'équipement nécessaires pour aider la MINUSCA à bien fonctionner et à bien s'acquitter de ses responsabilités.

Les membres du Conseil ont aussi engagé instamment les autorités de transition, ainsi que l'Autorité nationale des élections (ANE), « à accélérer les préparatifs en vue de la tenue, à titre urgent et dès que possible, des élections présidentielle et législatives libres, honnêtes, transparentes et ouvertes à tous qui doivent en principe se tenir au mois d'août 2015 au plus tard ».

Ils ont également exigé « de toutes les milices et de tous les groupes armés non étatiques qu'ils déposent les armes, mettent fin immédiatement à toute forme de violence ou d'activité déstabilisante et libèrent les enfants enrôlés dans leurs rangs ». Ils ont réaffirmé qu'il était urgent et impératif « de traduire en justice tous les auteurs de violations du droit international humanitaire, de violations des droits de l'homme et d'exactions, quels que soient leur statut ou leur appartenance politique ».

Le Secrétaire général adjoint des Nations Unies aux opérations de maintien de la paix, Hervé Ladsous, se trouvait mardi en République centrafricaine, où il a rencontré les autorités avant l'ouverture du Forum national de Bangui le 4 mai.

Lors d'une conférence de presse clôturant une visite de quatre jours, M. Ladsous s'est dit « serein et raisonnablement optimiste » sur la situation dans le pays.

Il s'est félicité du travail réalisé par la MINUSCA, six mois après son établissement. Tout en reconnaissant que la sécurité restait relative, il a formulé l'espoir qu'elle puisse s'améliorer notamment avec l'arrivée annoncée d'hélicoptères d'attaque et de drones.

« La protection des civils s'améliore de manière continue parce que nous avons développé des actions de protections ciblées et coordonnées », a-il-ajouté.

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Sur le processus de transition politique et particulièrement à propos du Forum national de Bangui, Hervé Ladsous, a souhaité qu'il se déroule bien. « Cet évènement capital permettra de lancer des réformes majeures pour le peuple centrafricain et permettra à la transition de céder la place à un régime démocratiquement élu », a-t-il dit.

Selon M. Ladsous, « le Forum de Bangui, qui sera suivi d'élections inclusives et crédibles, sera un élément clé dans la bonne conclusion de la transition ».

KENYA

Le Kenya et la Tanzanie attribuent la recrudescence du terrorisme à la radicalisation des jeunes

Source: Agence de presse Xinhua

29 Avril 2015 - Les gouvernements Kenyan et Tanzanien ont attribué mercredi la recrudescence des activités terroristes dans la région d'Afrique de l'Est à la radicalisation de la jeunesse.

La Haut-commissaire tanzanien sortant au Kenya, Batilda Burian, a déclaré que son pays travaillerait en étroite collaboration avec le Kenya pour combattre le terrorisme entre autres activités criminelles.

"Il est nécessaire que nos deux pays travaillent ensemble pour combattre les actions des terroristes, qui sont de plus en plus une menace pour le développement de la Communauté d'Afrique de l'Est", a déclaré Mme Burian lors d'une rencontre avec le vice-président William Ruto à Nairobi.

La Tanzanie est attristée par l'attaque récente qui a fait 148 morts à Garissa, a-t-elle dit.

"Nous souhaitons vous assurer de notre soutien alors que vous intensifiez votre lutte contre ces actes de chaos ignobles. Nous sommes à vos côtés", a-t-elle dit.

S'exprimant à l'occasion de cette réunion, M. Ruto a déclaré que le Kenya avait intensifié ses efforts pour combattre le terrorisme, observant que ce défi d'ampleur mondiale nécessitait des efforts concertés pour le contenir.

"Nous devons travailler ensemble en tant que pays de la même région, pour éliminer les activités terroristes, pour le bien de la paix et du développement", a déclaré M. Ruto.

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La police kenyane a renforcé sa surveillance de la sécurité dans le pays suite à des rapports des services de renseignement suivant lesquels des activists somaliens du groupe Al-Shabab prépareraient des attentats terroristes en représailles contre ce pays d'Afrique de l'Est.

Les forces de sécurité ont accru leurs mesures de surveillance des installations clé et des lieux publics ou privés, appelant la population à faire preuve de prudence face aux personnes aux mobiles incertains.

SOUTH SUDAN

Five African countries to join IGAD mediation on S. Sudan conflict

Source: Sudan Tribune

Addis Ababa, 28 April 2015 - African Union's (AU) Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) has selected five countries each representing different blocs in the continent to take part in the South Sudanese peace process under a new mediation mechanism led by the East African regional bloc of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

At a press conference held on Tuesday in Addis Ababa, IGAD chief mediator on South Sudan peace talks, Seyoum Mesfin, said the five countries were selected in response to Africa's request to participate directly in the peace process which will include other international bodies and countries.

"Africa has asked to participate not only through IGAD but also to join the IGAD and give its full support and participation," Mesfin told reporters.

Accordingly, Algeria, Nigeria, Chad, South Africa and Rwanda will be engaged in the peace process representing north, western, central, southern and eastern African regions, respectively. The five countries will be participating both at envoys and at summit level.

Outside Africa, the IGAD plus initiative will also include China, Troika countries (USA, UK and Norway), EU and the UN.

The February to March negotiations, the third phase and 8th session were the final ones per the declaration of IGAD leaders and by the agreements of the two principals, President Salva Kiir and Riek Machar.

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However the negotiations which were highly expected to bring lasting peace deal collapsed on 6 March after the two warring factions failed to bridge differences on outstanding issues.

Mesfin on Tuesday however stressed that failure to the final session didn't mean IGAD would abandon the peace process.

“Declaring the session would be the final one was meant only [that] IGAD will think of a different and innovative approach that might help to achieve lasting peace solution” he said adding “That is why the IGAD is moving towards the IGAD plus initiative.”

He made clear that despite the inclusion of other partners to the mediation, IGAD however will still be fully leading the peace process.

“Without the region's commitment and fully leading the process we can't hope to achieve peace and reconciliation in South Sudan,” he said.

The IGAD Plus, he added, only aimed to reinforce the IGAD peace process in a way to embrace more voices and strength and give it a robust expression towards the negotiating parties.

Currently envoys are in consultation at summit and leaders' level, said the former Ethiopian foreign minister. No timetable is set for the resumption of the next round of peace talks but Mesfin said soon it will be announced after the ongoing consultations are finalised.

SUDAN

Soudan : Béchir accuse le Soudan du Sud d'héberger les rebelles hostiles à son régime et une possible invasion militaire

Source: HCH24 (<http://www.hch24.com/actualites/04/2015/soudan-bechir-accuse-le-soudan-du-sud-dheberger-les-rebelles-hostiles-a-son-regime-et-une-possible-invasion-militaire/>)

Par Hassan Cher

29 Avril 2015 - omar al-bechir - soudanLe président soudanais Omar Al Bashir accuse le Soudan du Sud de soutien pour les rebelles soudanais et l'accueil dans des bases militaires à l'intérieur de son territoire, et a ordonné à Juba de les désarmer autrement de s'attendre à des répercussions diplomatiques, économiques et militaires.

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Dans un discours aux milices pro-gouvernementales dans l'Etat du Sud Darfour cité mardi par le responsable soudanais de Media Center, Bashir dit que si le Soudan du Sud ne respecte pas son appel, les forces de Khartoum sont prêtes à violer les frontières entre le deux pays pour désarmer les rebelles eux-mêmes.

Les rebelles se battent contre les forces gouvernementales soudanaises au Darfour-Sud et dans deux autres régions à un conflit qui a déplacé des dizaines de milliers de personnes au cours des dernières années.

Bashir a été réélu avec 94% du vote ce mois-ci, selon les résultats officiels du régime publiés lundi, prolongeant son règne de 25 ans, malgré les poursuites internationales pour crimes de guerre et de multiples insurrections. Le voisin du Sud riche en pétrole, le Soudan du Sud, a fait sécession en 2011.

Des hauts responsables du gouvernement de Juba doutent que son voisin du Nord, Khartoum, peaufine depuis quelques temps un projet militaire d'invasion de Soudan du Sud sous des prétextes farfelus comme ceux précités.

Ces responsables rajoutent que Bashir, pour redorer son blason et mettre KO l'opposition, prépare une invasion militaire et une annexion de Juba pour se déclarer le héros unificateur de la nation et reconquérir les mannes pétrolières du Sud.

Soudan: un mort dans des violences entre étudiants à Khartoum

Source: AFP/Jeune Afrique

Un homme a été tué mercredi lors d'affrontements entre étudiants dans une université de Khartoum, a indiqué le ministère de l'Intérieur.

29 Avril 2015 - Une dispute a éclaté entre des étudiants favorables au parti du Congrès national du président Omar el-Béchar, et un groupe d'étudiants du Darfour qui critiquaient l'élection d'avril remportée par M. Béchar, selon des témoins.

"Après une dispute entre deux groupes d'étudiants de l'université de Sharq al-Nil, un des groupes a attaqué l'autre sur le campus", a indiqué le ministère de l'Intérieur dans un communiqué.

Les violences ont fait plusieurs blessés et l'un d'eux, Mohammed Awad, "a été transféré à l'hôpital, où il est décédé", selon le texte.

Un témoin a indiqué à l'AFP que les étudiants de la région du Darfour critiquaient les élections d'avril quand des étudiants sympathisants du PCN les ont attaqués.

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M. Béchir, au pouvoir au Soudan depuis un quart de siècle après un coup d'Etat orchestré en 1989, a été réélu président lundi avec plus de 94% des voix, au terme d'un scrutin qui a fait l'objet de critiques au plan international.

Le Soudan est miné par des conflits armés au Darfour et dans les provinces du Kordofan-sud et du Nil-Bleu, où des rebelles, dont ceux du SPLM-N, s'estiment marginalisés par la domination arabe et défient les autorités fédérales.

Le président Béchir est réclamé par la Cour pénale internationale pour génocide au Darfour.

Sudan's election chief defends April poll results

Source: VOA News

28 April 2015 - The chairman of Sudan's Independent Electoral Commission has defended the conduct of the country's April 13 elections, saying the only way to have peace in Sudan is to have a constitutionally-elected government.

Mukhtar al-Assam said those who criticized the election want Sudan to be in chaos like South Sudan, Syria, Libya, Yemen, and Iraq.

The commission announced Monday that President Omar al-Bashir had been re-elected to another five-year term after winning more than 94 percent of the vote. Most of the major opposition parties boycotted the election.

Assam said the turnout of 46 percent was better than last month's general election in Nigeria, which was 42 percent.

"The final results of the elections showed that 46.4 percent of the total voter turnout voted in this election. Out of the 13 million, about six million voted in this election. President Bashir got 5,242,000 votes. Out of the number of total votes, [that] is the percentage of 94.04 percent," he said.

Many of the major opposition parties, which boycotted the vote, described the results as a joke.

The European Union, United States, Britain and Norway all criticized the election saying the lack of a promised national dialogue left Sudan without an inclusive political process.

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U.S. State Department spokesman Jeff Rathke said Monday the United States does not consider the outcome to be a "credible expression" of the will of the Sudanese people.

Assam said the results were the outcome of a "transparent" election where all the votes were counted in the presence of all political party representatives and observers.

"In the last election in Nigeria, [turnout] was 42 percent. Even Obama in the USA [in 2012], the participation was 33.4 percent. So, the turnout in this election wasn't that bad," Assam said.

The Sudanese election official said the non-participation of major opposition parties did not leave a cloud hanging over the results. On the contrary, he said Sudan has to have the election to meet a constitutional deadline.

"There was no need to continue ruling a country in a constitutional manner without any election unless that somebody is advocating that the ruling party should continue to rule the country without the constitution, without any authority," he said.

He said those who criticized the election want Sudan to be in chaos like South Sudan, Syria, Libya, countries that are all experiencing some form of conflict.

"Those countries who are saying that this election should not have taken place are just saying that Sudan should go into the same path of South Sudan, where a civil war is taking place, Libya where civil war is taking place, Yemen where civil war is taken place. No, I don't think Sudan should take that path," Assam said.

With election victory, Sudan's Bashir stands out in a chaotic region

Source: Christian Science Monitor

Facing international charges of war crimes, President Bashir easily cruised another term in office after an election widely criticized as unfair. Yet he offers Sudan, and allies in the Arab world, something that is in short supply: stability.

28 April 2015 - Cheers of "Allahu Akbar" ("God is Great") erupted from members of Sudan's ruling party as election officials announced Monday what everyone had anticipated: another term for President Omar al-Bashir.

Winning 94.05% of votes cast, Mr. Bashir easily outpaced his opponents, a field of unknowns, and has another five-year mandate to add to his quarter-century in power.

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Most major opposition parties refused to front any candidates in protest at a lack of representation, ongoing conflicts, restrictions on press freedoms, and the jailing of activists prior to polling. Western nations dismissed the vote before the first ballots were even cast, saying conditions were not conducive to a credible election.

Now attention turns to what Bashir, and Sudan, can achieve in his next term. Sudan faces bloody insurgencies in the western Darfur and southern Kordofan regions that Bashir has battled for years without resolution. Western economic sanctions have taken their toll on the economy, and with the secession of oil-rich South Sudan in 2011, Bashir's government needs more foreign investment.

Yet, ironically, the Sudanese strongman may have placed himself in a better position to attract Gulf investment to the country, and cultivate an image of stability as much of the Arab world struggles to restore centralized authority, a challenge exemplified by the implosion of neighboring Libya where the Islamic State is gaining ground.

"Regional countries look to Sudan as a good regime for their interests ... in terms of radical Islam," says political analyst and human rights activist El Barag El Nazir. "The Sudanese regime may be seen as protective tool against expansion or extension of radical Islamics like [Nigeria's] Boko Haram, [ISIS] and other Islamist groups."

A GUARANTOR OF STABILITY

For the majority of Sudanese, the elections were a non-event. Most eligible voters did not bother to show up to polling stations at all; overall turnout was less than 50 percent. Khartoum had the lowest turnout at 34 percent, revealing deep disillusionment with Bashir's overtures toward democratic participation.

"The election actually came with bad results for the [ruling] National Congress Party," says Mr. El Nazir. Though Bashir won, he says low turnout reveals shaky popular support for the ruling party.

"If you voted or you didn't, the result will be the same, so it doesn't matter," says Ahmed, a middle-aged father of six, sipping a cup of spiced mint tea in a middle-class district in Khartoum. A non-voter, he voices a common disillusionment here.

Hashim Khalifa, who works in a bank, says he didn't vote, but he supports the president as a guarantor of stability. "Everybody witnessed what happened in the other countries during the Arab Spring when people tried to change the regimes there, so I think it's better to stick to Bashir," he says.

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Back in the spring of 2011, Sudanese watched enviously as Libya and Egypt overthrew dictators. The subsequent chaos may be Bashir's trump card: he stands as a bulwark against further state collapse in the region.

El Nazir says that this means regional governments may overlook Sudan's human rights record, because it is a stable government that will not provide a vacuum for Islamic State to fill. The International Criminal Court has issued an arrest warrant for Bashir over alleged genocide in Darfur.

FIXING THE ECONOMY

Bashir's biggest obstacle, however, will be the economy. He has to juggle punishing US-led sanctions and a smaller economy with the loss of access to South Sudan's oil, which has pushed up inflation and sunk the Sudanese pound.

The dollar now trades on the black market for more than nine Sudanese pounds as compared to half of that before South Sudan seceded in 2011. For many would-be voters in Khartoum, the feeble economy was the big reason they stayed away.

"I am hungry. I didn't have time to vote," says Fatima, a single mother of three selling peanut butter off a rough wooden table near a bus terminal. "I wish [Bashir] the best, [but] I don't think politics affects me....I only get money from this [business]," she adds, knocking on the table with her wares spread out. "[Bashir] doesn't do anything."

COURTING THE SAUDIS

Though billed as an attempt to protect Islamic holy sites, Bashir's recent military intervention in Yemen seems aimed at cultivating wealthy Sunni allies. After years of cozying up to Shiite Iran to the Sunni Gulf's displeasure, Bashir opted to join the Saudi-led air strikes against Iranian-allied Houthi rebels in Yemen.

Large new billboards in Khartoum show Bashir alongside the Saudi monarch with fighter jets soaring behind. It may bring dividends at home. Mr. Khalifa says he's cautiously optimistic that Bashir is now "playing the game" with more powerful Arabs.

"He needs to improve his economic situation and he needs support from Arab countries," says El Nazir. "It's not just for financial support from Gulf countries but also political support."

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Sudan closes its southern borders after Al Nakhara fighting

Source: Radio Tamazuj

29 April 2015 - Sudan's Defence Minister Abdul-Rahim Mohamed Hussein has described the recent battles between the army and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) in Al Nakhara area of Tulus Locality in South Darfur as "decisive".

The Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces clashed on Sunday with the Justice and Equality Movement in South Darfur State near the border with South Sudan.

The minister claimed that they inflicted heavy losses on the rebels in terms of lives and properties. The top official disclosed that the army had closed the border with South Sudan to stop any infiltration of the rebels.

This statement came after his visit to soldiers wounded in the Nakhara battles who have been admitted to a hospital in the capital Khartoum.

Abdel-Rahim pointed out that the JEM forces had received intensive military trainings in South Sudan for a period of one year and a half. He claimed the intensive trainings were done by foreign experts and other hostile countries under the auspices of the South Sudan government.

The intention was to cause major insecurity and disrupt the electoral process, according to the defense minister.

For its part, the Juba government denied the accusations of supporting and harbouring Sudanese rebels that are fighting the Khartoum government. Spokesman for South Sudan's army Colonel Philip Aguer described the accusations by Khartoum as "baseless and unfounded".

TANZANIA

L'avion transportant Bill Clinton a-t-il atterri d'urgence en Tanzanie?

Source: Le Huffington Post Québec

29 Avril 2015 - Un avion transportant Bill Clinton a-t-il atterri d'urgence en Tanzanie comme le rapporte CBS News mercredi en début d'après-midi? Un journaliste de CNN puis un autre d'ABC News affirment que cette version n'est pas officielle.

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Selon NBC, il y aurait plutôt eu un léger incident avec l'avion, mais rien n'aurait forcé l'appareil à devoir se poser au sol de façon urgente.

Selon les premières informations rapportées par CBS News, c'est l'arrêt de l'un des quatre moteurs de l'avion qui aurait forcé l'appareil à devoir interrompre son vol pour atterrir à la station de ravitaillement de Dodoma. CBS News s'est rétracté, expliquant qu'il s'agissait d'un «atterrissage imprévu».

L'ancien président effectue actuellement un voyage dans les pays de l'Afrique de l'Est pour visiter des projets rendus possibles grâce à la fondation de sa famille.

Bill Clinton's plane makes emergency landing in Tanzania

Source: CBS

29 April 2015 - A plane carrying former US President Bill Clinton had to make an emergency landing in Tanzania Wednesday after one of its four engines on stopped working, CBS News has learned. Everyone on board the plane is safe.

Clinton was travelling in the East African nation to visit projects that have been funded by his family's foundation. The plane made an emergency landing at the Dodoma fueling station, where the engine had to be fixed.

The plane was a Canadian turboprop Dash 7, travelling from Iranga, a city in the center of Tanzania, to Lake Manyara, which is in the north. Clinton is touring projects intended to boost agriculture, health, education and wildlife conservation. He and his daughter Chelsea are also scheduled to visit Kenya, Liberia and Morocco.