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



MEDIA MONITORING

8 October 2015

GENERAL NEWS

Ibrahim Index: Africa's Good Governance 'Stalling'

NEWS STORY

Source: VOA

London, 5 October 2015 - Progress in good governance across Africa is stalling, according to the latest figures compiled by the Mo Ibrahim Foundation. At the same time, a few countries are showing notable improvement.

The Ibrahim Index says it holds the most comprehensive collection of data on African governance. Analysts measure each country annually on key aspects, such as its business environment, accountability of public figures, and legislation on violence against women.

At the launch of the latest annual report, founder Mo Ibrahim said the overall trend in the past four years raises concerns.

"We notice that this upward direction somehow plateaued. It has not gone back. It is still going up at a very slow pace. So the first thing we say here, 'Is African governance improvement stalling?'" he asked.

21 nations see drop

Twenty-one countries have seen their overall governance scores fall since 2011.

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But the trend masks significant progress in some areas. Health and education have improved across the continent. Ibrahim said Ivory Coast, which is to hold elections later this month, showed the biggest overall improvement.

“Cote d’Ivoire has done well in every aspect of governance. But again you have to remember Cote d’Ivoire is coming out of conflict,” said Ibrahim. “But then you have some countries which are not coming out of conflict, like Rwanda, Morocco, Togo, Kenya, these countries really have governments which are really focusing on development and are delivering.”

Ongoing conflicts in Somalia, South Sudan and Central African Republic meant they landed at the bottom of the list.

The measures of economic governance show some of the biggest declines. Analysts say several African states have suffered because of falling commodity prices in recent years.

Diversified economies

Conversely, successful countries have diversified economies, said former president of the African Development Bank Donald Kaberuka, speaking at the launch event in London.

“The commonalities are they are not dependent on commodities. So there has been something else happening, which is increasing investments; number two, increased domestic consumption; and number three, underrated, growth in regional trade,” said Kaberuka.

The Ibrahim Foundation says the aim of the index is to remove the mystery around governance, and to empower the ordinary African citizen to hold those in power to account.

D.R. CONGO**RDC : le Nigérien Maman Sidikou pressenti pour diriger la mission de l’ONU**

INFORMATION

Source: RFI

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Selon nos informations, Maman Sidikou devrait être prochainement nommé patron de la Mission des Nations unies au Congo (Monusco). Le Nigérien est actuellement à la tête de la mission de l'Union africaine en Somalie (Amisom).

6 octobre 2015 - C'est une annonce très [attendue] en République démocratique du Congo, le nom du prochain patron de la Monusco, la mission des Nations unies. Selon nos informations, le Nigérien Maman Sidikou est pressenti pour le poste. Son nom devrait être confirmé cette semaine par le Secrétaire général de l'ONU Ban Ki-moon.

Maman Sidikou était depuis octobre 2014 à la tête de l'Amisom, la mission de l'Union africaine en Somalie où, confie un proche, il sera regretté. « Il est dur mais juste, il nous donne des instructions 24 heures sur 24, 7 jours sur 7 », raconte ce collaborateur au sein de l'Union africaine.

Celui qui est aujourd'hui pressenti par les Nations unies pour remplacer Martin Kobler a une double carrière, voire même triple. Journaliste de formation, il a alterné les postes à responsabilité dans son pays et à l'international. Au Niger, il a notamment été ministre des Affaires étrangères de 1997 à 1999 puis directeur de cabinet du président jusqu'à l'élection de Mamadou Tandja.

Il a ensuite assumé des fonctions sur le plan international notamment au sein de l'Unicef et de la Banque mondiale. Suivi d'un premier passage par la région des grands lacs. Maman Sidikou a été coup sur coup directeur pays de Save the children au Rwanda, puis en RDC. Avant d'être rappelé par Mahamadou Issoufou qui le nomme en 2011 ambassadeur du Niger à Washington.

De l'Amisom, le voilà qui devrait passer à la Monusco. Interrogé par RFI, le nouvel ambassadeur du Niger auprès des Nations unies, lui-même ancien de la mission onusienne, ne tarit pas d'éloges sur Maman Sidikou : grande capacité d'écoute, discrétion, finesse politique...

Des qualités et compétences, le futur patron de la Monusco, quel qu'il soit, devra en avoir, à un an de la présidentielle dans un contexte politiquement tendu. Notamment sur le plan des relations entre la mission et le gouvernement congolais.

RDC: l'ONU demande à Kinshasa d'assurer des élections crédibles

INFORMATION

Source: VOA avec l'AFP

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7 octobre 2015 - Le chef de la mission de l'ONU en République démocratique du Congo (Monusco) appelle le gouvernement congolais à garantir une campagne électorale équitable menant à des "élections crédibles".

S'exprimant pour la dernière fois devant le Conseil de sécurité des Nations unies, Martin Kobler a souligné que "les tensions politiques sont fortes" et il a dénoncé "un nombre croissant de violations des droits de l'homme liées au processus électoral, particulièrement à l'encontre du droit de rassemblement pacifique".

En vue des élections prévues en novembre 2016, il a réclamé que le gouvernement congolais "prenne toutes les mesures nécessaires pour garantir que ces élections législative et présidentielle soient transparentes, crédibles" et qu'elles n'excluent personne. "Réduire l'espace politique avant les élections mine la crédibilité du processus électoral", a-t-il ajouté.

L'organisation américaine de défense des droits de l'homme Human Rights Watch (HRW) a affirmé mardi que des responsables des services de sécurité et du parti au pouvoir ont été impliqués dans l'attaque d'un rassemblement d'opposition le 15 septembre, une accusation rejetée par Kinshasa.

Aux termes de la Constitution de la RDC, le président Joseph Kabila, au pouvoir depuis 2001, ne peut pas se représenter lors de la présidentielle.

L'opposition et une partie de la majorité l'accusent cependant de chercher à tout faire pour se maintenir au pouvoir, par exemple en retardant le scrutin.

"Rien ne doit empêcher la tenue à temps des élections en novembre 2016 comme le prévoit la Constitution", a affirmé à ce propos M. Kobler.

Il a aussi appelé une nouvelle fois le président Kabila à "donner le feu vert à des opérations conjointes" entre les forces gouvernementales et la Monusco contre les rebelles dans l'est du pays.

Il a enfin réaffirmé que l'ONU "ne peut pas et ne doit pas se retirer dans la hâte" et qu'un tel retrait doit être progressif et lié à des "progrès tangibles sur le terrain", en référence à la volonté de Kinshasa de voir un retrait rapide des Casques bleus.

L'ambassadeur congolais à l'ONU Ignace Gata Mavita a déploré que les pourparlers officiels sur un retrait de la Monusco soient "au point mort".

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DR Congo: political tensions ‘running high’ ahead of 2016 elections, UN officials warn

NEWS STORY

Source: UN News Centre

7 October 2015 – The top United Nations official in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) told the UN Security Council today that he cannot say with certainty whether the progress attained in the country is sustainable, or whether violence will erupt again and reverse what has been achieved so far.

“The political situation in the DRC is increasingly marked by the electoral process [and] political tensions are running high ahead of the 2016 presidential and legislative polls,” said Martin Kobler, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the country, who was joined today by UN Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region Said Djinnit.

“The conduct of peaceful, timely and credible elections in November 2016 would send a clear message to the world that the Democratic Republic of the Congo is a nation that respects its Constitution, a nation keen on a peaceful transition of power, a nation that will consolidate peace,” Mr. Kobler continued, highlighting elements from the latest report of the Secretary-General.

To ensure transparent and inclusive elections, he appealed to the Government of the DRC to immediately address open questions related to the sequencing of the electoral calendar, its budget, and updating the voter registry to include eligible individuals who turned 18 since the last election in 2011.

On the issue of human rights in the country, Mr. Kobler said more than 2,200 violations affecting 5,400 victims have taken place this year so far. “Half of these abuses were still committed by State agents. Despite repeated calls, there has been limited progress in bringing senior perpetrators to justice,” he stated.

Meanwhile, he informed the Security Council that, in some parts of eastern DRC, refugees are gradually returning home but the population remains “wary of a fragile peace that still needs to be consolidated.” He recalled that when he first arrived in the Congo in August 2013, Goma was recovering from a takeover by the M23 rebel group – but after two years, the situation had changed.

“In August 2015, I flew into a newly-renovated airport in Goma with a major international airline,” explained Mr. Kobler, who is also head of the UN Organization Stabilization Mission (MONUSCO).

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“The slow return of investors is a sure sign of improving stability and security in the city. In some islands of stability in the East, the state has demonstrated its ability to enhance the presence of the army and police, while a justice system is being established and basic services delivered.”

Although the M23 is now defeated, Mr. Kobler underlined that military success alone is not durable. “M23 ex-combatants still sojourn in camps in Rwanda and Uganda. All efforts of reintegration on the basis of the Nairobi Declaration [2013 agreement ending hostilities] have not succeeded thus far. This is a time bomb that must be urgently defused.”

In addition, he informed the Security Council that the Ugandan armed rebels of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) have also been weakened, and highlighted that the “brave combat of the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC) and the deployment of UN peacekeeping forces have resulted in the gradual return of 80,000 refugees since early 2014.

“Further West in the Beni area, however, the population continues to experience the anguish of armed conflict. The 440 terror victims in one year alone speak a clear language. The ADF is far from being defeated,” he reported, adding that one victim is too many.

Regarding the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), a group mainly composed of remnant Rwandan Hutu rebels, Mr. Kobler said their existence “remains one of the most important hindrance to peace in Eastern DRC.” He welcomed the criminal convictions and long prison terms recently handed down against two FDLR leaders by a court in Germany.

“The only efficient solutions to address the security situation are joint MONUSCO-FARDC operations,” he insisted. “In my last briefing to you, I urged [DRC] President Kabila to give the green light for joint operations. Unfortunately, the green light has not yet been given. I again call on the President to instruct the FARDC to resume cooperation which produced so many positive results in the past.”

Turning to the gradual drawdown and exit of MONUSCO from the DRC, Mr. Kobler insisted that the UNs’ commitment to the population remains steadfast, and that the Mission “cannot, and must not, exit hastily.”

Meanwhile, in light of recent allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by UN personnel within some of the Organization’s peace operations, Mr. Kobler echoed the United Nations Secretary-General’s zero-tolerance policy, underlining that prevention and accountability “should become engrained in the modus operandi.”

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He also voiced “deep concern” about the degradation of the environment and the deforestation of the Congolese rainforest, noting that “the DRC’s natural resources are a blessing.”

This was Martin Kobler’s last briefing to the 15-member body in this capacity, as the end of his term as Special Representative of the Secretary General in the DRC is nearing.

In his remarks, Mr. Djinnit expressed concern about tensions related to the electoral process, as well as the persistence of armed groups in the eastern DRC and acts of violence they commit against particular populations.

“These negative forces and perpetuate tensions and maintain a climate of mistrust in the region. Neutralization remains undoubtedly a need for the DRC as part of its efforts to consolidate State authority throughout the country and ensure the safety of citizens and their property,” Mr. Djinnit explained.

While he praised the operations conducted by the FARDC against the armed groups in country’s restive eastern region, he stressed that such operations benefit from being strengthened by the full support of MONUSCO and its intervention brigade, calling for a resumption of joint operations between FARDC and MONUSCO against all armed groups.

RDC: un véhicule burundais chargé d’armes préoccupe les autorités

INFORMATION

Source: RFI

A Goma, dans l’est de la République démocratique du Congo (RDC), les autorités ont confirmé avoir saisi ce week-end un véhicule transportant des armes. Elles auraient également arrêté des ressortissants rwandais et burundais. Une enquête est en cours.

6 octobre 2015 - Moins d'une dizaine d'armes saisies, mais les autorités se disent très préoccupées par cette affaire. Les forces de sécurité congolaises auraient intercepté un véhicule immatriculé au Burundi samedi dernier. Une Toyota qui provenait du Rwanda voisin et qui aurait traversé la frontière au niveau de la grande barrière à Goma.

A son bord, un capitaine burundais et au moins un Rwandais. Et à l'arrière, quelques kalachnikovs et lance-roquettes. « Ce groupe avait été repéré, il voulait acheter de grosses quantités d'armes et on l'a piégé », se félicite une source proche du dossier. « On soupçonne que ces armes étaient censées servir aux putschistes burundais, le

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Rwanda ne doit pas vouloir utiliser des armes qu'on puisse tracer », ajoute cette même source.

« C'est vraiment ridicule », rétorque un dissident burundais, bon connaisseur de la RDC. Les kalachnikovs coûtent moins chers au Burundi qu'au Congo, ça sent le coup monté pour embarrasser Kigali. »

Zones d'ombres

« Il y a beaucoup de zones d'ombres », note un expert sur le Congo. « Pourquoi avoir conservé une plaque burundaise très identifiable et pourquoi une si petite quantité d'armes », poursuit-il, ajoutant s'inquiéter de l'apparition dans l'est du Congo de « promoteurs à la recherche d'hommes et d'armes ». « Quel que soit l'objectif recherché, c'est inquiétant pour l'avenir de la paix de la région », conclut cet expert.

2000 Centrafricains réfugiés au nord du Congo

INFORMATION

Source: Le Figaro.fr

6 octobre 2015 - Plus de 2000 personnes sont arrivées en une semaine dans le nord-ouest de la République démocratique du Congo après avoir fui le regain de violences en Centrafrique, ont annoncé aujourd'hui le Haut-commissariat aux réfugiés de l'ONU (HCR) et le Programme alimentaire mondial (PAM).

L'«escalade rapide de la violence» en Centrafrique a provoqué la «fuite de plus de 2.000 personnes, pour la plupart des femmes et des enfants, vers la République démocratique du Congo (RDC) voisine en l'espace d'une semaine», indique le communiqué conjoint des deux agences onusiennes.

Les réfugiés sont arrivés dans la province de l'Equateur (nord-ouest) bien que Kinshasa ait décrété le 28 septembre la fermeture «jusqu'à nouvel ordre» de sa frontière avec la Centrafrique, espérant ainsi protéger ses citoyens du regain de violence «incontrôlable» dans la capitale centrafricaine, Bangui. Les nouveaux réfugiés sont actuellement enregistrés par les autorités congolaises à Zongo, localité agricole séparée de Bangui par le fleuve Oubangui. La plupart d'entre eux doit être ensuite relocalisée dans le camp de réfugiés de Mole, à une trentaine de kilomètres au sud de Zongo.

Les réfugiés disent avoir fui les combats entre les rebelles essentiellement musulmans de la Seleka et les militants majoritairement chrétiens anti-Balaka, rapportent le HCR et

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le PAM, qui craignent que l'«extrême instabilité» de la Centrafrique n'engendre une «nouvelle augmentation du nombre de réfugiés» dans les «prochains jours».

RDC: la certification des minerais dans la CIRGL permet de générer plus des recettes

NEWS STORY

Source: Source: Agence de presse Xinhua

7 Octobre 2015 - La République Démocratique du Congo (RDC) a généré plus des recettes dans le secteur minerais dans l'est du pays depuis la mise en place du processus de certification des minerais par les États de la région de Grands-Lacs.

"Les recettes des minerais contribuent aujourd'hui de plus de 5% dans le budget des provinces du Nord-Kivu depuis le lancement du processus de certification, dans l'est de la RDC, contre 0% avant le lancement", dit-il, citant le ministre provincial des mines du Nord-Kivu.

Selon M. Hamuli Kabarhuza, coordonnateur national de la CIRGL en charge de la certification des minerais dans l'est de la RDC, ce processus de certification n'a pas seulement aidé le pays à contrôler les sources de provenance des minerais, mais a permis de générer des recettes importantes au pays.

"La mise en circulation des certificats par les chefs d'Etats de la région, en collaboration avec les experts de l'ONU et de l'OCDE, nous a permis de suivre les traces de toutes les trafics illicites des minerais", a déclaré Kabarhuza.

Pour lui, le trafic illicite de ces minerais qui ont perduré pendant plusieurs années dans l'est de la Rdc, mais aussi dans la région sont à la base des conflits dans cette partie du pays.

"Ce processus de certification des minerais est en ce jours, un instrument efficace qui nous permet de tracer la source de provenance de chaque minerais au niveau de la région pour éviter des éventuel qui alimente les groupes armés", a dit M. Hamuli.

A en croire le coordonnateur national de la CIRGL, l'appui de l'OCDE a été très déterminant dans la mise en place effective du certificat au niveau de la région.

"Il ne peut y avoir une réussite dans ce processus sans la collaboration des grandes États du monde, voilà pourquoi l'appui de l'OCDE qui regroupe ces États à son sein était pour nous important au niveau de la région", a ajouté Hamuli Kabarhuza.

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Le premier certificat de minerais a été lancé en l'année 2012, par la RDC et le Rwanda.

Plusieurs autres pays de la région coopèrent déjà avec ces processus de certification de la CIRGL, mais n'ont pas encore de législation juridique nationale leur permettant de lancer le certificat, selon Hamuli Kabarhuza.

"Depuis le lancement du processus, la RDC a déjà émis plus de 3 500 certificats sur le minerais qui quitte le pays de 2014 à ce jour", a fait savoir le coordonateur national de la CIRGL.

"Toutes les productions des minerais dans l'est du pays sont désormais contrôlées par les autorités du pays grâce à ce processus", a lancé Hamuli.

L'est de la RDC, fait objet de multiples conflits armés depuis des décennies qui ont permis aux groupes armés de faire le trafic illicite des minerais.

RWANDA

France drops genocide, torture case dropped Rwanda priest

NEWS STORY

Source: AFP

Paris, 6 October 2015 - French judges have dropped the case against Rwandan priest Wenceslas Munyeshyaka for his alleged role in the country's 1994 genocide, a judicial source said Tuesday.

Munyeshyaka was accused of handing over Tutsi civilians to Hutu militias and encouraging rapes, but French judges followed the advice of prosecutors in August that there was not enough evidence to proceed.

The decision can still be appealed by civil parties to the case.

Munyeshyaka had a reputation in Rwanda for carrying a gun and wearing a bulletproof vest when he moved around the capital, Kigali.

But he has protested his innocence and says he fled Rwanda because the Hutu militias accused him of protecting the Tutsi.

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The 57-year-old priest moved to France after the genocide and today administers to a parish in the town of Gisors in northern France.

Africa: Rwanda among Africa's Most Improved in Governance Index

NEWS STORY

Source: The New Times (Rwanda)

By Collins Mwai

Rwanda is among the six African nations that have improved remarkably in the Ibrahim Index of African Governance 2015 report.

6 October 2015 – The report, released yesterday, is published annually to provide a comprehensive assessment of governance for the 54 African nations.

The authors of the report used more than 90 indicators (from over 30 independent global data institutions) which fall in four categories; safety and rule of law, participation and human rights, sustainable economic opportunities, and human development.

Overall, Rwanda was placed in the 11th position.

The report noted that Rwanda, alongside Ivory Coast, Morocco, Senegal, Somalia and Zimbabwe improved remarkably in all of the four indexes.

The progress by Rwanda and the five other countries was deemed significant considering that, over the last four years, governance progress in the continent was deemed to have stalled and deteriorated in other aspects.

In the region, Kenya came second, in 14th position in the continent.

The report listed Mauritius, Cape Verde and Botswana as the top three nations, but noted that they all exhibit a decline in overall governance in at least two of the four components over the last four years.

Central African Republic, South Sudan and Somalia come at the bottom of the list. It is notable that the three countries have been experiencing civil conflict related to leadership in the last two years.

Fruits of deliberate programmes

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Governance experts say Rwanda's progress under the various indicators is due to the multiple programmes the government has put in place to ensure improvement of welfare of citizens.

Reacting to the report, Dr. Félicien Usengumukiza, the head of governance, research and monitoring department at the Rwanda Governance Board, said the progress in indicators such as sustainable economic opportunities were a result of sustained efforts to improve the investment climate for small and medium enterprises.

"The investment climate is now conducive for small and medium enterprises which, in turn, led to positive performance in the indicator," he said

Usengumukiza said by laying emphasis on provision of education through 12 year basic education and healthcare provision, the country had in turn fared well in human development.

"As part of the buildup efforts towards the achievement of the goals in the Second Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS II), several programmes and initiatives have been set up. It is because of such programmes that the country fairs well in various global indexes," Usengumukiza said.

He noted that it was in the same light that the country was able to reach and surpass targets set out in the just-concluded Millennium Development Goals process.

Usengumukiza predicted that the progress and commendation was likely to continue in coming days as initiatives were continuous.

However, he said, much debatable was the ranking of the country in participation and human rights areas where Rwanda was listed in the 47th position.

He said the ranking was not satisfactory considering that Rwandans were actively engaged in matters of governance.

Rwanda's press focuses on Burundi accusing Rwanda of training rebels, other stories

NEWS STORY

Source: APA

6 October 2015 - Rwanda's newspapers on Tuesday reported that the Burundi government had accused Rwanda of training rebels that are against Burundi's President

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Pierre Nkurunziza. Burundi's Foreign Minister Alain Nyamitwe stated that Rwanda is hosting Burundi's failed coup leader, General Godefroid Niyombare, and helping rebels launch attacks.

Rwanda denies the allegation, and says Burundi is trying to deflect attention from its own problems.

Meanwhile, roadblocks have sprung up on highways from Rwanda to Burundi, with passengers regularly taken off buses and arrested on claims that they part of rebels coming from Rwanda.

In other news journalists that were invited to an event attended by Rwandan President Paul Kagame in Amsterdam were reported being denied access, with some claiming they were attacked by Rwandan security guards.

The incident " which is coming out today – took place on Saturday at the RAI convention center, which was hosting a Rwanda Day celebration for nationals from that country living in Europe.

Many papers in the country reported that Rwanda is among six African nations that improved remarkably in the Ibrahim Index of African Governance 2015 report.

The report, released on Monday used more than 90 indicators (from over 30 independent global data institutions) which fall in four categories; safety, assessment of governance for the 54 African nations.

Rwanda was ranked 11th in the report.

In economic news, trade growth in Rwanda was boosted by \$10 million grant from Afreximbank.

The Cairo-based African Export-Import Bank and the Development Bank of Rwanda (BRD) signed the facility agreement to support Rwanda's productive sectors and to finance trade diversification and promote value-added exports.

More to that, Punam Chuhan-Pole, World Bank Africa's acting Chief Economist, praised Rwanda for being among several African countries – including Ivory Coast, Ethiopia, Mozambique and Tanzania – that are expected to sustain growth at around 7 percent or more per year between 2015 and 2017.

He said this on the backdrop of the release of World Bank's report titled "The Pulse of Sub-Sahara African Economies" which averagely drew a gloomy picture for most nations, noting that many economies are still weak.

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Generally, the report slashed Africa's growth prospects from 4.6 percent seen in 2014 to 3.7 percent projected this year, due to negative external factors such as low commodity prices for agricultural products.

Rwanda: States Commit to Roadmap for Rwandan Refugees

NEWS STORY

Source: The New Times (Rwanda)

By James Karuhanga

6 October 2015 - Countries hosting Rwandan refugees who fled the country before December 31, 1998 have committed to implementing an earlier agreed upon strategy that will see no Rwandan living abroad as a refugee by December 31, 2017.

This was agreed as ministerial delegations from the main countries that host Rwandan refugees and Rwanda met last Friday at UNHCR Headquarters in Geneva.

The meeting was convened to discuss the state of implementation of the Comprehensive Solutions Strategy for Rwandan Refugees and to review key issues and the way forward in bringing the strategy to its conclusion.

"They reconfirm their commitment to bring proper closure to the situation of Rwandan refugees who fled their country before 31 December 1998 and to secure appropriate durable solutions for them," reads part of a joint communiqué from the meeting, which was a follow up of a similar session held in Pretoria, South Africa in April 2013.

The main countries hosting Rwandan refugees include Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, the DR Congo, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia, the Republic of the Congo and Zimbabwe.

It was noted that the meeting recognised that States are at different stages of implementation of the Comprehensive Solutions Strategy, and the need to adopt a differentiated approach in this regard.

"The Participants commit to implement its main elements and to bring the strategy to its conclusion as soon as possible, but no later than December 31, 2017."

The statement says the UNHCR will "no longer be in a position to operationally support this population after December 2017," except to finalise any remaining jointly-agreed upon activities.

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On voluntary repatriation, it was noted that taking into account efforts to promote voluntary repatriation since the Comprehensive Solutions Strategy was adopted. Participants agreed that organised returns shall come to a close by December 31, 2016.

"Prior to that date, the participants will intensify dialogue with Rwandan refugees on the opportunities to benefit from organised voluntary repatriation, including through sensitisation campaigns, and to ensure that refugees are able to make free and informed decisions as to return."

Participants pledged to identify all affected refugees before the end of January 2016, with a view to identifying appropriate solutions, unless there are exceptional operational constraints.

The Government of Rwanda will take all necessary measures to ensure the safe and dignified return and reintegration of all refugees, the statement adds.

On the other hand, it is indicated that on local integration, countries hosting the refugees committed to intensify efforts to facilitate local integration opportunities for those who wish to remain in the country of asylum.

The participants also committed to explore the acquisition of an alternative legal status by waiving or reducing related fees and easing administrative requirements while the Government of Rwanda committed to furnish national passports to those refugees who require them, in accordance with the law.

"The participants recognise the need to prevent former refugees from being left without a legal status and or becoming at risk of statelessness and agree to take all possible measures, including exploring the acquisition of citizenship, to avoid such an outcome," they said in the statement.

Exemption

Officials at the Geneva meeting also reaffirmed the need to avoid large-scale exemption procedures to the extent possible by identifying alternative solutions for refugees. They called on the UNHCR to assist States to develop and implement fair and efficient exemption procedures.

"The Participants recognised that for those persons who are determined to no longer be in need of international protection, a transitional phase will be applied, ending no later than 31 December 2017, during which time durable solutions will be vigorously pursued and assistance gradually phased out."

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The meeting recognised that for those persons found still to be in need of international protection as refugees, such protection will continue to be provided as durable solutions are pursued.

Kigali continues to urge the UNHCR to revitalise the implementation of the Cessation Clause, which applies to those who fled the country between 1959 and December 1998.

The Cessation Clause on Rwandan refugees, adopted in 2013, was invoked after it was concluded that there is no reason for any Rwandan to remain in refuge and, the government has invested a lot of resources to promote voluntary repatriation.

From 1994 to date, more than three million Rwandans have been repatriated.

UNHCR latest Global trend report says that at the end of 2014 Rwandan refugees remaining in exile were 79, 411.

BURUNDI

Burundi expels Rwandan diplomat for 'creating insecurity'

NEWS STORY

Source: BBC Africa

Burundi has expelled a Rwandan diplomat, whom it accuses of destabilising the country, a Burundian official has told the BBC. Desire Nyaruhirira had been a top adviser at the Rwandan embassy in Burundi for many years. The expulsion comes amid worsening relations between the east African neighbours. Last week, Burundi accused Rwanda of training rebels seeking to destabilise the country, allegations it denies.

7 October 2015 - The Burundian official, who told the BBC Great Lakes service why Mr Nyaruhirira had been expelled, requested not to be named.

Rwanda has not commented on the expulsion.

The move by the Burundian government is a sign that the time for restraint is over, says the BBC's Prime Ndikumagenge from the capital, Bujumbura.

Rwandan President Paul Kagame has criticised the decision of his Burundian counterpart Pierre Nkurunziza to seek a controversial third term in office.

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Relations between the two countries deteriorated further after Burundi accused Rwanda of hosting failed coup leader Gen Godefroid Niyombare, who tried to seize power in May.

Burundi has been hit by a spate of assassinations and attempted assassinations since Mr Nkurunziza won disputed elections in July.

About 70,000 Burundians are living in refugee camps in Rwanda after fleeing the unrest.

Presidents Nkurunziza and Kagame were once on good terms, even playing football together when they visited each other's countries.

This changed in November 2012, when the two disagreed sharply over the M23 rebel group in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. Mr Nkurunziza opposed the M23, which, according to the UN, had Rwanda's backing.

The two leaders clashed at a meeting of regional leaders over the issue, prompting Mr Nkurunziza to walk out before the talks ended.

Burundi: President Nkurunziza's CNDD-FDD party accuses EU of bias towards Tutsis

NEWS STORY

Source: International Business Times

By Elsa Buchanan

6 October 2015 - The Burundian ruling power has accused the European Union (EU) of ethnic bias after it imposed sanctions against four Burundians for "undermining democracy" and blocking efforts to resolve the political crisis.

Less than a week after the EU slapped the sanctions on three high-ranking security officials and close associates of Burundi President Pierre Nkurunziza, as well as a putschist who led a coup d'état on 13 May, the ruling CNDD-FDD has accused the EU of purposefully targeting Hutus.

"The EU's decision to take judicial sanctions against some Burundians is illegal and a provocation," the CNDD-FDD said in a statement on 5 October. "Sanctions were taken against four Burundian Hutus." The president's party said it was "deeply shocked to

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hear about its sanctions that only too well remind [us of] the sad story that Burundi experienced, punctuated by bloody events for over 40 years".

It asked why the EU had only sanctioned Godefroid Bizimana, the Hutu deputy head of the national police, and not the chief of police, and why it had slapped sanctions on putschist General Léonard Ngendakumana – also a Hutu – and not General Cyrille Ndayirukiye, another putschist.

The individuals all fought within the Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie (FDD), Nkurunziza's rebel Hutu organisation that was later integrated as part of the CNDD-FDD. "Sanctions against four Burundians of the same Hutu ethnic group do not result from a known justice because there is no justice for one ethnic group in the world," the statement read.

EU accused of forgetting past 'bloody events'

The comments refer to the long-standing ethnic divisions between the Hutu and the Tutsi tribes in Burundi, which resulted in two genocides. These include the 1972 mass killings of Hutus by the Tutsi-dominated army and the 1993 mass killings of Tutsis by the majority-Hutu populace.

The ruling party added: "The EU has closed its eyes on the atrocities that were being committed by the powers in place [understood to be the UPRONA Tutsi regime] without even imposing sanctions against those responsible for the massacres and genocide directed against an ethnicity. Here everyone should ask a multitude of questions."

Members of the opposition have reacted to the comments, describing the CNDD-FDD's statement as "a divisionist discourse", also known as genocide ideology. "It is a divisionism discourse and that was their main goal. It is unheard of in Burundi. Plus these are lies because Hutu, Tutsi and Twa are all suffering from [their] bad governance," resident Bernard, from Bujumbura, said.

A student from the University of Burundi, who wished to remain anonymous, said: "I think the problem facing the Burundi is much more political than ethnic, and we Burundians are tired [of hearing] such false ideologies that only seek to discourage negotiations [between the ruling party, the opposition and civil society representatives]."

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CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Central African Republic goes back to square one

OPINION

Source: IRIN

By Crispin Dembassa-Kette

Bangui, 6 October 2015 - Six days of fighting that ended in Central African Republic's capital last week has left a heavy toll: dozens dead, hundreds wounded, thousands displaced, and hope of an imminent resolution to the country's protracted and complex political crisis fading fast.

The latest fighting was triggered on 26 September by the discovery of the body of a murdered Muslim motorbike taxi driver near the airport, just outside Bangui. This led the mainly Muslim residents of the area, called PK5, to take to the streets with weapons, and then to clashes with the anti-balaka, a loose grouping of self-defence units. Members of the armed forces also became involved.

When the fighting subsided, 61 people were dead and 300 wounded, according to official figures. The Red Cross, which was unable to access some affected areas in Bangui, said the real number of casualties was probably far higher. Some 40,000 people in the capital fled their homes. A church, several mosques and the offices of several NGOs were looted or damaged. Around 600 inmates broke out of the city's main prison.

There were also more peaceful demonstrations against interim President Catherine Samba-Panza, who cut short her attendance at the UN General Assembly in New York to rush home.

(Samba-Panza assumed office in January 2014, shortly after the resignation of Michel Djotodia, who had come to power in a violent coup the previous March at the head of a predominantly Muslim rebel coalition. Attacks on civilians by these groups after they left the capital prompted reprisals from the predominantly Christian anti-balaka, with much of the violence taking place across religious lines)

Trading blame

For the government, the latest events smacked of orchestration.

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“Just when we had come to tell the United Nations about the encouraging results of the transition process, which is coming to a close with elections due at the end of 2015, the enemies of peace have once again dealt a blow to the process, with violence, murders and odious crimes,” said Foreign Minister Samuel Rangba.

The president went further, describing the unrest in the capital as “an attempt to take power by force.”

On the first day of the violence, Security Minister Dominique Said Paguindji spoke to IRIN and blamed it on “armed groups who do not subscribe to the logic of disarmament and want to divide the country” and on “certain political actors who are excluded from the next elections.” He singled out the entourage of former president Francois Bozizé, who was ousted in the 2013 coup and who himself first came to power at the head of a rebellion.

“All these people have common interests, namely the destabilising of the state, preventing the elections and putting off the transition,” said Paguindji.

But the interim administration has also been accused of sharing responsibility for the violence, with one former minister citing its failure to make good on pledges to disarm the myriad armed groups around the country.

Meanwhile, Bozizé’s political party lashed out at the UN peacekeeping mission and a French military contingent deployed in CAR, calling them “complicit and impotent,” despite enjoying, in the case of the former, a Chapter VII Security Council mandate giving it strong powers to intervene.

Public antipathy to these outside forces was evident in the placards waved during demonstrations held in Bangui on Monday. Some protestors threw stones at passing UN vehicles.

One step forward, two steps back

Last week’s violence came as the country seemed to be turning the page on three years of conflict, with peace returning to many areas, some progress towards reconciliation, many displaced people heading home, and preparations for the elections under way. All this is now under threat.

“This situation shows that peace and reconciliation are still fragile and demand more robust and sustained support if the country is not to fall back into a cycle of generalised violence,” warned Rangba, the foreign minister.

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Charles-Armel Doubane, former ambassador to the UN and now a presidential candidate, put it more forcefully. “Two years of laborious work towards social cohesion and national reconstruction have gone up in smoke,” he told IRIN.

As for the two rounds of presidential and parliamentary elections, slated for 18 October and 22 November, Samba-Panza herself conceded in New York that they are now at risk of being postponed. Few in this country would bet money on the polls being held on schedule.

False narrative

Religious leaders have been urging citizens not to buy into oversimplistic presentations of CAR’s crisis – often perpetuated by the media – framing it as internecine warfare between rival Muslim and Christian communities.

“Everyone knows that all you need to do to get the whole population of PK5 to rise up is take someone, kill them, do what you can to make them look like a Muslim and take them here (to PK5),” Ali Ousman, coordinator of the country’s Muslim organisations, told a large demonstration on Sunday.

Such are the cynical tactics of those behind the violence, he said, labelling them “enemies of peace and this country, politicians nostalgic for power, who have lost power and who want to return by force to take power back.”

Archbishop of Bangui Dieudonné Nzapailianga, Ousman’s counterpart in CAR’s interdenominational peace platform, had a similar message for the Catholic weekly *La Croix*.

“Ours is not a religious crisis,” he told the magazine. “People take advantage of these troubles to fan the embers. They’re always ready to get stuck in and get weapons on the streets. [Weapons are] all around Bangui, because we haven’t had an effective disarmament.”

Now what?

Pretty much everyone in CAR agrees that the most pressing priority is the disarmament of all non-state groups. The question is: how to pull it off? After all, there have been several unsuccessful attempts in recent years.

On her return from New York, President Samba-Panza said this should be done without discrimination or the use of force against those unwilling to hand over their weapons.

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Doubane, the presidential hopeful, told IRIN it was “up to the head of state to bring together all the country’s key players, regardless of our differences, so that we can talk and find the ways and means to immediately restore security in CAR.

“This involves disarmament, which cannot wait and which has to be done through the international community represented by [the UN and French missions] and our own defence forces.”

Well-organised elections with a decent turnout “could offer our country a chance to return to normality, to get back stable and credible institutions,” he added.

CONGO (Republic)

Congo : ce que prévoit le projet de réforme constitutionnelle de Denis Sassou Nguesso

INFORMATION

Source: Jeune Afrique

Le référendum constitutionnel convoqué par le président congolais Denis Sassou Nguesso a été fixé au 25 octobre. Élection présidentielle, abolition de la peine de mort et contestation de l'opposition : voici ce qu'il faut savoir du projet dévoilé lundi.

6 octobre 2015 - Les Congolais seront donc appelés aux urnes le 25 octobre pour valider ou rejeter le projet de réforme constitutionnelle souhaité par Denis Sassou Nguesso, dont les contours ont été dévoilés lundi 5 octobre. Si ce document, qui « comporte 241 articles répartis en 21 titres » prévoit surtout des changements institutionnels, il propose également des nouveautés sociétales.

La réforme du mandat présidentiel

Si le texte venait à être adopté, une telle réforme permettrait à Denis Sassou Nguesso, 72 ans, de se représenter lors de prochaine élection présidentielle prévue mi-2016. Car en l'état actuel, deux articles de la Constitution l'en empêchent : l'un restreignant l'âge des candidats à 70 ans ; l'autre limitant le nombre de mandats à deux successifs.

Ces deux obstacles sont levés dans le projet. « Le mandat du chef de l'État est réduit de 7 à 5 ans. Il est renouvelable deux fois », établit ainsi le texte. Dans le détail, si une

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limite d'âge basse est rajeunie à 30 ans, aucune référence n'est faite à une quelconque tranche d'âge haute.

Un exécutif bicéphale

Le projet prévoit également la recreation du poste de Premier ministre, qui deviendrait « le chef du gouvernement à la place du chef de l'État ». Dans le texte, le Premier ministre « détermine, en concertation avec le chef de l'État, la politique économique et sociale de la nation, et il est seul chargé de la conduire, avec le gouvernement », précise le projet.

Le Premier ministre et son gouvernement seraient tous deux responsables devant le Parlement. Le président pourrait par ailleurs « dissoudre l'Assemblée nationale, tandis que celle-ci pourra renverser le gouvernement par le vote d'une motion de censure », ajoute le document.

Les réformes sociétales

La réforme comporte également un volet sociétal, et propose notamment d'abolir la peine de mort. « Le Congo se conforme ainsi totalement à la proclamation constitutionnelle du caractère sacré de la personne humaine qui existait déjà dans la Constitution de 2002, et qui proscrivait déjà tous les actes de torture, les traitements cruels et inhumains », précise le titre II du document.

Le projet constitutionnel fait par ailleurs « de l'objectif de la parité hommes/femmes une norme constitutionnelle qui devra être au cœur des politiques des institutions de la Nouvelle République ».

Enfin, le texte prévoit que l'État ait l'obligation constitutionnelle de « contribuer à l'épanouissement (...) des femmes, des jeunes et des personnes vivant avec handicap ».

La décentralisation de l'État

La décentralisation est également inscrite dans le projet de réforme. Une disposition qui permettrait de « transférer aux collectivités locales de nombreuses compétences jusqu'ici gérées par l'État central ».

Dans le détail, voici quelques-unes des compétences que les collectivités locales pourraient être amenées à gérer, si le projet venait à être adopté : l'enseignement périscolaire, primaire et secondaire, l'urbanisme et l'habitat, « la santé de base », l'action sociale, l'agriculture, la pêche et l'élevage.

Colère de l'opposition

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L'opposition, qui dans le texte se voit attribuer un « statut politique », avait déjà appelé à manifester contre ce projet, qualifié de « coup d'État constitutionnel ». Une manifestation a ainsi été convoquée le 10 octobre à Brazzaville, soit une journée après l'ouverture de la campagne en faveur du référendum.

Le 27 septembre, des milliers de Congolais avaient déjà défilé dans les rues de la capitale congolaise aux cris de « Sassoufit ! », « Non au troisième mandat ! », « Sassou dégage ! », ou encore « Non au référendum ».

Congo Brazzaville : des messages semant le trouble déversés dans l'opinion

OPINION

Source: Alwihda Info

Par Claude Dinard Vimont

Au lendemain du meeting de l'opposition, les réseaux sociaux affublent les utilisateurs des informations tendant à attiser la haine et la violence en République du Congo. De nuit comme de jour, les messages semant le trouble, la peur et la confusion dans l'opinion nationale sont déversés au sein de l'opinion. Okombi Salissa, Mathias Dzon, Blanchard Oba, Parfait Kolelas, Clément Mierassa et autres ont-ils intérêt à ce que le Congo bascule dans la Guerre ? Le devoir leur incombe d'appeler leur militants au ressaisissement.

6 octobre 2015 - Les douloureuses épreuves que le Congo a connues en 1997-1998 continuent à hanter les esprits de nombreux congolais dont les plaies, pour certains, ne se sont pas encore cicatrisées. Une parenthèse de sang qui a mis à mal l'image du Congo avec un tissu économique et social en lambeaux, des infrastructures détruites, l'unité nationale brisée et la force publique divisée.

La question qui trotte sur les lèvres des congolais est celle de savoir qui a intérêt à ce que le Congo brûle à nouveau ? Des observateurs avertis de la vie politique sont tous unanimes sur le fait que, les militants de l'opposition qui entretiennent la logique de guerre sur les réseaux sociaux n'ont pas de muscles en fer et ceux de la majorité des muscles tendres pour faire face respectivement aux balles des kalachnikov qui ne choisissent pas sur leur passage, comme l'a chanté le musicien congolais Zoba Casimir Zao dans « Ancien Combattant. »

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Tous les congolais aspirent à la paix, voilà pourquoi des actions de grande envergures devront être menées sur l'ensemble du territoire par les pouvoirs publics pour mettre hors d'état de nuire ceux qui veulent se substituer à la place du souverain primaire pour exprimer leur refus du référendum et entretiennent ce climat de terreur de mèche, sans doute, avec certaines puissances étrangères qui ont fait de l'Afrique le terrain d'expérimentation de leur arsenal militaire.

La seule chose à intérioriser et à comprendre, et cela s'impose à tout démocrate, que le référendum est le mécanisme démocratiquement reconnu, par lequel le peuple s'exprime. Le peuple congolais, alors lui seul, départagera les politiques divisés actuellement sur la question de changer ou non la constitution, à partir du vote. « Allons donc aux urnes ». Seuls les congolais diront leur mot, parce qu'il n'y a pas des congolais plus congolais que les autres.

En conséquence, il y a nécessité pour les leaders de l'opposition, leurs militants et sympathisants d'être démocrates comme ils le prétendent. Puisque tout le monde, opposition et majorité, est humain. Et devant la balle de canon en furie c'est la mort qui s'en suivra sans épargner qui que ce soit. Il est donc hors de question que le Congo replonge dans l'horreur et cette main noire étrangère, qui n'a que des intérêts et non des amis, a déjà mis à genoux la Libye, le Mali et la Centrafrique, pour ne citer que ces exemples, avec à la clé le règne de la désespérance et du non Etat.

Référendum : réactions des acteurs politiques

INTERVIEW

Source: Agence d'Information d'Afrique centrale

Après l'annonce de la date de la tenue du référendum constitutionnel, prévue pour le 25 octobre, les acteurs politiques de l'opposition et de la majorité présidentielle ont donné leur point de vue sur cette consultation politique populaire.

6 octobre 2015

Pascal Tsaty Mabilia, premier secrétaire de l'Union panafricaine pour la démocratie sociale (Upads), premier parti d'opposition et membre du Front républicain pour le respect de l'ordre constitutionnel et l'alternance démocratique (Frocad) : « Nous ne sommes pas surpris par l'annonce du référendum parce que le président Denis Sassou N'Gusso est sur un schéma préétabli de changer la Constitution et de se maintenir au pouvoir. Mais, entre l'annonce de ce référendum et

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sa tenue, il y a bien une autre étape à franchir. Rien n'est encore gagné pour le président de la République. Nous nous opposerons jusqu'au bout. Il compte sur la force brutale qui est éphémère et nous comptons sur le soutien populaire. Il se trompe d'époque. La Cour constitutionnelle lui a donné un avis pour faire évoluer les institutions; mais il nous sert un changement de Constitution. C'est finalement la ruse et la malice. Il doit retirer son texte à soumettre au référendum ou négocier un large consensus qui n'existe pas encore dans le pays. Il s'appuie sur un dialogue qui a réuni moins de 700 personnes, alors qu'à l'occasion de notre meeting du 27 septembre, nous avons réuni au moins 30.000 personnes. Où se trouve alors la raison ? ».

Clément Mierassa, président du Parti social-démocrate congolais (PSDC), membre du Frocad : « Le président est dans sa logique. Il tient coûte que coûte à réaliser son « coup d'État constitutionnel ». Il vient de poser les dernières bases de son projet en disant simplement qu'il est là par la force et il y demeurera. C'est à la fois triste et désolant pour la démocratie congolaise, en particulier, et africaine en général. Pour nous, la lutte sera menée jusqu'au bout pour s'opposer à ce projet qui ne repose sur aucune base juridique ».

Serges Michel Odzocki, porte-parole du parti congolais du travail (PCT) : « Nous sommes satisfaits de l'annonce qui vient d'être faite. Le PCT, avec lui, l'ensemble des membres du pôle de consensus de Sibiti, se préparent à se lancer dans la campagne référendaire. Nous pensons que la démocratie ne s'accommode pas avec la violence. Le peuple congolais a trop souffert des conflits armés et qu'il n'en a plus besoin. Le débat politique peut se passer sans recourir à la violence. Nous invitons les congolais à comprendre que le référendum ne devrait pas constituer le motif de déchirement ».

Antoine Gouala, président de la Fédération PCT du Niari: «Le référendum est une expression de la démocratie. Le président Denis Sassou N'Guesso est un démocrate et un homme de parole. Si le peuple lui dit non au changement de la Constitution, pendant ce référendum, je suis sûr qu'il s'inclinera».

Congo-Brazzaville : réaction des Etats-Unis au référendum du 25 octobre

COMMUNIQUE

Source: VOA

Dans un communiqué du Département d'Etat daté du 6 octobre 2015, le porte-parole Mark Toner a déclaré que les Etats-Unis ont noté avec préoccupation la

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décision du président de la République du Congo Denis Sassou N’Gusso de tenir un référendum sur une nouvelle constitution qui éliminerait les limitations du nombre actuel des mandats et lui permettrait de se représenter à la fin de son mandat en 2016.

7 octobre 2015 - Comme l’a dit le président Obama dans son discours à l’Union africaine, Nelson Mandela et George Washington « ont forgé un legs durable non seulement à cause de ce qu’ils ont fait au pouvoir, mais aussi parce qu’ils étaient prêts à quitter le pouvoir et à transférer le pouvoir pacifiquement. »

Le président Obama avait aussi souligné que lorsqu’un « leader essaie de changer les règles du jeu en milieu de jeu rien que pour rester au pouvoir, il y a risque d’instabilité et de troubles – comme nous l’avons vu au Burundi. Et c’est souvent la première étape vers un chemin périlleux. »

Les Etats-Unis réitèrent que des transitions régulières, pacifiques, et démocratiques offrent un mécanisme dynamique et sain aux citoyens pour tenir leurs leaders politiques responsables de leurs actes et promouvoir une stabilité à long terme. Aucune démocratie n’est bien servie quand son leader modifie sa constitution à des fins personnelles ou politiques, conclut le communiqué du Département d’Etat américain.

SOUTH SUDAN

US Cancels Meeting with South Sudan Officials

NEWS STORY

Source: VOA

7 October 2015 - The White House said Wednesday it cancelled a meeting with three senior South Sudanese officials because President Salva Kiir's government and Riek Machar's opposition have failed to commit to the weeks'-old IGAD-Plus peace deal.

National Security Council spokesman Ned Price told South Sudan in Focus that National Security Advisor Susan Rice invited South Sudan Vice President James Wani Igga, Machar, and former detainee Pagan Amum to the White House for a meeting to press them to implement the peace deal that all three parties signed in August.

But, Price said, "After a renewal of fighting over the weekend, as well as Machar's unwillingness to make compromises at security sector reform negotiations, and the government's decision to create ... 28 new states, in violation of the spirit of the peace

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agreement, we decided to not receive the parties here at the White House until they demonstrate a stronger commitment to promoting peace in South Sudan.”

Machar 'furious' over cancellation

Machar told VOA's Straight Talk Africa on Wednesday that he was angered at the cancellation of the meeting with Rice.

"It made me furious," Machar said.

"She should listen to our challenges. She should listen to our concerns. She should listen to the challenges in the implementation of the peace agreement. Instead of hiding, she should come out and assist us," he said.

Machar called on the international community to provide financial assistance to South Sudan so that the peace deal can be implemented and national reconciliation and healing promoted.

He said neither his side nor the government have the necessary funds to put the words of the peace agreement into action.

Wani Igga was unavailable for comment on the cancellation of the meeting but told VOA in an interview Tuesday that President Kiir's order to create 28 new states was a reaction to "the clamor of the people."

The vice president also said the South Sudan government was open to further talks on Mr. Kiir's controversial order to redraw South Sudan's internal boundaries.

Joint Statement on South Sudan**MEDIA NOTE**

Source: US Department of State

The text of the following statement was issued jointly by the Governments of Norway, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.

6 October 2015

The Troika (Norway, the United Kingdom and the United States) express serious concern about President Salva Kiir Mayardit's October 2 announcement that he plans to replace South Sudan's 10 states with 28 new states. This announcement directly contradicts the Government of South Sudan's commitment to implement the peace

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agreement it signed on August 26. One of the primary tasks of the soon to be formed Transitional Government of National Unity is to initiate and oversee a process to complete a permanent constitution that will address such fundamental issues as the structure of the state.

We recognize that the people of South Sudan have long been interested in the issues of federalism and decentralization. However, we strongly urge President Kiir to defer action on this fundamental matter until the Transitional Government of National Unity is formed and a national constitutional dialogue can take place.

We strongly condemn the current resumption of fighting in Unity State. This underscores the urgent need for all South Sudanese stakeholders and members of the IGAD Plus to move forward with the full and timely implementation of the peace agreement, especially the prompt establishment of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission and mandated security arrangements. We also call on the Opposition to resolve outstanding security-related issues and both to allow for full and unfettered humanitarian access.

Sudan, South Sudan border commission meets in Addis Ababa

NEWS STORY

Source: Sudan Tribune

Khartoum, October 7, 2015 - The Joint Boundary Commission (JBC) between Sudan and South Sudan has met in Addis Ababa under the auspices of the African Union Border Program (AUBP).

Claimed and disputed areas of the Sudan and South Sudan border include Abyei, 14-Mile area, Joudat Al-Fakhar, Jebel al-Migainais, Kaka, and Kafia Kingi enclave (Hofrat al-Nahas).

Since the South Sudan independence the agreed border between the two countries is not yet demarcated (marked on the ground). Also, talks between the two sides continue to delimit the remaining 20% disputed boundary.

The AU commissioner for peace and security, Smail Chergui, received the two co-chairs of the JBC, Michael Makuei, minister of information and broadcasting of South Sudan and El-Rashid Haroun, state minister at the Sudanese presidency on the margin of the JBC's fourth meeting in Addis Ababa.

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In a statement issued by the AU, Chergui stressed the importance to build on the dynamic momentum between the two countries in order to give more impetus to peace efforts in the region.

He further stated that “he was encouraged by the positive atmosphere of the meeting and the genuine cooperation the two parties are extending to the AU Commission including, the determination of their respective governments to demarcate the common boundary between both countries”.

According to the statement, the JBC’s fourth meeting is expected to “pave the way for the implementation of the planned activities of the JBC in accordance with the Agreement on Border Issues signed on the 27, September 2012 between the two countries”.

It described the meeting as “an encouraging development in the implementation of the AU Border Programme whose two core objectives are the delimitation and demarcation of borders and the promotion of cross-border cooperation”.

SUDAN

Sudanese president to visit Algeria on Sunday

NEWS STORY

Source: Sudan Tribune

Khartoum7 October 2015 - Sudanese president Omer Hassan al-Bashir will make a rare visit to Algeria on Sunday at the invitation of his counterpart Abdel-Aziz Bouteflika to discuss ways for strengthening bilateral ties and activating the joint cooperation agreements.

The visit was originally scheduled for last September but has been delayed at the request of the Algerian side and the two sides agreed to make it between 11 to 13 October.

Algeria is not a state party to the International Criminal Court (ICC) which has an outstanding arrest warrant for Bashir related to the conflict in Darfur.

A Sudanese diplomat told Sudan Tribune on Tuesday that Bashir would meet with his accompanying ministers at the presidential palace on Wednesday to put the finishing touches of the visit and discuss its agenda.

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According to the diplomat, Bashir's accompanying delegation includes the ministers of presidency, foreign affairs, finance, investment, oil, minerals and the civil aviation, expecting that representatives from the businessmen and employers federation would join the delegation.

The same source pointed that the anticipated discussions in Algeria would focus on the economic issues besides the regional developments particularly the situation in Syria, saying the two countries largely share similar positions regarding the ongoing crisis there.

He said the discussion between the two sides would likely be crowned by announcing resumption of the flights of Air Algerie to Khartoum particularly as the latter has recently enhanced its fleet.

He also said that Algeria seeks to import Sudanese meat, pointing to Algeria's investments in Sudan.

"Algeria began to import sesames from Sudan besides its participation in training activities and genetic [research] regarding poultry and some plants," he added.

Sudan was accused by Algeria in the 1990's of backing Islamists extremists during a wave of violence which hit the North African nation at the time. It came close to severing diplomatic ties on two occasions as a result.

But relations between the two countries warmed up particularly after Bashir removed the Islamist figure Hassan al-Turabi from the parliament speakership following a bitter power struggle.

There were reports in the past few years that Sudan has sought financial assistance from Algeria to weather the economic crisis resulting from the secession of South Sudan in 2011.

TANZANIA

Tanzania opens new camps for Burundian refugees to ease conditions in Nyarugusu Camp

PRESS RELEASE

Source: UNHCR

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7 October 2015 - Today [Wednesday, 7 October 2015], UNHCR started the relocation of 50,000 Burundian refugees to two camps in North West Tanzania, which the government has reopened to ease the suffering of tens of thousands of people in the crowded Nyarugusu camp.

Following lengthy negotiations, including a meeting between High Commissioner Guterres and Tanzania's President Kikwete in Geneva this summer, UNHCR received permission from the government to use three former refugee camps – Nduta, Mtendeli and Karago – to help decongest Nyarugusu. Nyarugusu currently accommodates more than 160,000 Burundian and Congolese refugees, and is one of the largest and most overcrowded refugee camps in the world.

Under the relocation plan UNHCR prepared with its UN and NGO partners, some 50,000 Burundian refugees will be moved this year from Nyarugusu to Nduta and Mtendeli camps. Despite current challenges to prepare the third camp, Karago, in particular because of a lack of water, that camp is expected to open next year, further easing the pressure on Nyarugusu.

Nduta has good water sources while Mtendeli has sufficient water to receive 15,000 refugees with immediate effect. A reception centre has already been built in Nduta camp in addition to four reception villages with the capacity to accommodate up to 5,000 refugees. Furthermore, UNHCR is renovating police posts in both camps and has identified a building to be used as an office for staff. Demarcation of reception villages in Mtendeli has been completed and construction of shelters and other infrastructure is underway.

Our camp planning and logistics experts have developed a detailed relocation plan, including the transportation of the Burundian refugees by road. Under the first phase, UNHCR will prioritize new arrivals and the most vulnerable refugees, including those living in flood-prone areas of Nyarugusu as well as refugee incentive workers before onset of the rainy season. New arrivals will be transported daily to the new camps with others three times a week in convoys of 1,000 people each. Convoys will be accompanied by at least one ambulance, two vehicles for refugees with specific needs and two police escorts.

Meanwhile, urgent work is required at Nyarugusu. Strong winds have damaged several mass shelters exacerbating the already dire living conditions. Refugees also need to be relocated to higher ground from some areas which are flood prone. The recent spike of arrivals from Burundi into Tanzania has seen Nyarugusu camp grow exponentially, adding more than 100,000 Burundian refugees to the existing camp population of some 60,000 refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo.

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UN praises Tanzania's democratic maturity

NEWS STORY

Source: The Daily News (Tanzania)

By Rose Athumani

The United Nations has praised Tanzania for its democratic maturity as top leaders hand-over power peacefully at the end of 10 years as stipulated in the country's constitution.

7 October 2015 - The commendation was made in Dar es Salaam by the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations System in Tanzania, Mr Alvaro Rodriguez. He said what is taking place in Tanzania is a process of maturity in politics, where members from political parties move from one party to another.

He, however, noted that the worry in many people's mind is the potential of violence. The UN senior official made the remarks during a visit to Tanzania Standard Newspapers aimed specifically to engage the state-run media house to help promote and educate the public on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) designed to end poverty and hunger by 2030.

"Tanzania is set in the right direction, but what worries me most and everyone else is the potential of violence.

There will be tension on Election Day and maybe when the results are announced," he explained. "We want to see tourists continuing flowing into the country and more direct investment taking place.

That's why we are working with the police force to ensure they are able to manage and contain any violence in time in case it erupts." Meanwhile, the UN Resident Coordinator noted that what is topical for UN is the SDGs and UN Development Assistant Plan (UNDAP) II.

The 17 SDGs were agreed by world leaders during the UN Sustainable Development Summit on September 25 this year, to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and tackle climate change by 2030. Mr Rodriguez said the new set of global goals will now guide the development activities of the UN in the country for the next 15 years from January 1, 2016.

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He said for the next year or two much of the UN's work will focus on advocating, educating and informing the public about the SDGs and what it means for Tanzania as a country. "Tanzania has always been a leading country in terms of the UN agreements, convention and programmes.

It was the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) at the time of former President Benjamin Mkapa, now the SDGs during this time of President Jakaya Kikwete and the new incoming president," he explained.

"The SDGs is a very broad agenda but a very extra ordinary one because if it is achieved, and I believe it can be achieved in Tanzania, you can end poverty, improve health, education services and tackle climate change which goes beyond 2030," he explained.

He said the quality of life (for men, women and children) will improve dramatically in the next 15 years. But for this to happen the SDGs need to be nationalized and incorporated into the government five-year national development plan that begins on 1st of July next year. He added that the government's national development plan will coincide with the UN Development Plan for Tanzania (UNDAP) II.

"There we focus on the national priorities but by deriving guidance from the SDGs. So we will have a mix between SDGs to what Tanzania wants to prioritize and we end up with 12 areas of work which is the focus of UNDAP II. The UNDAP II 12 areas of work are in four groups focusing on inclusive growth, national health, resilience and democratic governance, human rights and gender equality.

He emphasized the importance of engaging the media, both electronic and print and the social media in educating and informing the public on the SDGs so that they can understand and make demands from the government.

Speaking on behalf of TSN Managing Editor, Mr Gabriel Nderumaki, the company's Printing Manager, Mr John Mcharo, promised to work with the UN Resident Coordinator in educating and informing the public on SDGs.