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



MEDIA MONITORING

6 May 2015

D.R. CONGO

UN: Peacekeepers Ambushed in Congo; 2 Dead, 13 Wounded

Source: AP

5 May 2015 - Suspected rebels ambushed a Tanzanian unit of U.N. peacekeepers in eastern Congo on Tuesday, killing two and wounding 13, the spokesman for the secretary-general said in a statement. Four peacekeepers were reported missing.

The ambush came a day after gunfire hit a helicopter carrying the mission's force commander in the same region, according to the statement released late Tuesday.

The U.N. said the Tanzanians came under fire by "suspected Allied Democratic Forces elements in Beni territory, North Kivu." It blamed "unidentified armed elements" for the helicopter incident.

"The secretary-general also condemns in the strongest terms the continuing atrocities perpetrated by the ADF against defenseless civilians in the Beni area," the statement said.

Mineral-rich eastern Congo has been plagued by a number of armed rebel groups, including the ADF, since the Rwandan genocide two decades ago. The peacekeeping mission, the largest for the U.N., includes a force intervention brigade with a unique mandate to take offensive military action against rebel groups.

The U.N. peacekeeping chief, Herve Ladsous, visited Congo late last month in an attempt to smooth relations with President Joseph Kabila, who wants the force, known as MONUSCO, cut significantly on the way to an eventual exit from the country.

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The top U.N. envoy to Congo, Martin Kobler, has warned that making the \$1.3 billion, 21,000-strong peacekeeping mission leave Congo too early would be disastrous.

Kobler tweeted Tuesday that he condemned the latest attack but that "MONUSCO will conduct robust offensive operations."

The U.N. says that as of March 31, at least 86 peacekeepers in the mission had died, most by accident or illness. Just nine of those deaths were blamed on a "malicious act."

République démocratique du Congo: deux Casques bleus tués dans une embuscade dans l'est

Source: AFP

Deux soldats de la Mission de l'ONU en République démocratique du Congo (Monusco) ont été tués mardi dans une embuscade tendue dans le territoire de Beni, dans l'est du pays, où de violents combat opposent l'armée à des rebelles ougandais.

Goma, 5 mai 2015 - «C'est avec tristesse et colère que je viens d'apprendre le décès de Casques bleus dans une embuscade près de Béni», un grand carrefour commercial situé dans le nord de la province troublée du Nord-Kivu, a annoncé le chef de la Monusco, Martin Kobler, sur son compte Twitter, sans préciser le nombre de soldats tués.

Interrogé par l'AFP, M. Kobler a déclaré qu'il «condamnait fermement ces attaques contre les Casques bleus», sans pouvoir donner de bilan. Un porte-parole de la Monusco a pour sa part indiqué à l'AFP qu'«on confirme deux morts» mais que le nombre précis de blessés reste inconnu.

L'administrateur du territoire de Beni, Amisi Kalonda, a donné un bilan de "deux morts" et souligné que l'«attaque» a ciblé un «convoi de soldats tanzaniens tombé dans une embuscade tendue par l'ennemi, l'ADF», les rebelles musulmans ougandais des Forces démocratiques alliées.

Dans un autre tweet, en anglais cette fois, M. Kobler a rendu hommage aux "soldats de la paix tanzaniens qui sont morts", promettant que la "Monusco va mener des opérations offensives robustes" dans la région où s'est déroulée l'attaque.

Les soldats tanzaniens appartiennent aux quelque 3 000 hommes de la brigade d'intervention de la Monusco - également composée de Sud-Africains et de Malawites -,

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chargée de lutter contre les dizaines de groupes armés locaux et étrangers actifs dans l'est de la RDC.

Ces groupes armés, parfois actifs depuis 20 ans, s'affrontent pour des raisons foncières, ethniques ou pour le contrôle des nombreuses richesses dont regorge l'est du pays (minerais, bois...). Certains sont accusés de graves exactions (meurtres, viols, enrôlement d'enfants...) contre les civils.

Dans un communiqué publié dans la nuit de mardi, la Monusco précise que l'unité de Tanzaniens est «tombée dans une embuscade sur l'axe Mavivi-Mayimoya, au village Kikiki situé à 11 km au sud d'Eringeti». Dans cette région, l'armée affronte des rebelles de l'ADF depuis dimanche.

L'armée a fait état mardi de «16 morts côté rebelles et de 4 morts et deux blessés côté FARDC (armée)». La société civile du territoire de Beni n'a pas de chiffre quant aux pertes chez les rebelles, mais affirme que l'armée a essuyé de lourdes pertes: «28 morts parmi les FARDC, 22 blessés, 8 capturés».

«La situation est tellement grave qu'elle devrait interpeller les autorités à tous les niveaux. (...) Les rebelles s'attaquent aux FARDC de façon bien organisée. Ils ont saisi des tenues, des bottes, des armes... On sent qu'ils se sont vraiment ravitaillés en équipement militaire», poursuit cette source.

Lundi soir, M. Kobler avait condamné «fermement le fait que l'on ait tiré sur l'un de nos hélicoptères dans le territoire de Beni», forçant l'appareil, qui transportait le commandant de la force onusienne, à se poser en «urgence». L'attaque était attribuée à des «hommes armés non identifiés».

«Cette attaque ciblée contre le personnel des Nations unies est inacceptable et intolérable. Nous ne serons pas découragés dans notre (mandat de) protection active des civils. Les assaillants seront poursuivis avec le maximum d'efforts et le minimum de tolérance», avait affirmé M. Kobler.

M. Kobler estime que ces deux attaques en 48 heures révèlent «l'impérieuse nécessité de relancer la coopération entre les FARDC et la Force de la Monusco pour la sécurisation du territoire de Beni», alors que les armées sont en froid depuis un différend sur la manière de neutraliser les rebelles hutus rwandais des Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda.

D'octobre à décembre, plus de 260 personnes, pour l'essentiel des civils (hommes, femmes et enfants), ont été tuées, pour la plupart à l'arme blanche, dans la ville de Beni et ses environs dans une succession de massacres attribués aux rebelles musulmans ougandais de l'ADF.

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En décembre, une opération conjointe de l'armée congolaise et de la Monusco avait contribué à ramener le calme mais les tueries n'ont pas cessé totalement et se sont étendues à des zones limitrophes de la Province-Orientale au tournant de l'année.

Depuis le 1er janvier, soixante personnes au moins ont ainsi péri dans des attaques similaires dans le territoire de Beni ou en Province-Orientale.

Les ADF sont présentes depuis 1995 dans l'Est congolais, où elles sont accusées de graves exactions contre les civils (meurtres, enrôlement d'enfants, pillages...) et de se livrer à un juteux trafic de bois.

L'armée congolaise a annoncé que, dans la nuit du 24 au 25 avril, ses hommes avaient abattu Kasada Karume, numéro trois de l'ADF. Selon le journal ougandais New Vision, le chef de la rébellion, Jamil Mukulu, aurait été arrêté fin avril en Tanzanie.

SAAF chopper shot at in the DRC

Source: RDM News Wire

5 May 2015 - The South African National Defence Force on Tuesday confirmed that a South African Air, Force helicopter came under fire in the Democratic Republic of Congo on Monday.

According to Captain Jaco Theunissen of the Joint Operations Division: "The incident took place during a routine, visit by the MONUSCO (United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the DRC) Force Commander,, Lieutenant-General Santos Cruz, in the far north east of the DRC."

Theunissen said that "several shots, from a small-calibre weapon, were fired in the direction of a Oryx helicopter, whilst in flight between the towns of Beni and Bunia".

One bullet hit the fuel tank of the chopper, he said, causing a minor fuel leak, and "the pilot managed to safely fly out, of the danger zone and landed at the Mavivi Airport near Beni".

Nobody was injured in the incident, and the origin of the gunfire is still under investigation by MONUSCO.

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Nouveaux combats entre FARDC et ADF, 18 morts

Source: Radio Okapi

Le bilan des accrochages entre les FARDC et les rebelles ougandais des ADF dimanche 3 mai à Parikingi et Kokola (Nord-Kivu) fait état de quatorze ADF tués et cinq armes récupérées. Selon le porte-parole des FARDC à Beni, le major Victor Masande, au cours de ces accrochages, quatre militaires ont été également tués.

D'après toujours le major Victor Masande, pour l'instant l'armée exerce une pression sur les ADF dans la zone de Bango à l'extrême nord-est du territoire de Beni.

5 Mai 2015 - Cette traque lancée par l'armée régulière dans la zone est soutenue par la Monusco, qui est aussi visée par des hommes armés.

Un hélicoptère du commandant de force de la mission onusienne a essuyé des tirs des hommes armés non identifiés, lundi 4 mai vers 11h locales, dans le domaine d'Oïcha, à 20 km au nord de Beni, alors qu'il était en patrouille.

Deux présumés rebelles des ADF avaient été arrêtés dimanche 19 avril dans deux quartiers situés aux alentours de la ville de Beni.

Selon des sources sécuritaires, ces présumés ADF avaient fait des révélations accablantes sur les derniers massacres des civiles à Beni. L'un d'eux a fait état de l'existence d'un réseau de ravitaillement des ADF, qui serait piloté par un officier supérieur des FARDC.

RDC: arrivée de milliers de réfugiés burundais apeurés par les Imbonerakure

Source: RFI

En RDC, les Burundais qui fuient les manifestations et la répression des derniers jours affluent dans l'est de la RDC, près de la ville d'Uvira. En un peu plus d'un mois, 7 000 Burundais sont venus se réfugier au Congo voisin. Mardi 5 mai, le chef de la mission de l'Onu au Congo, Martin Kobler a rendu visite à ces réfugiés.

5 Mai 2015 - « Je suis venu ici pour vous écouter », affirme le chef de la mission de l'ONU au Congo, Martin Kobler, un mégaphone à la main. Il s'adresse à une petite foule. Quatre cents personnes sont assises sur des bancs sous un grand arbre. Beaucoup de jeunes, des femmes, des hommes et des dizaines d'enfants...

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Tous ont fui le Burundi ces dernières semaines, comme Godé parti de Rugombo dans la province de Cibitoke : « J'ai fui les jeunes du parti CNDD-FDD qui s'appellent Imbonerakure. Ils sont arrivés chez nous pour nous menacer vers minuit. On nous a dit que si nous ne votons pas pour le président Nkurunziza, on va nous tuer. »

Des récits comme celui-là, il y en a des dizaines. A chaque fois, les Imbonerakure, la jeunesse du parti au pouvoir est pointée du doigt. Hakima est partie sans rien juste après l'école : « Ils sont arrivés dans mon lycée et ils ont dit qu'ils allaient prendre les filles et les hommes forts pour les envoyer dans des camps d'entraînement Imbonerakure. J'ai eu trop peur, je suis partie. »

Chaque jour, ils sont 200 à 300, à franchir la frontière. En un mois, 7 000 sont venus se réfugier en RDC trop nombreux pour être pris en charge par les familles d'accueil estime le HCR. Les Congolais s'inquiètent d'une contagion sécuritaire, mais pour le chef de la Monusco Martin Kobler la priorité est d'accueillir ces réfugiés : « La priorité maintenant ce sont les questions humanitaires, de recevoir ceux qui sont venus. Les réfugiés doivent manger, ils doivent être logés... »

Pour le moment, accueilli dans des familles souvent d'ex-réfugiés burundais de 1994, le Haut commissariat aux réfugiés (HCR) songe à construire un camp de réfugiés pour faire face à cet afflux. Des discussions avec les autorités sont en cours pour ouvrir un camp de réfugiés comme le réclament ces Burundais qui disent craindre pour leur sécurité. De plus en plus de sources font état d'Imbonerakure qui vont et viennent entre le Burundi et la RDC.

DR Congo army kills 16 Ugandan rebels: military

Source: AFP

Goma, DR Congo, 5 May 2015 - Troops in the Democratic Republic of Congo have killed 16 Ugandan rebels in two days of clashes in the troubled northeast of the country, a military spokesman announced on Tuesday.

"The provisional toll is 16 dead on the rebel side and two injured in the (Congolese army). Six AK-47s (Kalashnikov assault rifles) were recovered," Major Victor Masandi of operation Sokola 1, which hunts the foreign rebels, told AFP.

Fighting began on Sunday close to Kokola and Mayimoya when Ugandan "ADF (Allied Democratic Forces) rebels attacked the army" about 50 kilometres (31 miles) north of the major trading town of Beni in North Kivu province, Masandi said.

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The clashes entailed "intensive firing with heavy weapons and light arms", while the Ugandan rebels on Monday "shot at a UN helicopter" that was part of the UN peacekeeping force deployed in the DRC, the major added.

"I strongly condemn the firing at one of our helicopters in Beni territory," Martin Kobler, the head of the UN mission in the DRC (MONUSCO), said in a statement late Monday.

The attack "by a group of unidentified armed men" took place in the Oicha area, 20 kilometres north of Beni, Kobler said, adding that the aircraft landed safely.

"We will not be deterred in our active protection of civilians. The attackers will be pursued with maximum efforts and minimum tolerance within the rules of engagement," he vowed.

The UN Security Council has mandated troops in a special Force Intervention Brigade to take the offensive against the many armed groups active in eastern DRC, where more than two decades of unrest has displaced hundreds of thousands of people.

The Muslim rebels of the ADF, who launched an insurgency in neighboring Uganda against President Yoweri Museveni in the mid-1990s, are accused of killing more than 260 people in and around Beni town between October and December last year.

Men, women and children were massacred mainly with machetes and knives, prompting a joint operation by the Congolese army and UN troops to put down the jihadist fighters in December.

Plusieurs entreprises américaines continuent à financer la guerre en RDC !

Source: www.KongoTimes.info

Plus de mille sociétés ou entreprises américaines sont concernées par l'exploitation ou la commercialisation des minerais du sang en RDC et dénoncent en même temps que 79 % de ces entreprises ne respectent pas les exigences minimales de la loi américaine sur les minerais de sang en République Démocratique du Congo (RDC).

5 Mai 2015 - La Voix de la Russie / SPUTNIKNEWS : " Notre observateur a interviewé par téléphone de Londres le Président de l'Alliance des Patriotes pour la Refondation du Congo, monsieur Honoré Ngbanda, auteur de plusieurs ouvrages sur la politique et

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l'économie. Son récent livre " Strategie du Chaos et du Mensonge : Poker menteur en Afrique des Grands Lacs" paru en novembre 2014.

L'Agence France Presse souligne le rapport fait par Amnesty International et Global Witness qui relèvent que plus de mille sociétés ou entreprises américaines sont concernées par l'exploitation ou la commercialisation des minerais du sang en RDC et dénoncent en même temps que 79 % de ces entreprises ne respectent pas les exigences minimales de la loi américaine sur les minerais de sang en RD-Congo."

Honoré NGBANDA - Pour moi, l'annonce faite par l'AFP est un non-événement. De mon point de vue, le rapport d'Amnesty International et de Global Witness relèvent d'une vaste hypocrisie occidentale qui vise à brouiller la lecture de véritables causes et objectifs du drame qui se joue dans la Région des Grands Lacs Africains depuis 1990.

Dans mon livre «Crimes organisés en Afrique centrale. Révélation sur les réseaux rwandais et occidentaux» publié en 2004, et dans le dernier livre «Stratégie du chaos et du mensonge : Poker menteur en Afrique des Grands Lacs » que je viens de coécrire en 2014 avec mon compatriote Patrick Mbeko, je ne cesse de dénoncer cette hypocrisie généralisée en Occident. C'est à cause de cela qu'aucun média occidental n'accepte de m'accorder la parole parce que les puissances qui ont allumé le feu dans la région des Grands Lacs Africains et particulièrement en RDC ne veulent pas que le reste du monde sache exactement la vérité sur ce qui se passe réellement en RD-Congo. C'est pourquoi je tiens à remercier «La voix de la Russie» pour son initiative.

Monsieur, on ne peut pas demander aux entreprises américaines de renoncer à l'utilisation des minerais du sang en RD-Congo. Et quand certains hommes politiques américains et autres occidentaux initient de telles lois dans ce sens, ils jouent seulement leur partition dans ce vaste orchestre du mensonge. Car les auteurs qui ont installé le chaos qui règne en RD-Congo depuis 1996 sont justement ces multinationales américaines qui ont financé ces guerres pour contrôler et piller nos mines d'or, de diamant, de coltan et de cuivre qu'on qualifie aujourd'hui hypocritement de « minerais de sang ».

Pour cela, je dois vous rappeler quelques faits historiques pour illustrer cette hypocrisie occidentale. Nous avons enregistré d'une part, plusieurs rapports d'experts de la commission d'enquête de l'ONU sur les pillages et l'exploitation illégale des ressources naturelles de la RDC et, d'autre part nous nous souvenons du rapport de la commission sénatoriale belge sur les pillages des ressources naturelles de la RDC.

Dans tous ces nombreux rapports d'enquêtes et d'études publiés, les experts ont dénoncé chaque fois le pillage et l'exploitation illégale des ressources naturelles de la RDC et ont aussi chaque fois formellement identifiés les pays, les sociétés, les firmes et

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les différents groupes d'intérêts qui sont impliqués dans ce pillage. Les experts onusiens ont même plus d'une fois formulé des recommandations qui ont conduit les organes compétents de l'ONU à prendre des résolutions pour sanctionner les principaux pillards.

C'est pour cela que nous nous posons toute une série de questions. Pourquoi donc toutes ces recommandations pertinentes et toutes ces bonnes résolutions de l'ONU sont-elles restées de vœux pieux et n'ont jamais connu un début d'exécution ? Pourquoi les responsables de l'ONU et du Sénat belge qui avaient diligenté les enquêtes avaient-ils tous refusé de communiquer des informations importantes sur certains contrats léonins illégaux, sous prétexte de confidentialité ? Pourquoi ce refus ? Et quels sont ces pays, ces sociétés et ces hommes placés au-dessus de l'ONU et protégés par la confidentialité des sénateurs belges et des experts de l'ONU ? C'est ça l'hypocrisie occidentale dont je parle et que je dénonce.

La vérité est toute simple, monsieur le journaliste. Ce sont les mêmes lobbies politiques et financiers, auteurs de pillage en RDC, qui déploient leurs multiples et puissantes tentacules de pieuvre pour bloquer par des mécanismes de pression, de chantage, de diversion et d'intoxication, l'application de toute mesure qui vise à mettre fin au pillage et à la violence en RD-Congo. La guerre qu'ils y ont conçue et planifiée a justement pour objectif de leur créer un cadre idéal de chaos pour perpétrer impunément ces crimes dont le peuple congolais paie aujourd'hui un lourd tribut.

Ces sociétés américaines sont des pyromanes à qui on demande hypocritement de jouer aux sapeurs-pompiers pour éteindre l'incendie qu'ils ont allumé pour mieux piller la RDC. Comprenez bien qu'ils n'accepteront jamais d'éteindre leur propre feu ; et ils n'accepteront pas que quelqu'un d'autre le fasse non plus !

Le cas de la société AMFI est particulièrement éloquent. Elle a créé une branche spécialement pour gérer les minerais du sang dans le Kivu en RDC. Cette filiale s'appelle ADASTRA/AMFI. Elle a une autre filiale liée à la NASA et qui s'appelle NASA/BETCHEL. Et cette branche d'AMFI liée à la NASA a fourni aux troupes rwandaises et ougandaises de l'AFDL au Zaïre en 1996 et 1997 des photos satellitaires de reconnaissance des mouvements des troupes des FAZ au sol durant les combats et elle a fourni aussi des fréquences de communications des troupes zaïroises à la coalition ennemie. Elle a créé des cartes infrarouges des gisements importants des minerais de la RDC en vue d'orienter facilement les sociétés américaines, dans le processus d'occupation et de partage du territoire congolais, vers les « zones utiles » !

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Toutes ces informations-là, toutes ces vérités-là sont connues des médias et des dirigeants politiques occidentaux. Mais personne ne veut en parler publiquement, parce que cela fait partie de ce que j'appelle la «Stratégie du chaos et du mensonge» !

Voilà pourquoi je dis que l'article de l'AFP est un non-événement pour moi et une simple mise en scène qui vise à distraire et à tromper la vigilance des patriotes congolais. Mais c'est raté !

Et l'ONU est parfaitement au courant de toutes ces informations. Depuis 2014 à Addis-Abeba, la communauté internationale a décidé de créer une Brigade Spéciale d'intervention rapide de l'ONU pour neutraliser par la force toutes les forces dites négatives contrôlant justement les sites des fameux minerais de sang. Ils ont fait venir des milliers de militaires de la Tanzanie et de l'Afrique du Sud ; ils ont même envoyés des dromes prétendant qu'ils devaient localiser tous les mouvements des troupes des forces dites négatives. Jusqu'aujourd'hui, alors que le délai de l'ultimatum est expiré depuis le mois de janvier 2015, la MONUSCO n'a encore tiré aucune balle. Je me pose la question : Pourquoi ?

Par contre, deux bataillons rwandais ont envahi le Kivu et 1 autre bataillon ougandais envahit la Province Orientale de la RDC. Pendant ce temps, nous avons plus de 20.000 casques bleus en RDC, et la région où opèrent les forces dites négatives (c'est-à-dire le Kivu) est enclavée. Comment alors expliquer que durant plus de 20 ans, ces forces négatives continuent à se ravitailler en armes et munitions à partir de leur zone enclavée sans que les forces de l'ONU présentes dans les villes et aéroports ne le sachent ? Cela est-il seulement compréhensible en dehors d'une complicité avérée ?

Igor YAZON - Monsieur Honoré Ngbanda, l'histoire de votre pays est tellement chargée des conflits alimentés par le trafic des ressources naturelles...

Honoré NGBANDA - Tout à fait. Toute cette guerre comme je viens de vous le dire n'a comme but que les ressources naturelles. Quand vous regardez comme révélé dans mon livre « Crimes organisés en Afrique Centrale - Révélation des réseaux rwandais et occidentaux », j'ai relevé les déclarations des hommes d'Etat américains qui ont dit clairement que l'heure est venue pour rentrer en Afrique, rentrer au Congo pour nous emparer de ses richesses. Cela a été dit publiquement devant le Senat américain, dans les forums en Afrique. La communauté internationale aujourd'hui, vous savez, est dirigée par ces mêmes gens et c'est ce qui fait qu'aucune décision n'a été prise et même les résolutions prises au sein de l'ONU n'ont jamais jusqu'ici connu d'application sur le terrain parce que justement on demande aux pyromanes qui ont mis le feu de servir de pompiers.

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Igor YAZON - Ce pillage des ressources naturelles du Congo et les crimes générés par ce pillage durent depuis plusieurs décennies, y a-t-il quelques solutions ?

Honoré NGBANDA - La solution de ce problème viendra des Africains mais maintenant il y a des conséquences. Nous vivons maintenant dans la mondialisation et les jeunes Africains qui se réveillent aujourd'hui se rendent compte qu'ils vivent dans un pays riche mais ils sont pauvres dans des pays riches. Ils se posent alors des questions de savoir où sont parties leurs richesses.

Et, lorsque j'entends certains dirigeants occidentaux aujourd'hui dire qu'ils n'ont pas à accueillir toute la misère du monde, je me dis soit ils sont aveugles soit ils sont idiots parce qu'ils ne comprennent pas encore la réalité des choses. La solution aujourd'hui est que si l'Europe compte devenir riche toute seule, elle sera détruite, car ce ne sont pas les barbelés qui vont arrêter les vagues migratoires. Tant qu'on ne rétablira pas l'équilibre qui fera que les pays africains propriétaires des richesses puissent eux aussi être bénéficiaires de leurs propres richesses afin de créer, tant que faire se peut, l'équilibre entre le nord et le sud, alors le Nord sera détruit par sa propre politique. Aujourd'hui, nous avons à faire à des vagues des jeunes qui se heurtent aux barbelés, mais demain, je ne suis pas prophète, il y aura peut-être des vagues d'un autre genre que l'Europe ne contiendra pas!

Igor YAZON - Monsieur Honoré Ngbanda êtes-vous optimiste pour le futur de votre pays, le plus riche sur le continent africain ?

Honoré NGBANDA - Je suis l'homme le plus optimiste pour l'avenir de mon pays et je vais vous dire pourquoi. Je constate que la jeunesse africaine et congolaise se réveille dans la diaspora comme à l'intérieur du pays. Cette jeunesse a besoin aujourd'hui du leadership pour pouvoir le conduire à s'assumer elle-même en se libérant du syndrome du larbin qui habite beaucoup de générations d'hommes politiques africains qui, eux, se retournent vers les prédateurs et les bourreaux de l'Afrique pour attendre des solutions. La plupart des dirigeants politiques africains pour qu'ils soient acceptés par leurs peuples se tournent vers le Nord pour avoir le quitus de Londres, de Paris, de Bruxelles ou de Washington. Mais il faut que la jeunesse congolaise comprenne qu'elle doit s'assumer à l'instar des Chinois, des Brésiliens, des Latino-Américains par exemple qui se sont assumés et ont réussi à sortir du sous-développement.

Je suis optimiste et je me bats pour communiquer à la jeunesse de mon pays cette connaissance et cette expérience qui feront qu'elle prenne conscience et ait confiance en elle pour s'assumer pleinement. Et il suffit d'établir en RDC un Etat fort et stable avec une bonne gestion pour qu'en moins de cinq ans la RDC reprenne sa place dans l'échiquier des nations.

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BURUNDI

East African ministers in Burundi amid political crisis

Source: AFP World News

Bujumbura, 6 May 2015 - East African foreign ministers arrived in Burundi Wednesday following days of deadly demonstrations against a third term bid by President Pierre Nkurunziza, the government said.

Ministers from neighbouring Rwanda and Tanzania, as well as Kenya and Uganda, were in the capital Bujumbura for talks.

"They have come to listen to all parties in the conflict, and to try to propose ways out of crisis," said Burundi's foreign ministry spokesman Daniel Kabuto.

Protesters have defied calls to end demonstrations, after more than a week of running battles in which at least 13 people have been killed, including police.

Last week the East African Community (EAC) -- the five-nation bloc that includes Burundi -- called in a statement for talks to ease tensions and to ensure "the realisation of a peaceful, free and fair electoral process."

The EAC also called on Burundi to "ensure that the electoral process does not lead to humanitarian crisis", noting that tens of thousands of Burundians have already fled into neighbouring nations fearing violence.

The president, a former rebel leader from the Hutu majority who has been in power since 2005, has come under intense international pressure to withdraw from the June 26 presidential poll.

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

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Burundi rivals meet in bid to end political crisis: sources

Source: AFP World News

Bujumbura, 6 May 2015 - The government and opposition in Burundi are meeting in a bid to defuse tensions after days of deadly demonstrations against a third term bid by President Pierre Nkurunziza, sources said Wednesday.

"This is a last chance meeting, they have to come up with concrete solutions so that elections can be held in acceptable conditions," a diplomat said, warning international funding for polls could be cut if a deal was not struck.

The rivals met late Tuesday and talks were expected to continue Wednesday.

A government source, speaking like the diplomat on condition of anonymity, confirmed the government had "agreed to talk with some partners in civil society and the opposition to find a solution."

The meetings come after furious protesters dismissed a constitutional court ruling that allows Nkurunziza to run in June elections.

On Tuesday, protesters defied calls to end demonstrations, after more than a week of running battles in which at least 13 people have been killed, including police.

One of leaders of the campaign against Nkurunziza's third term said they were doubtful the talks would result in a deal.

"We talked late into the night," he said, also asking not to be named. "But I'm afraid we won't succeed -- because the government does not want to discuss the third mandate of Nkurunziza, and this issue is non-negotiable for us."

The president, a former rebel leader from the Hutu majority who has been in power since 2005, 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 he said "flies directly in the face of the constitution".

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

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Nkurunziza's 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.

Burundi VP: We Respect the Constitution

Source: VOA

5 May 2015 - Burundi's first vice president has said his government respects the agreement signed to bring stability to the country 10 years ago following a civil war. The comment comes amid protests in the capital against President Pierre Nkurunziza's bid to seek a third term. Government critics have insisted the president leave office.

Meeting opposition groups, diplomats and African Union representatives, Vice President Prosper Bazombaza said his government respects the Arusha accord that ended the war. The vice president also said he supports the rule of law.

"The concern surrounding the candidacy of the president of the republic in the elections of June 26, 2015, the leaders of the opposition and civil society are calling for the respect of the Arusha agreement for peace and reconciliation and the establishment of the Republic of Burundi. We would like to reiterate, once again, that the government of Burundi is strongly attached to these references," he said.

Bazombaza did not explain how his boss respected the signed agreements, but called on protesters to also respect the same laws they are yearning for.

"If we stick to the claims of the protesters they argue that the application of the president of the republic violates the constitution and the Arusha Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation that protects the constitution. Consequently, it is self-evident that their actions should respect the same pieces of legislation that they put forward," said Bazombaza.

The government said Tuesday it is willing to release more than 600 protesters arrested since last week on condition they stop the demonstrations.

UN voices concern

The United Nations' special envoy for the Great Lakes region of Africa, Said Djinnit, voiced concern about the situation becoming worse.

"The violence that we have seen for days in some areas of Bujumbura, it's attracting a lot of worries and apprehension in Burundi, in the region and beyond. More than a

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decade of stability, nobody likes to see this country again with the disastrous effects of division and violence," said he.

Djinnit has called on all the parties to reject violence and avoid using inflammatory words that could increase the tension.

Former interim president Domitien Ndayizeye noted that before it was easy to negotiate with armed men and convince them they can be part of the political system.

He says if President Nkurunziza is allowed to run again for the third term, nothing will stop him from doing so again in the future.

"In Africa, many presidents in Africa want to go on, so I am afraid that if today we agree him to go on with this mandate, in 2020 he will ask again to run. So I am very afraid of that so it's very necessary to stop him just now go on the way it was agreed on Arusha agreement and the constitution," said Ndayizeye.

Protests continue

Protesters blocked the road to the hotel where the politicians, diplomats and AU representatives were meeting. They chanted slogans and called for the president not to run again. At times police felt helpless.

VOA saw one police officer calling for calm and requesting the protesters to not block the roads and stay away from the road that leads to the hotel.

Protesters and the police had a deal not to cross each other's territory and maintain the peace.

Protests were still ongoing in some parts of the capital, Bujumbura, as political leaders met to discuss ways to end the escalation of violence and bring normalcy to the smallest nation in East Africa.

On Monday, three protesters were killed and dozens more wounded when police opened fire on marchers in suburbs of the capital.

Demonstrators in Burundi have vowed to continue with their protest until President Nkurunziza abandons his plan to run again for the top job.

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US concerned about Burundi government's pressure on court

Source: Deutsche Presse-Agentur

5 May 2015 - The United States urges the Burundi government to uphold judicial independence after the vice president of the Constitutional Court fled the country in the conflict over a third term for the incumbent president.

State Department deputy spokesman Jeff Rathke says the US is "deeply concerned" by the reports that Judge Sylvere Nimpagaritse has fled to Rwanda. President Pierre Nkurunziza is running for a third term, in violation of the constitution's two-term limit.

"Judicial impartiality ... is a key element of a healthy democracy," Rathke says.

"The United States has consistently maintained that the only way to respect both the terms of the Burundian constitution and the Arusha Agreement is for President Nkurunziza not to seek a third term."

Clashes leave 15 injured in Burundi amid protests against president's third term

Source: Xinhua

Bujumbura, 5 May 2015 - A total of 15 protesters were Tuesday injured, four of them seriously, in clashes that opposed with police agents who used tear gas and live ammunition to disperse demonstrators against the third term of Burundian President Pierre Nkurunziza.

Burundi Red Cross Spokesman Alexis Manirakiza told Xinhua that a pregnant woman was also "traumatized" when gunfire was opened near her in northern suburbs of the Burundian capital Bujumbura.

"We have counted 15 injured persons. They also include a pregnant woman who was traumatized. Four of the injured persons were seriously injured and our ambulances took them to hospital," said Burundi Red Cross Spokesman Alexis Manirakiza.

Besides, policemen also fired in the air near the U.S. Embassy in Kigobe residential area to disperse protesters coming from Ngagara and who were attempting to go to Bujumbura city center via Kigobe.

Since protests broke out on April 26 in some neighborhoods in the capital Bujumbura, a day after the ruling party nominated President Pierre Nkurunziza as its candidate to the

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upcoming presidential election due on June 26, the Red Cross reports that at least 12 people were killed during the clashes.

Some neighborhoods have since then been rocked by protests against the third term of Burundian President Pierre Nkurunziza.

Convened by the opposition and some civil society organizations, those protests are aimed to force Burundian President Pierre Nkurunziza to avoid running for third term in the upcoming presidential election.

Nkurunziza was, on April 25, elected by his party, the National Council for the Defense of Democracy-Forces for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD-FDD), in an extraordinary congress, to represent the party in the upcoming presidential election.

Earlier, the opposition and the civil society had called for mass protests if the country's ruling party nominates Nkurunziza to run a third term which, they say, would be a violation of the country's constitution and the Arusha Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Burundi.

The constitution and the Arusha Agreement stipulate that a president of Burundi cannot serve the country for more than two terms.

Nkurunziza was elected by parliament in 2005 and directly re-elected by citizens in 2010.

Burundi is this year to hold general elections between May 26 and August 24, with the presidential election to be held on June 26.

Burundi protests spark fears of return to ethnic violence

Source: Deutsche Presse-Agentur

By Fred Buteera and Sinikka Tarvainen

5 May 2015 - Demonstrations swell in Burundi as people flee persecution by the ruling party's youth wing. There is now talk of a new civil war, which could destabilize other parts of east Africa beset by the Hutu-Tutsi rivalry.

Bujumbura (dpa) - In Burundi's north-western town of Murwi, a young man lies in a pool of blood, crying out in pain after being shot by riot police rushing after protesters with guns and tear gas.

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By the time the chaos subsides and the Red Cross arrives, the unidentified protester is already dead.

President Pierre Nkurunziza's announcement that he will seek a third term despite a constitutional two-term limit has triggered massive demonstrations in the east African country, threatening to plunge the surrounding region into a spiral of violence.

"Burundians will not have died in vain," vows Justin Kobucyeye, who took part in another protest rally in the capital Bujumbura.

"We will not give up until President Nkurunziza withdraws his candidacy" in the June 26 elections, he adds.

Analysts say a new civil war could break out between Burundi's Hutus and Tutsis. The two ethnic groups have struggled to heal the wounds of the 1993-2005 civil war and previous ethnic massacres which claimed at least half a million lives.

The ongoing protests follow similar ones in Congo, where the senate finally scrapped draft legislation allowing President Joseph Kabila to extend his 14-year rule, and Burkina Faso, where demonstrations forced President Blaise Compaore to flee after 27 years in power.

Nine people have been killed, more than 100 injured and hundreds more arrested in the Burundian protests. More than 25,000 people have fled to neighbouring Rwanda, Congo and Tanzania.

Many say they are fleeing the Imbonerakure, the youth wing of the National Council for the Defence of Democracy - Forces for the Defence of Democracy (CNDD-FDD), which human rights activists accuse of harassing anyone opposed to Nkurunziza's third term bid.

"Members of the Imbonerakure came to my house and said I only had one choice - to support Nkurunziza," said Agathe Uwimana, 34, who has fled to Bugesera in eastern Rwanda. "I cannot do that."

The government has distributed arms to the Imbonerakure, according to Pierre Claver Mbonimpa from Burundi's Association for the Protection of Human Rights and Detained Persons (APRODH).

Some people targeted by the group have disappeared, Mbonimpa said.

The government denies arming the Imbonerakure, but a United Nations document leaked last year backed such claims.

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The violent methods of the Imbonerakure have sparked comparisons with the Interahamwe, a militia in neighbouring Rwanda that played a key role in the genocide of about 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus there in 1994.

Nkurunziza's government has restricted coverage of the protests in traditional and social media and allegedly pressured the Constitutional Court into endorsing his candidacy in the elections.

The CNDD-FDD argues the president's first term in office does not count because he was elected by parliament and not directly by the people in 2005.

But the 2000 Arusha agreement, which eventually ended the country's 12-year civil war, emphasizes that presidents may not serve more than two five-year terms.

Many Burundians are concerned about violations of that agreement, which halted ethnic violence by setting power-sharing quotas between the Hutus - who make up 85 per cent of the population - and the Tutsis, giving the once dominant minority a strong enough voice to make them feel safe.

The current protests are "perhaps the first time Burundians are acting as citizens without recourse to the Hutu-Tutsi dichotomy," said Asuman Bisiika, a Ugandan journalist and east Africa analyst.

But the upsurge in violence is threatening to upset that balance. The CNDD-FDD is dominated by Nkurunziza's Hutu ethnic group, and some of those who fled abroad say they were targeted by the Imbonerakure for being Tutsis.

"I'm lucky I managed to escape," said Andre Niyoneza, a 31-year-old Tutsi who is now in Bugesera. "I don't know what will happen to my relatives who stayed in Burundi," he added.

The army, which has many Tutsi among its highest ranks, has reportedly prevented police from cracking down harder on demonstrators. That has sparked speculation about an eventual military coup or about the army splitting between Tutsis and Hutus.

"The fear that a Tutsi military leader could be tempted to stage a coup is realistic," analyst Bisiika said. "Perhaps that could invite violence between Hutus and Tutsis."

If a new civil war eventually broke out in the nation of 10 million, Hutu members of the opposition might join Tutsis to seek protection from the government, analysts say.

A conflict in Burundi could also threaten the stability of Rwanda, where Tutsi President Paul Kagame might intervene to help Burundian Tutsis, and of Congo, which has already been used as a base by Burundian rebel groups in the past.

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Burundi's largely agriculture-based economy has a gross domestic product of only 2.7 billion dollars, and the anti-corruption watchdog Transparency International ranks the country as the 159th least transparent among a total of 174 countries.

Nkurunziza retains a power base in rural areas, which felt neglected by previous governments. Imbonerakure chairman Dennis Karera warns protesters that Burundi will not follow in the footsteps of Burkina Faso, where demonstrations ousted Compaore.

Nkurunziza, he says, "will not go."

Pierre Nkurunziza peut briguer un troisième mandat, selon la Cour constitutionnelle

Source: Jeune Afrique

Par Trésor Kibangula

5 Mai 2015 - Saisie par le Sénat sur la légalité, ou non, d'un éventuel et controversé troisième mandat de Pierre Nkurunziza, la Cour constitutionnelle a déclaré mardi que le président sortant avait droit de briguer une dernière fois à la magistrature suprême au Burundi.

Sans grande surprise – après la fuite de son vice-président qui a dénoncé d'"énormes pressions" -, la Cour constitutionnelle du Burundi s'est déclarée, le 5 mai, favorable à un éventuel troisième mandat de Pierre Nkurunziza.

Dans son arrêt signé par son président, cinq juges et le greffier, la Cour constitutionnelle burundaise considère en effet que "l'article 96 [qui limite à deux les mandats présidentiels au Burundi] veut dire que le nombre de mandats au suffrage universel direct est limité à deux seulement et l'article 302 créé un mandat spécial au suffrage universel indirect et qui n'a rien à voir avec les mandats prévus à l'article 96".

"Une seule et dernière fois"

Une victoire attendue pour le camp du président sortant qui a toujours soutenu que son champion pouvait encore légalement briguer à la magistrature suprême. D'autant qu'il a été élu au second degré par une Assemblée en 2005 avant d'être réélu au suffrage universel direct en 2010.

"La Cour dit [en effet] pour droit que le renouvellement une seule et dernière fois de l'actuel mandat présidentiel au suffrage universel direct pour cinq ans n'est pas contraire à la Constitution du Burundi", confirme l'arrêt. Pas sûr que les manifestants qui

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s'opposent depuis le 26 avril à un éventuel mandat de Pierre Nkurunziza l'entendent de cette oreille.

Burundi presidential term saga balloons into regional crisis as US, Rwanda, Tanzania drawn in

Source: Mail & Guardian Africa

5 May 2015 - BURUNDI's crisis this week snowballed into a major regional concern after a constitutional court backed president Pierre Nkurunziza's bid for a controversial third term, even as one of the judges fled saying the decision had been made under duress.

Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete on Tuesday pressed foreign ministers from the East African Community states to investigate the political situation in Burundi, where protests that erupted a week ago over the president's plan to seek a third term turned deadly.

Kikwete, who is the current chairman of the five-nation bloc, asked the ministers from Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi to "talk to key stakeholders and send us a report to guide the way we can assist Burundi," according to a statement e-mailed from the presidency in the commercial capital, Dar es Salaam.

Solutions to the current crisis in Burundi lie in the country's constitution and electoral law, Kikwete said. The Tanzanian leader, who leaves office later in the year, has in the past urged Nkurunziza to reconsider his bid.

Opponents say Nkurunziza's candidacy violates a peace accord signed 15 years ago in Arusha, Tanzania, that stipulates a two-term presidential limit, but his supporters say his first term was not elected but by appointment by parliament.

Neighbour Rwanda also weighed in, signalling that foreign countries may have to intervene to restore order.

"While we respect Burundi's sovereignty in addressing internal matters, Rwanda considers the safety of innocent population as a regional and international responsibility," Rwandan Foreign Minister Louise Mushikiwabo said in a statement e-mailed Tuesday, according to Bloomberg news agency.

Rwanda has "serious concern" about the deteriorating situation in the East African country, she said.

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Return to conflict

The unrest in Burundi is stoking regional fears of a return to conflict if rebel groups abandon the agreements that ended a 12- year civil war in which 300,000 people were killed.

On its own, Burundi is a minor regional player of sorts, but sustained unrest there has the potential to destabilise the Great Lakes region that includes the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), a top resource exporter and a playground for global multinationals.

It also plays a critical role in a theatre where America is highly vested - it is one of the main contributors to the peacekeeping forces in Somalia, where the Al-Shabaab militant group has been reported to be recruiting Somalis in the American diaspora.

These concerns may have alarmed the United States enough to take a tougher stance. Secretary of State John Kerry warned Monday that Nkurunziza's bid goes against the constitution, calling for calm after days of protests.

We are deeply concerned about President Pierre Nkurunziza's decision, which flies directly in the face of the constitution of this country," Kerry told reporters in the Kenyan capital Nairobi.

"It is my understanding that an Africa Union delegation will go there soon to meet with him to try to underscore the importance... of the constitution of the country," Kerry said.

"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."

A judge flees

Burundi's constitutional court Tuesday ruled that the president's bid to stand for another term "by direct universal suffrage for five years is not contrary to the constitution of Burundi," the judgement signed by six out of seven judges read.

But the vice-president of the court detailed how the court's judges had come under major duress including death threats from senior figures, whom he refused to name, to rubberstamp the disputed candidature of the president.

Sylvere Nimpagaritse claimed that a majority of the court's seven judges believed it would be unconstitutional for Nkurunziza to stand again, but had faced "enormous pressure and even death threats" to force them to change their mind.

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“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 emotionally told AFP before leaving the country.

Regional economic powerhouse Kenya, which has its companies trading in Burundi, this week said it would support free and fair elections but would not interfere with its sovereignty.

Tens of thousands of Burundian refugees have already fled to neighbouring countries ahead of the election scheduled for next month.

The situation could be a test of the African Union’s resolve in clamping down on unconstitutional changes, given the Burundi case does not quite fall into the mould of a coup. But with leaders in several African countries bidding to extend their office, and Burundi’s role in AMISOM, the AU might just not want to open a can of worms by banging the table on Nkurunziza.

Almost 40,000 flee Burundi amid political crisis - U.N.

Source: Reuters World Service

Reporting by Patrick Nduwimana in Bujumbura and Tom Miles in Geneva; Writing by Edith Honan; Editing by Edmund Blair and Andrew Heavens

Bujumbura, 6 May 2015 - Nearly 40,000 refugees have fled Burundi to neighbouring Rwanda, Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the last month, amid protests against President Pierre Nkurunziza's bid for a third term, the United Nations said on Wednesday.

More than a week of demonstrations have plunged the African nation into its worst crisis since an ethnically charged civil war ended in 2005. Civil society groups say a dozen people have been killed. Police say the death toll is half that number.

The opposition says Burundi's constitution and a peace deal that ended the civil war limits Nkurunziza to two terms.

But Burundi's constitutional court this week cleared the way for the president to run again in June, saying his first term did not count because he was picked by parliament not publicly elected.

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About a dozen demonstrators gathered in the capital's Kinindo district on Wednesday, one of them holding a placard saying: "The constitutional court's decision will not stop us. Nkurunziza has to abandon the illegal term."

A Reuters witness saw about 200 protesters in another district. But most of Bujumbura's streets were relatively calm and police surrounded the scenes of recent flashpoints, a Reuters witness said.

The U.N. refugee agency UNHCR said 39,091 Burundians had sought asylum in neighbouring states since the start of April.

At least 24,795 had gone to Rwanda, Tanzania had taken in 6,966 people and 7,319 have fled to Congo.

The number has been rising steadily on a daily basis, and diplomats say many people have left to stay with relatives in neighbouring states and are not being registered as refugees in host countries.

Tanzania's presidential office said on Tuesday that a team of foreign ministers from Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Rwanda were travelling to Burundi to assess the situation.

"If there are people who feel that the nomination of the Burundi president for re-election is illegal, they should follow the course of justice to get to the truth and resolve the matter, not use force," Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete said in a statement.

The unrest has particularly worried Rwanda, still scarred by its 1994 genocide that killed more than 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus. Burundi has a similar ethnic mix.

Nkurunziza, a former Hutu rebel leader, says the demonstrations are an "insurrectional movement".

UN's Ban Ki Moon appeals to Museveni over Burundi, South Sudan peace efforts

Source: The Africa Report

5 May 2015 - United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki Moon has appealed to Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni to help avert the deteriorating situation in Burundi and restore peace.

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The two leaders met at the UN High Level Thematic Debate on UN cooperation with Regional and Sub-Regional Organisations in the maintenance of global peace and security for development.

Riots erupted in Burundi's capital Bujumbura and other parts of the country following the ruling party's nomination of incumbent President Pierre Nkurunziza as candidate for the next presidential election.

According to the ruling party, Nkurunziza whose second term ends next year, can run again for a third term because his first term does not count, as he was handpicked by lawmakers and not elected.

Both Nkurunziza and the government have shown no public sign of changing tack, and analysts argue that the Burundian president is likely to ignore calls by the international community not to stand for a third term in office.

On the side lines of the debate, during a bilateral meeting, Ban Ki Moon and Museveni discussed regional issues covering Burundi, Somalia, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Analysts say 2016 could prove challenging for the region, as the presidential term limits of neighbouring Rwanda and DRC come to an end.

It is unclear whether the leaders of the two countries would seek third terms.

Similarly there is chaos in South Sudan, where fighting erupted in December 2013 between government troops and fighters loyal to former Vice President Riek Machar in which thousands of people have been killed and over 1 million displaced.

Ban Ki Moon also urged Museveni to try and bring the two warring factions in the South Sudan conflict to negotiate conclusive peace agreements for the country.

Ban Ki Moon commended Museveni, among other regional leaders, for the efforts that brought peace to Burundi leading to the democratic transition.

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RWANDA

Kagame seeks long-term miracle

Source: Business Day (South Africa)

5 May 2015 - Few people could be more aware of the constraints that Rwanda has been working under than President Paul Kagame. Little more than 20 years ago, the hardline leader was engaged in a battle for the country's existence as it was devastated by genocide. Today its turnaround amounts to an extraordinary feat, often referred to as "Rwanda's economic miracle".

Tiny, landlocked and 1,000km from the nearest port, with high electricity prices and 120-million mostly poor inhabitants, Rwanda has recorded 8% annual growth rates for the decade to 2012. More than 1-million people have been taken out of extreme poverty.

Good roads, security, healthcare services and an efficient bureaucracy are impressive in a region where all are in short supply.

The country is developing agro-processing industries to add value to rural products and is marketing itself as a continental hub for services. The World Bank ranks it third as Africa's most business-friendly destination. This is not merely the result of growth from a low base, but also one of policy directed from the top.

The president is a former military commander brought up in a Ugandan refugee camp, who now mingles with global leaders discussing subjects from the dignity of education to speeding up the pace of e-government. Under Mr Kagame, Rwanda has studied locations worldwide — from Jersey to Singapore — that perform against the odds, and considered what to emulate.

His administration has reformed business rules, offered tax incentives, promoted women, championed East African integration, attracted aid money — which still funds 38% of the budget — and provided state spending that has propelled growth.

All this will not be enough, however, to secure Rwanda's future. Several of the efforts underpinning one key goal — to become a middle-income country by 2020 — are turning sluggish.

Growth is slowing and forecast at 6.5% this year. Dollars are so scarce that some firms cannot pay bills. Exports amount to only \$600m a year, producing what the World Bank calls a "chronic, large trade deficit" at 17.2% of gross domestic product.

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Flagship projects in construction, tourism and energy are behind schedule. The effort to develop the "land of a thousand hills" as a hub for services — which accounts for the lion's share of growth — is limited by Rwanda's small number of consumers.

So perhaps it makes sense that, at a national leadership retreat in March, Mr Kagame took issue with senior staff in his administration. "Why are you not interested in delivering on what you must deliver for your people?" he asked. "Don't just be so full of yourselves."

In an attack judged by his critics to be "dehumanizing", he called on ministers and senior officials "to deliver or die". He added: "We are failing as individuals to take stock of our own weaknesses and problems that we transmit into the system."

He had the right to be angry, he said, accusing individuals of doing "little or nothing" to correct planning failures and weak leadership in state-backed projects.

Mr Kagame's authoritarianism can inspire fear. "He just loses it," says a close collaborator who attended the retreat, choosing his words with care despite offering his view anonymously.

"He definitely expressed his displeasure with the speed at which certain projects are moving. I guess he gets frustrated. Our president won't allow us to waste time. He knows we can't afford to be complacent."

In many ways, Mr Kagame may well be right. Given its past, Rwanda cannot afford to fail. Almost a generation after the 1994 genocide that killed 800,000 people, the country remains a "test-tube experiment", the outcome of which remains uncertain, says one senior western diplomat.

THE government, meanwhile, is writing its own rule book, one that is written in authoritarian ink and regularly colored by allegations of human rights abuses, which range from the suppression of free speech to alleged murder of political rivals.

Social cohesion, such as it exists, is "imposed", according to one senior international official. The Tutsi-dominated hierarchy is drawn from the minority ethnic group that was targeted in the genocide.

Rwanda's leaders still see an existential threat from Hutu extremists, drawn from the majority group, who carried out the genocide. Tensions seethe despite the fact that ethnicity has become taboo in the attempt to overlook divisions in a country where some victims and perpetrators of the 1994 atrocities live side by side.

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One foreign former admirer of the administration says the government risks recreating an "apartheid" system. "Hutus understand there is a glass ceiling," says the senior international official, who describes Rwanda's "economic miracle" as overstated.

"If you're not playing to the tune of the RPF (the ruling Rwandan Patriotic Front party) you're dead economically. There is no such thing as free enterprise in Rwanda. It doesn't exist."

While the state — frequently in the form of the RPF — has a heavy hand in many areas of the economy, it seeks to market a business-friendly environment for private investors. Neither the RPF nor Mr Kagame's rule is likely to be tested in the short term, in spite of a 2017 constitutional deadline — by then he will have been president for 17 years — for him to step down.

Diplomats and insiders say changing the constitution would be easy, legal and probably widely supported even where driven only by fear of instability.

Most investors appear to back the prospect of continuity.

"He stays, no questions," says a senior international official, adding with irony: "He will have to abide by the wish of the Rwandan people, who will come on their knees (begging him to stay)."

The official worries, however, that although extending Mr Kagame's personalized rule might secure stability in the near term, it risks weakening institutions and inflaming dissent in the longer term.

Donors, who in 2012 halted a considerable amount of aid following allegations that Rwanda was supporting rebels in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, are unlikely to resort to the same action should Mr Kagame stay on.

Private concerns persist, however. "You can make a perfectly credible administration case for him staying on, focusing on how it is remarkable what's been achieved," says the western diplomat. "But it is also impossible to become a challenger. It is not permitted, even within the (ruling) party. My concern is if he does stay on, when does he ever go?"

Against the echoey soundtrack of building works, Ali Kashan, project manager of Rwanda's forthcoming — and long-delayed — Marriott Hotel, points towards a boarded up, large, dusty door frame. "This is our ballroom," he says. There is a hint of triumph in his voice that is in keeping with Kigali's ambitious view of its future. "The entire vision of the country is to develop Rwanda as a hub for meetings, incentives, conferences and

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exhibitions," says Frank Murangwa, of the Rwanda Convention Bureau, a state marketing agency.

Rwanda is betting big on becoming a pan-African conference destination. Well-laid roads pass building project after building project across the capital, many of them hotels planning conference facilities.

"Conference bookings come with capacity," says Mr Murangwa. "We need 20, 50 conferences (a year). The more we get bigger hotels, the more we will attract more conferences."

Several of the conference-related projects are attracting big names, including a five-star Radisson Blu, a four-star Park Inn by Radisson and, for 2018, a Sheraton.

The five-star Marriott plans to open this year with 254 rooms and gala conference facilities. The ballroom should be big enough for 187 people.

"This would be a big hotel anywhere in the world," says Mr Kashan, a Dubai-based contractor, standing on a balcony looking down on to the pool area, where 500 workers are applying the finishing touches.

Of Rwanda's \$305m tourism takings last year, conferences accounted for \$49m. The aim is to raise that to \$150m by 2017.

Tourism is the biggest foreign exchange earner and the conference programme "can be a quick-win in terms of increasing our foreign exchange", central bank governor John Rwangombwa says. "We expect that in the next three years we'll have yielded results."

Key to this is the expansion of RwandAir, the national flag carrier, in which the government owns 99%. Its present 17 destinations and seven aircrafts are expected to increase respectively to 25 and 14 over the next few years.

RwandAir CEO John Mirenge wants to fly a million passengers a year by 2019, double that of today's number. "The most important objective the government of Rwanda set itself when they were reinvesting in this airline was to provide accessibility to the country, to support the other service industries in the country — tourism, conference possibilities, meetings," he says....

HE adds that the expansion has "catalyzed" the travel market and attracted international airlines such as KLM and Qatar to land in Kigali.

Rwanda aims to lure dollars out of the pocket of every conference-goer, with activities ranging from evening entertainment to weekend gorilla treks.

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"Conference delegates in Rwanda spend \$245 each per day but internationally its \$665," says Mr Murangwa, comparing Kigali with the likes of Vienna, Berlin, Paris and Barcelona, as well as Africa's top conference destinations in Egypt, Kenya and SA.

Many projects remain far behind schedule. One example is the \$300m Kigali convention Centre — the very place for which Rwanda issued its debut \$400m bond on the international markets to fund. The crane towering above the capital's great spherical hope stands abandoned following an argument with the Chinese contractor, which Rwanda is taking to court.

When Rwanda hosted the annual African Development Bank meetings last year it was forced to use tents for meetings and private villas to accommodate some of the 2,500 visiting delegates.

Rwanda's cast-iron security is a plus, however. In November, Kigali hosts the annual general assembly of Interpol, the international police network.

UGANDA

Museveni accuses UN Security Council of sidelining African states in peace missions

Source: Daily Nation (Kenya)

5 May 2015 - Uganda President Yoweri Museveni has accused the United Nations Security Council of being slow in involving African troops in peace missions in the continent.

He said slow response to turmoil in African states was leading to loss of lives, which he said, can be mitigated by quick action by African states.

Mr Museveni said the civil war in South Sudan could have escalated to "another genocide" had Uganda not intervened.

The Ugandan leader said the UN is still debating the issue while his country sent in troops soon after the conflict began in December 2013.

"If we in the region had not acted when we did, quickly, the region could possibly have had another genocide.

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"The UN Security council is still debating the issue up to now," Mr Museveni noted in a speech to the General Assembly on the theme of UN cooperation with regional organisations such as the African Union.

Uganda sent two battalions of soldiers to the neighbouring country to evacuate its nationals.

The Ugandan forces have remained in South Sudan ever since. They are seen as providing support for President Salva Kiir's government as it battles rebel forces led by former Vice President Riek Machar.

HARM TO AFRICA

He said African forces could also have stopped the 1994 genocide in Rwanda but "we could not do it because the UN was obstructing us," he said.

He said Africa's voice on the continent's security matters was being ignored by the Security Council.

"This is a big mistake, and has already caused a lot of harm to Africa," he said.

He pointed to the case of Libya "where Africa's opinion was ignored; hence, the present massive human haemorrhage in that area," he said.

"The chaos currently besetting Nigeria and Mali, as well as Libya, could also have been avoided if the Security Council "had listened to the voice of Africa," Mr Museveni added.

He cited Somalia as a success story in cases where African troops were involved in peacekeeping missions.

He also made favorable comments about the UN's first-ever combat brigade that helped defeat the M23 rebel group in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The brigade was "internationally supported" and made up of troops from "contiguous African states," he noted.

He said the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crisis offers an opportunity for involvement of African troops in peacekeeping missions.

He said it is an intervention force, approved by the African Union two years ago, and an "an African-owned initiative for rapid military interventions as and when the need arises."

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CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Accord pour libérer les enfants soldats en Centrafrique

Source: Reuters

Par Tom Miles; Jean-Stéphane Brosse pour le service français

5 Mai 2015 - Les groupes armés de République centrafricaine (RCA) ont accepté de relâcher tous leurs enfants soldats et les autres mineurs qu'ils ont enrôlés pour des tâches ménagères ou à des fins sexuelles, a annoncé mardi le Fonds des Nations unies pour l'enfance (Unicef).

L'accord, signé durant un forum de réconciliation nationale qui se tient actuellement à Bangui, la capitale de RCA, concerne 6.000 à 10.000 enfants, a précisé l'Unicef.

"C'est une étape majeure en faveur de la protection des enfants dans ce pays", s'est félicité le représentant de l'Unicef pour la RCA, Mohamed Malick Fall.

"La République centrafricaine est l'un des pires endroits au monde pour un enfant et l'Unicef est impatient d'oeuvrer avec les autorités locales à la réunion de ces enfants avec leurs familles."

Le forum de réconciliation nationale, qui s'est ouvert lundi et s'achèvera le 11 mai, vise à mettre fin à des années de violences qui ont fait des milliers de morts et plus d'un million de personnes déplacées.

Central African Republic militias agree to free child soldiers - U.N.

Source: Reuters

By: Reporting by Tom Miles in Geneva and Crispin Dembassa-Kette in Bangui; Editing by Matthew Mpoke Bigg and Mark Heinrich

5 May 2015 - Armed factions in Central African Republic agreed on Tuesday to free all child soldiers and other children used as sex slaves or menial workers, boosting U.N.-driven efforts at national reconciliation after two years of turmoil.

The pact signed by the eight main militia groups in the landlocked ex-French colony covers an estimated 6,000 to 10,000 children, according to United Nations child agency UNICEF. Armed groups also pledged to end the recruitment of children.

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The accord emerged from a week-long national reconciliation forum which began on Monday with the goal of ending conflict that has killed thousands and driven more than a million people from their homes.

"This is a major step forward for the protection of children in this country," said Mohamed Malick Fall, UNICEF envoy to Central African Republic.

"The Central African Republic is one of the worst places in the world to be a child and UNICEF is eager to work with local authorities to help reunite these children with their families."

Central African Republic is divided between a government-controlled, Christian-dominated south and a Muslim, rebel-held north. Several thousand U.N. peacekeepers and French troops seek to maintain calm.

The parties to Tuesday's deal will agree a schedule for the release of the children and their return to their families as well as protection and support to help them rebuild their lives, UNICEF said.

The armed groups have agreed to give UNICEF and its partner's unrestricted access to areas under their control to identify the children and plan their release.

"If UNICEF finds child soldiers in our ranks they will automatically be demobilized," said Captain Ahmat Nejad, spokesman for the Union for the Peace in Central Africa (UPC), a faction of the Seleka rebels that briefly seized power in 2013.

Last year, UNICEF helped to get more than 2,800 children released by armed factions, including 646 girls. In 2013, 500 children were freed, the agency said.

Nejad said his armed group had demobilized some child soldiers in cooperation with UNICEF in 2013 and 2014. "We ask UNICEF to teach these children a profession as almost all of them are orphans," he said.

UNICEF spokesman Christophe Boulierac said it was necessary to be cautious before declaring the end of child soldiers in the turbulent nation.

"This is a starting point," he said, noting that the deal had been signed by the vast majority of the parties to the conflict, as well as religious leaders and civil society.

Even with foster families taking in some children, their reintegration would be challenging, he said: "It's a very difficult and long process to ensure the transition of a child armed with a Kalashnikov (assault rifle) back into normal family life."

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SOUTH SUDAN

South Sudan govt blocks UN patrols near area where villages allegedly burned

Source: Radio Tamazuj

6 May 2015 - South Sudanese government forces restricted movements of United Nations peacekeepers after allegedly launching offensives near the Unity State capital Bentiu and attacking and burning villages in the area. The peacekeepers were so far unable to verify allegations about attacks on the villages.

In a statement to Radio Tamazuj, the UN Mission in South Sudan explained, “UNMISS has been dispatching patrols to assess the amount of fighting taking place near Bentiu in recent days, but the movements of those patrols have been restricted by government forces on a number of occasions.”

This comes after the Sudan People's Liberation Movement in Opposition accused the Juba government of committing atrocities in Unity State, torching various villages including Nhialdiu in late April. SPLM-IO controlled the Nhialdiu area prior to the latest government offensive. Speaking to Radio Tamazuj, a state official last week claimed the capture of Nhialdiu.

Joseph Contreras, acting UNMISS spokesman said, “UNMISS is aware of allegations made by the armed opposition and some civilians that villages have been attacked and burned in the vicinity of Nhialdiu during the recent fighting in that part of Unity State. The Mission is unable to verify those accusations but is planning to send a team shortly to investigate those charges.”

The UNMISS official was responding to an inquiry about whether the Mission was aware of the claims about the burning of villages in the Nhialdiu area and how it had responded to the latest violence in Unity State.

South Sudan 'frees' opposition politician

Source: AFP

5 May 2015 - A South Sudanese opposition leader who has spoken out against both sides in the civil war said Tuesday that he has been freed from a week of house arrest.

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Lam Akol said his home in the capital Juba, which is under the control of the government loyal to President Salva Kiir, was surrounded by security personnel last week.

South Sudan's government denied placing any restrictions on Akol, although witnesses confirmed security forces and vehicles had been posted outside.

"I have been freed," Akol told AFP on Tuesday, saying security forces had told him they had been sent to provide him protection, but that he doubted that reason.

"I suspect that they — the government -- may be unhappy about our stand on the current issues," Akol said.

South Sudan's civil war began in Juba in December 2013 and has since spread across the country. At least 50,000 people have been killed and more than a million forced from their homes.

Akol is the leader of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-Democratic Change (SPLM-DC) party, and has spoken out against both Kiir and rebel leader Riek Machar.

Akol comes from Upper Nile State where ethnic rebels from his Shilluk people have fought government troops.

Experts say the government restrictions on him were likely linked to fears he played a role in the clashes.

Akol is a former warlord who fought on both sides during Sudan's 1983-2005 civil war, including alongside Machar.

South Sudan threatens to detain and take journalists to court

Source: Sudan Tribune (Paris)

5 May 2015 - South Sudan's information minister, Michael Makuei Lueth, on Monday said his government will from now on detain and take to court journalists who report on issues authorities consider false or infringing on national security.

Speaking at a national conference to mark the World Press Freedom Day on Monday in the South Sudanese capital, Juba, Lueth, an outspoken controversial figure in government, said security agents have the legal right to arrest and present unprofessional journalists to detention and charge them in court.

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“Up to now we have not taken any journalist to the court but we will do so,” said Lueth, the chief guest for the two-day event.

He said the government would now resort to taking journalists to court as it is a practice done worldwide. Overtimes, government’s security agents randomly detain journalists for publishing stories which the government feels unfavorable to its political and security stance, but release them thereafter without charges.

“We will do so [take reporters to court] because they are being taken to the court all over the world,” Lueth added.

“It is only in South Sudan where we have not taken anybody up to now. So if calling anybody [to national security office in Juba], and talking to him and setting him free is becoming a problem, then we will apply the law as it is,” he said, referring to penal code that says defamation could earn reporter twenty years in jail if proven guilty.

Minister Lueth has been known for his criticisms against the press, particularly threatening local journalists in the country on many occasions. Last year he also threatened to shut down the independent Miraya FM radio which is being run by the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

The minister warned media houses not to speak to officials of the opposition factions, particularly the rebel group led by the country’s former vice-president, Riek Machar, saying their messages were misleading the public.

Alfred Taban, the editor in chief of the daily Juba Monitor newspaper and the chairman of the Association of Media Development in South Sudan (AMDISS), said the conditions are already unfavorable for journalists.

“The conditions for reporters and media owners is changing from bad to worse every day,” he said, speaking at the same event on Monday.

The veteran journalist explained that security agents summon editors nearly on daily basis to caution them on what stories to shelf.

“Publishing those stories would mean endangering your newspaper,” he added.

Lueth however said journalists are not being targeted, explaining that they have the constitutional rights like any other citizens.

“The constitution talks of the rights of all the citizens and journalists are citizens. So whatever law applies, applies on them [journalists]. This does not apply to journalists only but it applies to all the citizens,” he said.

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He further defended that the security agents were operating within the law by arresting journalists as required by security law.

Organized by AMDISS, UNESCO and other partners, the Monday event brought together reporters from across the ten states of South Sudan under the theme "Advocating for media safety, freedom of expression and gender equality in the media."

Many participants however said the event which was meant for promoting freedom of the press and expression was instead polluted by the remarks of the government's official who further presented a list of punishments awaiting the journalists in the young war-ravaged nation.

SUDAN

Soudan: Israël aurait frappé 3 dépôts d'armes près de Khartoum (médias arabes)

Source: i24News (<http://www.i24news.tv/fr/actu/international/afrique/70144-150506-soudan-raid-aerien-etranger-sur-khartoum-source-militaire>)

Tsahal aurait déjà opéré au Soudan, connu pour être la plaque tournante des armes iraniennes vers Gaza

6 Mai 2015 - Plusieurs médias arabophones ont accusé l'aviation israélienne d'avoir procédé à des raids ciblés contre des entrepôts près de Khartoum très tôt mercredi matin, citant des sources militaires soudanaises.

De fortes explosions ont été entendues mercredi matin dans la capitale soudanaise alors que sur son compte Twitter, le Sudan Tribune cite des témoins qui ont vu des "flammes dans le ciel" et dit que "leurs maisons, situées à quelques mètres de l'impact ont tremblé après la déflagration".

L'armée israélienne aurait déjà procédé à des frappes au Soudan, qui serait, selon les responsables militaires de Tsahal, un point de passage pour les armes iraniennes à destination de la bande de Gaza contrôlée par le mouvement terroriste Hamas.

Jérusalem a notamment accusé le gouvernement soudanais de stocker des missiles de longue portée pour le Hamas.

Le Soudan ne s'est jamais prononcé sur ses liens présumés avec le Hamas.

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UNISFA arrested Sudanese intelligence officer following a deadly attack near Abyei: UN chief

Source: Sudan Tribune

5 May 2015 - The United Nations secretary-general Ban Ki Moon said the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) has apprehended someone claiming to be a Sudanese intelligence officer after a deadly attack last month.

Ban said in his latest report to the UN Security Council that peacekeepers in Abyei responded on March 2 to an attack on the village of Marial Achak by 100 armed individuals from the Misseriya tribe, pointing that three people were killed in the attack, four children abducted and 24 houses destroyed.

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

According to Reuters, the report pointed that 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," the 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 UN 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, who occupy much of the Abyei region, on Al-Shagag village on February 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.

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Ban called upon both Sudan and South Sudan to ensure that armed forces allied to them remain outside the Abyei area, adding that the abduction of children was “particularly deplorable and unacceptable.”

Resolving the final status of Abyei still remains a major issue between Sudan and South Sudan after the latter broke away from the former in July 2011, leaving several unresolved post-secession issues.

In 2012, the African Union mediation team proposed holding a referendum in Abyei , but stated that only those residing permanently in the area will be allowed to vote in the plebiscite and decide whether they want to join Sudan or South Sudan.

The Sudanese government, however, rejected the AU proposal aimed at breaking the deadlock over Abyei referendum saying it ignored the eligibility of the Misseriya.

In October 2013, the Ngok Dinka held a unilateral referendum in Abyei but the Sudanese government rejected its results calling it an "outcast".