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



MEDIA MONITORING

5 May 2015

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Congo: le Front contre la réforme constitutionnelle ne désarme pas

Source: RFI

L'opposition du Congo-Brazzaville appelle une nouvelle fois le président Denis Sassou-Nguesso à ne pas toucher à la Constitution. Les opposants, rassemblés au sein d'un Front pour le respect de l'ordre constitutionnel et l'alternance démocratique, se sont réunis dimanche à Pointe-Noire, la capitale économique du pays. Un lieu symbolique, puisque c'est là que, le 26 avril dernier, que le fils du président et les associations qu'il parraine avaient appelé à l'émergence d'une nouvelle République.

5 Mai 2015 - C'est par l'hymne national « La Congolaise » que les leaders de l'opposition et leurs militants ont bouclé leur meeting à la place de la République de Pointe-Noire. Le lieu, bien quadrillé par la police, n'a pas pu contenir la foule. Ceux qui ont pris la parole, Guy Romain Kinfoussia, Clément Mierassa, Pascal Tsaty Mabilia et Paul-Marie Mpouele ont dit non au changement de la Constitution et au référendum. Ils ont réclamé plutôt une gouvernance électorale pour un scrutin présidentiel apaisé en 2016.

L'opposant Jean Ngouabi a eu le même langage : « Nous avons prouvé qu'il y a des problèmes, des problèmes de gouvernance électorale qu'il faut régler avant que ce soit. »

Dans la foule, les autres militants étaient sur la même ligne. « Voir que le peuple se mobilise pour dire non au changement de la Constitution, je partage entièrement ça,

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parce que, comme on l'a dit ici, 32 ans de pouvoir, ça suffit », explique un homme qui ajoute : « Je suis déjà très sensible au fait que le peuple a été mobilisé. Malgré tout ce qui a été fait pour démoraliser les gens, pour que les gens ne viennent pas au meeting, il y a eu beaucoup de gens qui sont venus et c'est vraiment une dynamique qui prouve que les gens ont dépassé la peur ».

Le meeting de l'opposition n'a pu se tenir qu'après moult réunions et explications entre les opposants et les autorités policières et administratives de la ville océane.

Retour depuis dimanche soir à Kinshasa du président Joseph Kabila après son séjour dans la ville de Boma au Kongo central

Source: Agence congolaise de presse (ACP)

Le président Joseph Kabila a regagné dimanche en provenance de la ville de Boma au Kongo central où il avait procédé dans cette ville au lancement des travaux de construction et de modernisation de l'axe routier en état de délabrement avancé située entre les villes de Matadi et Boma ainsi que de ville côtière de Muanda.

Kinshasa, 4 Mai 2015 - Kabange a regagné Kinshasa dimanche soir provenant de Boma dans le Kongo Central où il avait procédé jeudi dans cette ville au lancement des travaux de construction et de modernisation des axes routiers Boma-Matadi et Boma-Muanda sur la route nationale n°1.

Cette route part de Moanda (Kongo Central) jusqu'à Kasumbalesa, au Katanga, en traversant la ville de Kinshasa, et les provinces de Bandundu, du Kasaï Occidental et du Kasaï Oriental.

Aussitôt lancés, les travaux d'asphaltage et de modernisation de la route Boma-Matadi vont devoir commencer, tandis que le tronçon Boma-Muanda ne sera réhabilité que lorsque l'Agence congolaise des grands travaux aura terminé les études de faisabilité y afférentes.

Le lancement de ces travaux s'inscrit dans la vision du Chef de l'Etat Joseph Kabila Kabange de renforcer le développement et l'attractivité de la province du Kongo Central. D'une longueur de 110 Km et 11 mètres de largeur, avec deux bandes à l'aller et au retour, la route Boma-Matadi sera l'un des magnifiques axes routiers que va désormais compter la République Démocratique du Congo. Au terme des travaux, cette route offrira aussi de multiples avantages à la province du Kongo Central en particulier et à l'ensemble du pays en général. Elle garantira la fluidité du trafic et réduira le temps

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d'acheminement des marchandises du port de Boma au reste du pays, en passant par Kinshasa, la capitale, ont indiqué les ingénieurs.

Le gouverneur de la province du Kongo Central, Jacques Mbadu Situ, a réussi à faire d'une pierre deux coups, en annonçant que la route Boma-Matadi, sur un tronçon de 15 Km à partir du port de Boma, portera le nom de « Boulevard Président Joseph Kabila », selon le vœu exprimé par la population de cette ville. Ainsi, ce boulevard sera-t-il l'un des plus longs de la République Démocratique du Congo, à côté du Boulevard Lumumba à Kinshasa, a-t-il relevé.

Les travaux de construction et de modernisation de la route Boma-Matadi seront exécutés pendant quinze mois par l'entreprise chinoise CREC-7, pour un coût global d'environ 81 millions USD. Aussitôt la cérémonie terminée, le Président Joseph Kabila Kabange s'est rendu au port de Boma où il a visité l'usine d'engrais chimiques en construction, destinée à booster l'agriculture de la province qui disposera bientôt d'un parc agro-industriel dans la vallée de Nkundi, secteur de Mongo-Luala, dans le territoire de Luozi.

Boma considérée comme une ville historique et berceau de la nation congolaise dispose de plusieurs sites historiques qui attirent des touristes et des estivants venant des quatre coins de la planète. Il s'agit de la première résidence et du premier bureau du gouverneur général de la colonie belge, du premier camp militaire et de la première cathédrale de la République Démocratique du Congo, du baobab de Stanley et de la première voiture ayant circulé en République Démocratique du Congo.

L'exclusion de plus de dix millions d'électeurs du processus électoral inquiète l'Opposition congolaise

Source: La Tempête des Tropiques, via mediacongo.net

By Julie Muadi

Kinshasa, 4 Mai 2015 - L'exclusion de plus de dix millions de Congolais qui avaient moins de 18 ans en 2011 des prochaines élections et la question des délais irréalistes contenus dans le calendrier électoral.

Telles sont quelques-unes des questions présentées par une délégation des présidents de partis politiques et de groupes parlementaires de l'opposition à Martin Köbler, Représentant spécial du Secrétaire général des Nations Unies et chef de la Mission de stabilisation de l'ONU en République Démocratique du Congo (MONUSCO), le mardi 28 avril dernier.

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C'était lors d'une rencontre avec le patron de la mission onusienne, axée sur les propositions et les préalables des opposants à l'organisation des prochaines élections en RD Congo.

Vital Kamerhe, Martin Fayulu, José Makila, Jean-Claude Vuemba, Alexis Lenga, Jean-Lucien Busa, Ingele Ifoto,

Martin Mukonkole et Samy Badibanga, qui ont conduit cette délégation, voulaient avoir de la MONUSCO des réponses aux préoccupations contenues dans leur mémorandum du 27 février.

Pour l'opposition, cette rencontre s'est tenue dans un esprit de construction démocratique, pour éviter à la RDC et à ses citoyens un chaos électoral. Ces opposants ont aussi déclaré attendre de la Mission onusienne des réponses formelles le plus rapidement possible.

L'absence du président de la Commission Electorale Nationale Indépendante (CENI) au pays a aussi fait partie des préoccupations qu'ils ont partagées avec Martin Kobler. Cette situation inquiète l'Opposition.

Car, l'indisponibilité de l'abbé Apollinaire Malumalu (issu de la société civile) depuis un temps laisse ainsi le champ libre au Parti du Peuple pour la Reconstruction et la Démocratie (PPRD) à travers son délégué, le premier vice-président de la commission.

DR Congo: UN official condemns "intolerable" attack on mission helicopter

Source: Indian Blooms

5 May 2015 - "I strongly condemn the firing at one of our helicopters in Beni territory," declared Martin Kobler, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in a statement released from the capital, Kinshasa.

The attack took place in the morning of May 4th, in the area of Oicha, 20 km north of Beni. The helicopters were fired upon by a group of unidentified armed men leading to a safe landing.

"This targeted attack against United Nations personnel is unacceptable and intolerable. We will not be deterred in our active protection of civilians. The attackers will be

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pursued with maximum efforts and minimum tolerance within the rules of engagement," Kobler added.

21 killed in clashes between Congolese army and rebels

Source: Press TV

5 May 2015 - At least 21 people have been killed in clashes between the army and a rebel group in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, a military official says.

Army spokesman Victor Masandi said Monday that the clashes broke out overnight Sunday when the rebels of the Allied Democratic Forces-National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (ADF-NALU) attacked an army post in the village of Kokola, around 40 kilometers north of the city of Beni.

He added that 16 rebels, four soldiers and a civilian were killed in the fighting.

The rebel group killed some 20 people in North Kivu Province in a mid-April assault.

More than 300 people were killed by ADF-NALU militants last year in and around Beni.

The ADF-NALU rebel group, which was founded in Uganda in 1995 and later moved to the Congo, is believed to have roughly 400 members and has been accused of committing serious human rights violations, including recruiting child soldiers and rape.

ADF-NALU and dozens of other armed groups have been active in eastern Congo since the 1996-2003 Congo wars.

BURUNDI

Burundi court approves president's third-term run - ruling party

Source: Reuters World Service

Bujumbura, 5 May 2015 - Burundi's constitutional court has approved President Pierre Nkurunziza's bid for a third term, the ruling party chairman said on Tuesday, a move that will anger protesters who say his decision to run again violates the constitution.

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"It has given its decision already," Pascal Nyabenda, chairman of Nkurunziza's ruling CNDD-FDD party, told Reuters in a text message when asked about the court's deliberations. Asked if it had approved the election bid, Nyabenda wrote: "Yes!"

Top Burundi judge flees country in dramatic twist to crisis

Source: AFP

Bujumbura, 5 May 2015 - The vice-president of Burundi's constitutional court -- which was about to decide on the legality of a third term for President Pierre Nkurunziza -- dramatically fled the country Monday.

Judge Sylvere Nimpagaritse told AFP that the court's judges had come under "enormous pressure and even death threats" from senior figures, which he refused to name, to rubberstamp the controversial candidature of the president.

His dramatic departure comes after more than a week of protests in the central African country in which at least 13 people have died, including four protesters shot dead by police on Monday.

Nimpagaritse claimed that a majority of the court's seven judges believed it would be unconstitutional for Nkurunziza to stand again.

Burundi's senate -- controlled by the president's CNDD-FDD party -- had asked the court to decide the issue last week and it was to pronounce before Saturday, when the list of candidates was to be published.

"In my soul and conscience I decided not to put my signature to a ruling, a decision which is clearly not lawful that would be imposed from the outside, and which has nothing legal about it," Nimpagaritse told AFP before leaving the country.

Nkurunziza, a former rebel leader and born-again Christian from the Hutu majority, has come under intense international pressure to withdraw from the June 26 presidential poll.

US Secretary of State John Kerry warned Monday that he was "deeply concerned" about Nkurunziza's decision to stand again, "which flies directly in the face of the constitution".

Burundi, where a 13-year civil war ended only in 2006, has been rocked by violent protests since the CNDD-FDD designated Nkurunziza to stand in apparent defiance of the constitution and the Arusha accords which ended the war.

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His supporters say he is eligible to run since his first term in office followed his election by parliament -- not directly by the people as the constitution specifies.

The country's powerful security forces appear divided over Nkurunziza's bid to hold onto power, diplomatic sources told AFP.

On Sunday, the army's chief of staff General Prime Niyongabo said the military "remains and will remain a republican and loyalist army that is respectful of the laws and rules of Burundi and of those who govern it".

But a statement by Defence Minister General Pontien Gacyubwenge on Saturday appeared to contradict this, declaring the army's neutrality and calling for an end to attacks on citizens' rights.

Burundi government says ready to free detainees to help dialog

Source: Reuters World Service

Bujumbura, 5 May 2015 - Burundi's vice president said on Tuesday the government was ready to release those detained during more than a week of protests against President Pierre Nkurunziza's bid for a third term, saying it was a move to help dialog and restore calm.

"We urge the protesters against the third term for Nkurunziza to stop that illegal movement," Vice President Prosper Banzombanza told a meeting of diplomats and representatives of civil society groups and opposition parties in Bujumbura.

"To give chance to dialog and to calm, the government is ready to release all the people arrested during protests," Banzombanza added.

Burundi police kill four in battles with protesters

Source: AFP World News

Bujumbura, 4 May 2015 - Police in Burundi shot dead at least four demonstrators and wounded dozens of others Monday, in running battles with protesters angry at a bid by President Pierre Nkurunziza to extend his rule.

The deaths, which leading human rights activist Pierre-Claver Mbonimpa confirmed, brought the death toll in more than a week of protests to at least 13, including two soldiers and a policeman.

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The small central African country has been rocked by violent protests since the ruling CNDD-FDD party designated Nkurunziza, a former rebel leader and born-again Christian from the Hutu majority, as its candidate in a presidential vote due to be held on June 26.

US Secretary of State John Kerry warned Monday he was "deeply concerned" about Nkurunziza's decision, "which flies directly in the face of the constitution".

Police spokesman Liboire Bakundukize said 15 officers were wounded Monday after a grenade was "thrown by protesters", while others were wounded by rocks hurled by demonstrators.

An AFP reporter saw at least eight people with bullet wounds, with Burundi's Red Cross saying 46 were wounded.

The police fired tear gas and hurled stun grenades in a bid to disperse the crowds.

"I am killed by Nkurunziza!" one injured man screamed, as he was taken to hospital with a bullet wound in his shoulder.

Witnesses said other protesters had been shot, with police apparently giving no warning before opening fire.

After a weekend truce, hundreds of protesters gathered on Monday in a suburb of the capital Bujumbura, shouting at police who have for days blocked roads to prevent demonstrators from moving into the centre of the city.

Nkurunziza has been in power since 2005. His supporters say he is eligible to run again, since his first term in office followed his election by parliament -- not directly by the people as the constitution specifies.

- 'No one wants to back down' -

Since the protests started, the army has regularly come between police and demonstrators to avoid further clashes, and the protesters believe the soldiers are neutral.

Scores have been wounded since the protests began last weekend. Nearly 600 people have also been arrested, according to police.

"We have two camps fixed in their positions -- and no one is willing to back down," said a foreign diplomat, declining to be named.

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The government linked a grenade attack that killed three people, including two police officers, in the early hours of Saturday to the opposition protests and branded the demonstrators "enemies of the state".

It has also vowed a major crackdown, with the security minister warning the police would do anything to stop an uprising.

On Monday, Kerry said the African Union would soon send a delegation to Burundi to meet with Nkurunziza and "to try to underscore the importance... of the constitution of the country".

"And it is our hope in the United States that ultimately that is what will happen and the people of Burundi will be given the choice that their constitution promises them," he added.

Nkurunziza's bid to hold on to power has both supporters and opponents within the security services, according to the foreign diplomat.

On Sunday, the army's chief of staff General Prime Niyongabo said the military "remains and will remain a republican and loyalist army that is respectful of the laws and rules of Burundi and of those who govern it".

But a statement by Defence Minister General Pontien Gaciyubwenge on Saturday declared the army's neutrality and called for an end to attacks on citizens' rights, appeared to flag up possible divisions in the army.

Burundi: Anti-Government Protesters Return to Burundi's Streets After Truce Ends

Source: AFP

4 May 2015 - Protesters have returned to the streets of Burundi after a two-day truce ended. They are demanding the current president abandon his bid for a third term in office.

Demonstrators gathered in the streets of Burundi's capital, Bujumbura, on Monday, at the start of a second week of protests over President Pierre Nkurunziza's decision to stand for a third term.

Some participants managed to break through police barricades and move into the center of the city, but were quickly dispersed. There were several scuffles with police, and teargas and water cannon were deployed.

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Protesters have also accused authorities of using live rounds of ammunition, which police deny.

Groups of Burundians gathered in the suburb of Kinindo, chanting "Please, Nkurunziza, give up the third term so that peace returns in the country."

Witnesses also reported protests were staged in Nyakabiga and Musaga.

The army has been sent in in an effort to restore calm in the central African nation, one of the poorest countries in the world.

On Friday had protesters agreed to a two-day break in the demonstrations, but warned they would resume their action if the president did not back down.

Power play

On April 25 Burundi's ruling CNDD-FDD party announced President Nkurunziza would be their candidate in June's presidential elections, sparking the protest action.

He has been in power since 2005, when he took over power from his father.

At least six people have died since the unrest began, including at least two policemen and one soldier. This is disputed by civil society groups, who say the death toll is at least nine. Around 600 arrests have also been made.

The government blamed a grenade attack on Saturday on the protests, calling demonstrators "enemies of the state."

The United States, several European countries and many regional nations have also urged Nkurunziza to call off his planned campaign, worrying he is risking a hard-fought peace deal which ended the civil war and has kept the country relatively stable for the past 10 years.

Clauses in this deal and in Burundi's constitution state that the president can only be in power for up to two five-year terms. Nkurunziza's supporters argue that his first term in office doesn't count because he was elected by lawmakers, and not a popular vote.

On Saturday Defense Minister Major General Pontien Gaciyubwenge vowed the army would not be used to violate the peace deal or the constitution, but would remain neutral.

The United Nations reported that thousands of people have already fled to neighboring Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo to escape the violence.

Social media and independent broadcasters have also been blocked or shut down.

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RWANDA

Rwanda says alarmed by Burundi unrest as refugees stream across border

Source: Reuters World Service

Reporting by: Clement Uwiringiyimana in Kigali and Patrick Nduwimana in Bujumbura;
Writing by Edith Honan; Editing by Andrew Heavens

Kigali, 5 May 2015 - Rwanda's foreign minister said on Tuesday she was concerned about neighboring Burundi's clampdown on more than a week of protests against its president's decision to seek a third term in office.

President Pierre Nkurunziza's announcement that he would stand in a June 26 vote has plunged Burundi into its worst political crisis since its ethnically fueled civil war that pitted majority Hutus against minority Tutsis from 1993 to 2005.

At least 24,000 mostly Tutsis have fled to Rwanda fearing another outbreak of ethnic strife, say officials. The unrest has particularly worried Rwanda, still scarred by its 1994 genocide that killed more than 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

"While we respect Burundi's sovereignty in addressing internal matters, Rwanda considers the safety of innocent population as a regional and international responsibility," Rwanda's foreign affairs minister, Louise Mushikiwabo, said.

"We appeal to leaders of Burundi to do everything in their power to bring the country back to a peaceful situation," she added in a statement.

Civil society groups say least 12 people have been killed during Burundi's protests, while police put the number at six, including three members of the security forces.

Small groups of protesters were back on the streets of Bujumbura on Tuesday, keeping their distance from the police. Tires smoldered and rocks were strewn over the roads from previous clashes. Police have fired tear gas, water cannon and, say demonstrators, live rounds, a charge the police denies.

Nkurunziza's opponents accuse him of breaking two-term limits set out in the constitution and the Arusha peace deal that ended the civil war. His supporters say his first term doesn't count as he was chosen by parliament, not by a popular vote.

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U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, who is in the region for talks, told a news conference in Nairobi on Monday the decision to seek a third term "flies directly in the face" of Burundi's constitution.

Nkurunziza, a former Hutu rebel leader, has called the protests an "insurrectional movement" and warned of tough steps against those behind the demonstrations.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

RCA : Catherine Samba Panza appelle à ne plus "replonger dans l'abîme"

Source: APA (<http://fr.starafrika.com/actualites/rca-catherine-samba-panza-appelle-a-ne-plus-replonger-dans-labime.html>)

4 Mai 2015 - La Présidente de Transition en Centrafrique, Catherine Samba Panza, a appelé, lundi à Bangui ses compatriotes à faire de leur propre affaire le processus électoral, soulignant que sa non-candidature à la présidentielle ne l'empêchera pas de veiller à "une bonne organisation des élections" afin d'éviter à son pays de replonger dans l'abîme".

"La Transition est le fruit d'un compromis national et international. Tout doit être mis en œuvre pour qu'au mois d'août, un gouvernement démocratique soit né. Comme je ne suis pas candidate, je veillerai sur une bonne organisation des élections pour nous éviter que le pays ne replonge dans l'abîme. Le processus électoral est l'affaire de tout le monde", a dit Catherine Samba-Panza, à l'ouverture des travaux du forum national de réconciliation de Bangui.

"Les images de la société centrafricaine ont été ternies dans le monde par des actes barbares, il faut profiter du forum pour montrer au monde que c'est d'un peuple digne", a-t-elle préconisé avant de souligner que "le forum n'est ni un tribunal populaire ni un cadre de calcul politicien pour distribuer des primes à l'impunité. Les participants doivent avoir une pensée profonde envers les victimes afin de dégager des perspectives prometteuses pour des enfants, femmes centrafricaines".

Insistant sur le sens de la rencontre, la présidente centrafricaine a affirmé que celle-ci était "un cadre intégrateur sociologique, politique, pour proposer des solutions innovatrices pour un pays moderne. C'est une occasion de mûrir les questions qui nous opposent et divisent pour une nouvelle République Centrafricaine".

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Auparavant, le Président congolais Denis Sassou-Nguesso, médiateur international de la crise, s'était réjoui du privilège qu'il avait de s'adresser "en Centrafrique, au cœur de l'Afrique, pays de rêve de Barthelemy Boganda, sans calcul, avec humilité". "Je ne Suis pas un donneur de leçons, mon pays a connu les mêmes difficultés que le vôtre", a-t-il dit avant d'ajouter: "je vous parle en citoyen d'Afrique, fils d'Afrique centrale, voisin, frère, ami et le vrai".

Pour Denis Sassou Nguessou, "le chemin de la paix est long et ardu mais le succès est à la portée des Centrafricains parce que tous ont la volonté d'arriver à la paix car la dynamique de la paix et d'unité est avec le peuple qui l'a exprimé à travers la consultation populaire à la base organisée en prélude au forum"

"Le forum sera une occasion de mettre à profit la population dans l'application effective de l'accord de cessez-le-feu de Brazzaville, de refonder les Forces armées centrafricaines et la nation centrafricaine mais de mettre en place le Désarmement, la Démobilisation et la Réinsertion (DDR) des ex combattants. C'est une occasion de recherche de thérapies susceptibles de conjurer le démon de la division et de la guerre en Centrafrique", a dit Denis Sassou Nguesso, selon qui "La priorité de la transition est l'organisation des élections dans le délai prévu, car il faut que tout le monde respecte les textes qui régissent la transition, c'est souvent au port que les bateaux chavirent".

A l'ouverture des travaux qui ont démarré avec deux heures de retard sur le programme officiel au Conseil national de transition, beaucoup d'orateurs se sont succédé à la tribune, à l'image du maire de Bangui, Hyacinthe Wodobodé, des enfants en femmes de Centrafrique qui ont tous délivré des messages de paix.

La communauté Internationale, à travers plusieurs institutions, a aussi délivré son message. Ainsi, l'union africaine a relevé tous les efforts qu'elle a faits pour ramener la stabilité en Centrafrique avant d'appeler les Centrafricains à profiter du forum pour tourner la page de l'instabilité.

Pour le représentant des Nations Unies en Centrafrique, le général Babacar Gaye, "les Centrafricains sont en face de multiples choix et défis. Mais les élections générales s'imposent comme l'unique voie dans un proche avenir pour un retour définitif à la paix en Centrafrique".

Le Premier ministre tchadien a lu le discours du Président Idris Déby, Président de la Communauté Economique des Etats de l'Afrique Centrale (CEEAC), disant notamment aux Centrafricains que le forum était "une occasion de faire la différence avec les autres dialogues qui ont déjà eu lieu. C'est l'occasion de créer les conditions économiques, sécuritaires, politiques en vue d'un retour à la paix par les élections démocratiques".

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Paix en Centrafrique: la Minusca salue la tenue du Forum national de Bangui

Source: Algérie Presse Service (<http://www.aps.dz/monde/22305-paix-en-centrafrique-la-minusca-salue-la-tenue-du-forum-national-de-bangui>)

Bangui, 4 Mai 2015 - La Mission multidimensionnelle intégrée des Nations Unies pour la Stabilisation en République centrafricaine (Minusca) a salué dimanche dans un communiqué la tenue lundi du Forum national de Bangui, une étape importante dans le processus de sortie de crise.

"La Minusca se félicite de la contribution à ces assises historiques des consultations populaires à la base organisées dans toutes les préfectures du pays", rapporte le texte.

"Cet acte majeur posé par le peuple centrafricain en faveur d'une paix durable est une avancée importante dans le processus de sortie de crise", lit-on dans le communiqué.

Le Représentant spécial du secrétaire général des Nations Unies pour la République centrafricaine et Chef de la Minusca, Babacar Gaye, cité dans le communiqué, a ainsi salué le rôle "crucial joué par tous ceux qui ont consacré leur énergie, leurs compétences et leur temps à l'organisation de cet événement inédit".

Le Chef de la Minusca appelle toutes les parties prenantes à "faire preuve de dépassement en plaçant l'intérêt supérieur de la nation au-dessus de toute autre considération afin d'assurer un bon déroulement de la rencontre et d'aboutir à des recommandations qui permettront d'écrire un nouveau contrat social".

Le Représentant spécial reste "convaincu que le Forum esquissera la configuration future d'un pays dont les habitants aspirent à plus de sécurité, de paix, de justice, de réconciliation, de bonne gouvernance ainsi que de développement économique et social, thématiques de ces assises qui constituent un rendez-vous avec l'histoire".

Il réaffirme le soutien des Nations Unies aux autorités et aux populations de la République centrafricaine "qui sont à la croisée des chemins".

Le Forum national de Bangui se tient dans la capitale centrafricaine du 4 au 11 mai 2015.

Il a pour objectif de créer la dynamique nécessaire à l'aboutissement du processus de paix et de réconciliation nationale en République centrafricaine, offrant l'occasion à toutes les composantes de la vie sociopolitique, culturelle et confessionnelle centrafricaine d'échanger et de faire des recommandations sur différentes thématiques: Justice et Réconciliation, Gouvernance, Paix et sécurité et Développement économique

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et social, des thèmes qui émanent des attentes et propositions des populations durant les consultations à la base.

A rappeler que la tenue du Forum de Brazzaville, qui en a constitué le point de départ, a été convenue lors de la 5ème réunion du Groupe international de contact sur la République centrafricaine, tenue à Addis Abéba le 7 juillet 2014.

La Centrafrique a plongé dans la violence depuis que la rébellion Séléka, conduite par Michel Djotodia, a renversé en mars 2013 le président François Bozizé.

L'ex-rébellion a été évincée du pouvoir en janvier 2014 après une intervention de l'armée française, consécutive à un cycle sanglant de violences et de représailles entre combattants de la Séléka et milices anti-balaka.

Lundi dernier, L'ONU s'est alarmée du manque cruel de fonds pour mener à bien ses opérations humanitaires en Centrafrique, une situation l'obligeant à réduire son aide.

Amnesty international: Central African Republic new constitution should leave no space for impunity

Source: Standard Digital (Kenya)

4 May 2015 - Bangui: Authorities in Central African Republic should amend clauses in a proposed new constitution that could undermine the fight against impunity, Amnesty International said ahead of a national reconciliation forum in Bangui.

In an open letter to delegates attending the Bangui Forum starting on 4 May, the organisation warns that the current draft constitution could allow any serving president immunity from prosecution for all charges except “high treason”. Likewise former presidents could be exempt due to their honorary membership of the Constitutional Court. “Amnesties and immunities only perpetuate the cycle of conflict and injustice. The current draft constitution should be amended to recognize that everyone, no matter their position, can be held accountable for crimes under international law,” said Steve Cockburn, Amnesty International Deputy Regional Director for West and Central Africa.

“The population of CAR has clearly called for an end to impunity, and the CAR authorities have recently taken positive steps by establishing a new court to prosecute those suspected of crimes under international law. Ensuring that a new constitution builds on this progress, rather than undermining it, would be a valuable legacy for the transitional authorities to leave.” While CAR’s current criminal code appears to outlaw immunity for those suspected of war crimes, crimes against humanity or genocide, the

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draft constitution fails to prevent future parliaments from introducing immunity laws for these and other crimes. In an open letter to the transitional authorities Amnesty International warns that justice must be at the heart of the reconciliation process, including by opening investigations on anyone suspected of serious human rights violations and supporting the newly created Special Criminal Court.

In a set of recommendations to forum delegates, Amnesty International also states that the Constitution should recognize that international law, including treaties ratified by CAR and customary international law, should be considered as superior to domestic legislation and the Constitution, in compliance with the Vienna Convention of the Law of the Treaties, to which CAR is a state party.

In nationwide grassroots consultations in advance of the Bangui Forum, ordinary citizens repeatedly said that without justice there will be no chance of reconciliation.

Rights Group: Fight Impunity in CAR Reconciliation Process

Source: Standard Digital (Kenya)

4 May 2015 - More than 500 delegates representing all stakeholders in the Central African Republic begin a week-long reconciliation forum Monday in Bangui on the future of the strife-torn country, including its proposed constitution. Ahead of the meeting, Amnesty International sent an open letter to the transitional authorities urging them to amend all clauses in the proposed constitution that could undermine the fight against impunity. Stephen Cockburn, Amnesty's deputy regional director for West and Central Africa, said one of the concerns is the document gives the president immunity from prosecution for all charges except "high treason."

"The current draft of that constitution includes a number of clauses that could allow perpetrators of human rights violations to escape justice. Now, a couple examples I can give you, for example, the president of a country in the new constitution could not be charged with any crime except for high treason. And, that will also be the same for former presidents as well," he said.

Cockburn said the same exemption will apply to former presidents of the CAR. He said transitional authorities have responded to the calls of the population for an end to impunity by establishing a new court to prosecute those suspected of crimes under international law.

"Ensuring that a new constitution builds on this progress, rather than undermining it, would be a valuable legacy for the transitional authorities to leave," Cockburn said.

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He said Amnesty is calling for the draft constitution to be amended so that anyone, no matter their position, can be held accountable. Cockburn said the CAR's history is replete with people being given amnesty for very serious crimes and making deals to escape justice.

"Obviously, in a peace process, there are always compromises made. But, one thing you cannot compromise with are crimes against humanity, war crimes, or genocide. It's against international law to do so. It also would be against the Central African Republic's own criminal code. And, it wouldn't really help to build a real and sustainable peace," he said.

He described allegations that French peacekeepers sexually assault boys in the CAR as extremely serious. Cockburn called for a swift and transparent investigation as soon as possible and in a way that put the rights of the children first.

"The battle against impunity is for everyone. We have to condemn and to hold people accountable for crimes committed whether those people are Central African militias or whether they are UN peacekeepers, the same principles apply to everyone," Cockburn said.

KENYA

Kerry commemorates attack victims in Kenya

Source: Aljazeera

4 May 2015 - John Kerry has commemorated the victims of Kenya's past and present attacks and offered American support in the fight against an increasingly diffuse but perhaps more dangerous threat emanating out of Somalia.

His trip to the East African country coincides with improving US-Kenyan ties and sets the stage for President Barack Obama's visit this summer.

Kerry laid a wreath on Monday for the victims of the deadly 1998 bombing of the US embassy in Kenya and offered condolences to families and friends of the 148 people, mainly students, massacred at a Kenyan university last month.

The embassy attacks in Nairobi and the Tanzanian capital of Dar-es-Salaam killed 224 people, the work of a rising al-Qaeda just three years before the even deadlier September 11 attacks against the US homeland.

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Kerry told an assembled group at the park that if the attackers intended to destroy relations between US citizens, Kenyans, and Tanzanians, they failed.

"They didn't destroy anything that was worthwhile," Kerry said. "The only place for al-Qaeda, al-Shabab, Boko Haram and Daesh is in the past."

Daesh is another term for ISIL, or the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. US officials have been using the term more frequently in order to undercut ISIL's claims that only it represents legitimate Islamic beliefs.

'Terrorists will fail'

Last month's tragedy at Garissa University College was different, coming from an al-Shabab network that is on the run in Somalia but expanding its activities elsewhere.

"Terrorists will always fail," Kerry said at the site of the former embassy.

"Yes, they can reduce a building to rubble. And yes, they can even deprive innocent people of their lives."

"But they do not give anyone anything of what really makes life worthwhile."

Americans and Kenyans have the power to fight back, Kerry emphasised, militarily and "through our unity and the character of our ideals."

Earlier, he addressed the embassy's current staff, which includes several employees that survived the attack 17 years ago. He praised their efforts.

Kerry's presence in Kenya, however, comes shortly after a US justice department decision not to award victims of the embassy bombings money seized from Sudanese accounts at a French bank.

The US says Sudan financed and supported the attacks in Kenya and Tanzania.

George Mimba, who headed embassy employees in Kenya at the time, said in a statement that he and others were "deeply disappointed".

Obama's planned trip

Kerry, previewing Obama's scheduled trip here in July, later met Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta.

US relations with Kenyatta have improved since the International Criminal Court dropped charges of crimes against humanity against him in December.

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Those were linked to violence that killed hundreds of people after Kenya's contested 2007 presidential election.

Tensions remain, however.

The US believes Kenyatta should do more to improve human rights, from addressing the post-election killings last decade to stamping out continued incidents of police violence and pressure against journalists, activists and political opponents.

And on counterterrorism, where cooperation is close, both sides are not completely content with the partnership.

The Kenyans want a bigger US footprint in the region to combat al-Shabab, whose activities in Kenya include the 2013 attack on the Westgate shopping mall that killed 67 people.

Al Jazeera's Rosiland Jordan, reporting from Nairobi, said Kerry held meetings with Kenyatta, opposition leaders and the chief justice to discuss security and other issues.

SOUTH SUDAN

Washington soutient la création d'un tribunal pour les crimes au Soudan du Sud

Source: VOA

Le secrétaire d'Etat américain John Kerry l'a annoncé lundi au cours de sa visite officielle au Kenya.

5 Mai 2015 - ohn Kerry a affirmé soutenir la création d'un mécanisme judiciaire crédible, impartial et efficace tel un tribunal hybride pour que les responsables des violences puissent répondre de leurs crimes.

Pour démarrer la mise en place d'une telle instance Washington s'engage à donner cinq millions de dollars.

Human Rights Watch avait proposé en décembre 2014 la création d'un "tribunal hybride" comprenant des juges du Soudan du Sud et des juges internationaux.

L'Union africaine, aussi avait plaidé en faveur de la poursuite des responsables des crimes.

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Le conflit sud-soudanais a éclaté en décembre 2013 entre le président Salva Kiir et son ancien vice-président Riek Machar.

Les combats sont souvent accompagnés de massacres et atrocités contre les civils. Ce conflit a déjà fait des dizaines de milliers de morts dans le plus jeune pays du monde.

S. Sudan's rebel controlled counties and neighbouring Ethiopia sign cooperation agreement

Source: Sudan Tribune

3 May 2015 - South Sudanese officials in the rebel controlled counties [districts] in Jonglei and Upper Nile states sign a cooperation agreement with their neighbouring Ethiopian woredas [districts] in promotion of cohesion between the cross-border communities.

Signed in Tiergol woreda [district] in Gambella region of Ethiopia early this week, the cooperation agreement which is sanctioned by the Gambella Regional Justice Bureau, was inked by cross-border district officials, chiefs, traditional leaders and representatives of religious leaders, women and youth groups from the rebel held bordering counties in Jonglei and Upper Nile states and the districts of Gambella region in Ethiopia.

Officials from both sides told Sudan Tribune on Sunday that the deal aimed to promote harmony between the Ethiopian and South Sudanese neighbouring communities and to control movement of firearms across their common borders as well as clear feeder roads connecting their neighbouring districts.

The deal reiterated to continue to grant free cross-border movement of people, particularly the displaced persons or refugees from South Sudan into Ethiopia and share fishing and grazing lands as well as work in collaboration with their respective administrations.

The agreement further addressed other social matters including the need to harmonize or reduce dowry payment in case of cross-border intermarriages, saying this would reduce marriage-induced violence and cattle raiding.

Currently, most of the South Sudan's Jonglei and Upper Nile states' bordering counties with Ethiopia are under the control of the opposition forces led by former vice-president, Riek Machar.

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Also the districts on the side of Ethiopia and South Sudan are predominantly inhabited by the Nuer communities in the two countries, with the Ethiopian Nuer inhabiting four counties in Gambella region in Ethiopia.

The two communities also share history, culture and language although they are separated by the international borders. Representatives from the neighbouring Anyuak community also signed the cooperation agreement.

Ethiopian Tiergol commissioner, Simon Dol Kek, hailed the agreement, saying the deal would promote cohesion and ease some of the concerns arising from the influx of refugees from South Sudan, who are being resettled in many different refugee camps within Gambella region, including Tharpam at Itang and Panyidu.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Ethiopia this week announced that the number of refugees, mainly from the Nuer ethnic group, has reached 200,000, in Ethiopia, with thousands of new arrivals registered every month.

The deal further stressed the need to clear the feeder roads on both sides of the border to ease movement and trade. Ethiopian government has already constructed a tarmacked road up to it border with Pagak, a border town in Upper Nile state, which the rebels have renamed as Adar state.

South Sudanese county officials said they wanted to initiate and promote peace and harmony between the bordering communities with the sisterly Ethiopia, which they hailed for its historical support to South Sudan which lead to its independence and for leading a peace process to end the war in the young country.

SUDAN

U.N. says apprehended Sudan Intel officer after attack near Abyei

Source: Reuters

4 May 2015 - U.N. peacekeepers in the disputed region of Abyei along the border of Sudan and South Sudan apprehended someone claiming to be a Sudanese intelligence officer after a deadly attack last month, the U.N. chief said in a new report.

The ownership of Abyei, which has rich pastureland and small oil reserves, was left undecided when South Sudan declared independence from Sudan in 2011. It remains

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one of the biggest potential flashpoints between the two countries, who have also argued over oil rights and other disputed territories.

On March 2, U.N. peacekeepers in the Abyei region, known as UNISFA, responded to an attack on the village of Marial Achak by 100 armed individuals from the Misseriya community, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said in his latest report to the Security Council on Abyei.

Three people were killed in the attack, four children abducted and 24 houses destroyed, Ban said.

"UNISFA responded swiftly to the incident and was able to intercept the armed men fleeing north from Marial Achak," his report said.

After an exchange of fire, UNISFA troops captured eight of the armed assailants, who had five AK-47 rifles, over 400 rounds of ammunition, three motorcycles, and a Motorola radio set.

"Among the eight detainees were one logistics officer from a local militia group, Tora Bora, and one individual who identified himself as a Sudan Armed Forces intelligence officer," Ban's report said.

The report noted that Khartoum denied that a Sudanese officer took part in the attack, which it blamed on a rebel group. Sudan's Deputy U.N. Ambassador Hassan Hamid Hassan told Reuters the allegation was "totally not true."

If confirmed, the presence of a Sudanese officer with local militia could suggest that Khartoum may be helping armed elements around Abyei coordinate attacks.

Ban said Khartoum also alleged that the Misseriya militia was retaliating after an attack by elements of the Dinka Ngok community, who occupy much of the Abyei region, on Al-Shagag village on Feb. 26. It said those militants were based in Marial Achak and supported by the South Sudanese army.

UNISFA could not confirm the Al-Shagag attack, the report said.

Ban appealed to both Sudan and South Sudan to ensure that armed forces allied to them remain outside the Abyei area.

He added that the abduction of children was "particularly deplorable and unacceptable."

South Sudan has been embroiled in a civil war since December 2013.

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TANZANIA

Près de 2.000 réfugiés burundais accueillis en Tanzanie (officiel)

Source: APA (<http://fr.starafrica.com/actualites/pres-de-2-000-refugies-burundais-accueillis-en-tanzanie-officiel.html>)

4 Mai 2015 - Près de 2.000 Burundais, craignant pour leur sécurité à cause de la crise que traverse actuellement leur pays, se sont déjà réfugiés en Tanzanie voisine, a-t-on appris lundi de source officielle.

«Jusqu'au (dimanche) 3 mai, 1.852 ressortissants burundais étaient déjà entrés sur le territoire tanzanien », indique un communiqué du porte-parole du ministère tanzanien de l'Intérieur, Isaac Nantanga.

Selon ce communiqué rédigé en swahili, ils sont accueillis par le HCR et les autorités locales, puis interrogés, avant d'être transportés au camp de réfugiés de Nyarugusu dans le district de Kasulu, dans la province de Kigoma, au bord du lac Tanganyika.

La télévision nationale tanzanienne, TBC one, a diffusé lundi matin des images de ces réfugiés, des femmes pour la plupart, dont certaines affirmaient, en kirundi, fuir les menaces des Imbonerakure, les jeunes du parti au pouvoir au Burundi.

Le communiqué du ministère tanzanien de l'Intérieur indique que les opérations d'accueil et d'enregistrement se déroulent très bien et que les forces de l'ordre au niveau de la région de Kigoma contrôlent parfaitement la situation.

Un plus grand nombre de Burundais ont déjà cherché refuge au Rwanda.

Le Burundi, qui forme, avec la Tanzanie, le Rwanda, l'Ouganda et le Kenya, la Communauté d'Afrique de l'Est (EAC), traverse une profonde crise après la désignation du président Pierre Nkurunziza comme candidat de son parti pour un troisième mandat à la tête du pays.

L'opposition et la société civile, qui accusent Nkurunziza de violer ainsi la constitution, se sont mobilisées contre cette candidature dans une vaste contestation qui a déjà fait plusieurs morts.

La semaine dernière, le secrétaire général de l'EAC a appelé le gouvernement du Burundi à poursuivre le processus de dialogue impliquant tous les acteurs clés en vue de discuter de "toutes les questions clés pouvant avoir un impact sur la tenue d'un processus électoral pacifique, libre et équitable ».

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Il a exhorté "par ailleurs le gouvernement du Burundi et tous les acteurs à veiller à ce que le processus électoral ne conduise pas à une crise humanitaire».

Il s'est déclaré "préoccupé » par le fait que certains Burundais ont commencé à chercher refuge dans les pays voisins "par crainte de violences liées aux élections ».

ZAMBIA

Zambia Sends 750 Troops to CAR

Source: Times of Zambia

4 May 2015 - ZAMBIA has sent 750 soldiers for the United Nations (UN) peacekeeping mission in the war-torn Central African Republic (CAR).

The CAR has been rocked by religious violence which has killed thousands of people, and the country is scheduled to go for elections in July this year.

The Zambian troops, who will be part of the multidimensional United Nations peacekeeping operation dubbed MINUSCA, left the country on Thursday and are expected to be in that country for 12 months.

The departure was preceded by a colourful send-off parade at Lusaka's Arakan Barracks last weekend where Defence

Deputy Minister Christopher Mulenga warned the soldiers against being undisciplined.

Mr Mulenga said the Government expected nothing but high levels of professionalism and discipline from the troops during the execution of their mandate.

"As peacekeepers sent from Zambia, you are expected to keep and observe your terms of reference and please do not for any reason get entangled in the politics of the host nation," he said.

Mr Mulenga commended the defence wings and command for working together during the preparation and pre-deployment training of the troops.

"While paying tribute to you our gallant men and women in uniform for ably representing Zambia, I will be failing in my duties if I don't remind you of the need to be morally upright bearing in mind the families you are leaving behind," Mr Mulenga said.

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He thanked the American government through the US embassy in Zambia for the support, in form of equipment and training, rendered to the troops during their preparations for the task.

Army Commander Paul Mihova assured the Government that the troops had met the required standard for them to successfully carry out the peacekeeping mission in CAR.

He thanked Government for allowing officers to continue participating in the UN and African Union peacekeeping missions.