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



# MEDIA MONITORING

**19 January 2015**

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### UN envoy calls for urgent offensive against FDLR

Source: Times Reporter

**January 17, 2015** - The United Nations Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, Saïd Djinnit, and three South African ministers yesterday called for urgent military action against the FDLR militia.

Djinnit held extensive consultations with South African ministers of International Relations and Cooperation, Maite Nkoana-Mashabane; Defence, Noluthando Mapisa-Nqakula; and State Security, David Mahlobo in Pretoria.

The meeting reviewed the current situation in the Great Lakes region, focusing on urgent political and security issues as well as means to advance long-term regional economic cooperation and development.

Noting joint efforts in improving the dire situation of women in the region, thousands of whom suffer daily unspeakable violence due to conflict, the meeting was firm on the need to act decisively against armed groups in eastern DR Congo, notably the FDLR and Uganda's Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), according to a release.

The armed groups continue to exert a heavy toll on the civilian population and their activities continue to undermine regional trust and cooperation.

The six-month deadline given to the FDLR to voluntarily disarm by the International Conference on the Great Lakes region (ICGLR) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) expired on January 2.

"We continue to witness horrific acts of violence perpetrated by illegal armed groups in eastern DR Congo, many of which are directed at women and children... and in the

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absence of progress, military action by the Government of DR Congo and Monusco should now commence without delay,” Djinnit said.

The Security Council has also called for joint operations by the DR Congo armed forces (FARDC) and the UN stabilisation force, Monusco.

President Kagame told journalists in Kigali on Thursday that he was not sure whether Monusco would finally address the problem of FDLR militia, based on past experiences, but was watching to see whether those concerned would honour their recent promises.

The military offensive is supposed to be conducted by the Force Intervention Brigade of the UN Stabilisation Mission in the Congo (Monusco), but instead the UN troops have recently launched attacks against Burundian rebels, the National Liberation Force (FNL), also based in Eastern DR Congo.

Djinnit’s visit comes two weeks ahead of a major meeting of Heads of State of the region under the Regional Oversight Mechanism of the Peace, Security and Cooperation (PSC) Framework for the DRC and region, scheduled to take place on January 31 in Addis Ababa on the sidelines of the African Union summit.

## **UN Special Envoy and South Africa call for a prompt and decisive military action against the FDLR**

Source: Rwanda News Agency

**Kigali, 16 January 2015** - UN Special Envoy for the Great Lakes region Saïd Djinnit held extensive consultations with South African Ministers on the issue of FDLR who failed to meet a January 2 disarmament deadline.

Saïd Djinnit met in Pretoria South African Ministers of International Relations and Cooperation, Ms. Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, Defence, Ms. Noluthando Mapisa-Nqakula, and State Security, Mr. David Mahlobo.

They discussed the need to act decisively against armed groups in eastern DRC, notably the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) and the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), which continue to exert a heavy toll on the civilian population and whose activities continue to undermine regional trust and cooperation.

“We continue to witness horrific acts of violence perpetrated by illegal armed groups in eastern DRC, many of which directed at women and children. The six-month deadline given to the FDLR to voluntarily disarm by the International Conference on the Great

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Lakes region (ICGLR) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) expired on 2 January, and in the absence of progress, military action by the Government of DRC and MONUSCO should now commence without delay”, both Special Envoy Djinnit and the South African Ministers said.

“I commend the South African government’s firm support for the FIB’s mandate, and look forward to prompt and decisive military action against the FDLR, with every effort made to protect the civilian population”, Djinnit said.

Saïd Djinnit praised South Africa’s contribution to peace and stability in eastern DRC and the region, and commended South African troops for their performance as part of the UN Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) in the DRC.

The Security Council has called for joint operations by the DRC armed forces (FARDC) and the UN stabilization force, MONUSCO.

The effectiveness of such joint operations was recently demonstrated by the FARDC-MONUSCO operations against the Forces nationales de libération (FNL) in eastern DRC, with the participation of South African UN troops, and more recently against the Front de Résistance Patriotique de l’Ituri (FRPI) in Aveda.

In addition, Saïd Djinnit and South African Ministers agreed on the urgency to expedite full implementation of the Nairobi Declarations of the Kampala Dialogue.

A key next step would be the repatriation of ex-M23 combatants from Uganda and Rwanda to the DRC, building on the initial steps to repatriate ex-combatants from Uganda.

UN Special Envoy for the Great Lakes region Saïd Djinnit concludes his visit in Pretoria today. After South Africa, he will have consultations with Rwandan authorities on the issue of FDLR.

## **UN still awaiting Kabila go-ahead for DR Congo offensive**

Source: AFP World News

**United Nations, 16 January 2015** - The United Nations is still waiting for President Joseph Kabila to sign off on a joint military plan to drive out rebels from eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, the UN said Friday.

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UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric told reporters that Kabila had not signed a joint directive on the military operation despite appeals by the Security Council and Secretary General Ban Ki-moon more than a week ago.

"We are obviously making preparations for this action," Dujarric said. "For such a major operation, it's important that the government be fully on board. The contacts are ongoing."

The UN's 20,000-strong MONUSCO force is preparing to launch the offensive against the Hutu rebels, but the mission's success hinges on an active role by the Congolese government troops.

The rebels from the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) are facing military action after failing to meet a January 2 deadline set by the UN and African leaders for them to surrender.

The United Nations is pushing for the disarming of dozens of rebel and splinter groups after two decades of conflict in the eastern DR Congo, much of it fueled by the lucrative trade in minerals.

Ban's special envoy for the region Said Djinnit held meetings on Friday in South Africa, a key contributor of troops to an intervention brigade that would be the first to swing into action against the FDLR.

Djinnit praised South Africa for its "firm support" for the brigade and said he was expecting "prompt and decisive military action against the FDLR, with every effort made to protect the civilian population," a UN statement said following the talks.

Up to 1,500 FDLR rebels are active in a large swath of territory in remote South Kivu, North Kivu and Katanga provinces.

These include ethnic Hutu fighters, some of whom are accused of taking part in the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

Rwandan President Paul Kagame, who has pushed for military action, accused regional governments this week of "making all kinds of excuses when it comes to FDLR."

"When it comes to the FDLR, it's like, you know, let's wait," said Kagame.

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## **Kagame complains of inaction on Congo rebels**

Source: AFP

**Kigali, 16 January 2015** - Rwanda's president has voiced renewed frustration over what he complains is long-term inaction over Rwandan Hutu rebels in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Paul Kagame said even though the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) had missed a deadline to disarm and were now facing an offensive by the United Nations mission in the DR Congo, MONUSCO, he was far from optimistic about the prospect of decisive action.

The FDLR is estimated to include between 1,500 and 2,000 ethnic Hutu fighters, some of whom are accused of having participated in the 1994 Rwandan genocide which left close to a million people dead, mainly ethnic Tutsis.

Opposed to President Kagame's Tutsi-dominated government, they have been based across the border in eastern DR Congo since the genocide, and are accused of staging brutal attacks on civilians, including rapes and murders, and smuggling gold and charcoal.

Kagame told a news conference he was not confident "that things are going to work out the way they should."

"We've been with the FDLR for decades ... and what has been playing out relating to the FDLR has not been helpful at all," he said.

He accused regional players of making "all kinds of excuses when it comes to (dealing with the) FDLR," including saying there are children and civilians among them.

"When it comes to the FDLR, it's like, you know, let's wait," he said.

MONUSCO head Martin Kobler said last week the UN and DR Congo forces were prepared for a confrontation with the rebels after they missed a January 2 deadline to turn themselves in.

Last week DR Congo's government also said the forced disarmament of the FDLR was now "the only option".

The United Nations is still waiting for President Joseph Kabila to sign off on a joint military plan to drive out rebels from eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, the UN said Friday.

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UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric told reporters that Kabila had not signed a joint directive on the military operation despite appeals by the Security Council and Secretary General Ban Ki-moon more than a week ago.

"We are obviously making preparations for this action," Dujarric said. "For such a major operation, it's important that the government be fully on board. The contacts are ongoing."

The UN's 20,000-strong MONUSCO force is preparing to launch the offensive against the Hutu rebels, but the mission's success hinges on an active role by the Congolese government troops.

The rebels from the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) are facing military action after failing to meet a January 2 deadline set by the UN and African leaders for them to surrender.

The United Nations is pushing for the disarming of dozens of rebel and splinter groups after two decades of conflict in the eastern DR Congo, much of it fueled by the lucrative trade in minerals.

## **Rwanda: Kagame Says Rwanda Not Plundering DRC Coltan**

Source: News of Rwanda

**16 January 2015** - President Paul Kagame has offered free visa and air ticket to anyone disputing Rwanda's Coltan (tantalum) production capability to visit the country's active mining sites.

"Rwanda has not only enough Coltan but of a very high quality. It is something that has been known for years," Kagame said Thursday at a monthly Press Briefing at Village Urugwiro.

Kagame told KTPress that whoever is having confusion about Rwanda's Coltan production, "we can even pay a ticket for them, we shall give them a visa and we shall take them to the mines. If only they won't want to stay there and keep mining. For anybody with that confusion, there is a simple way and not so expensive to sort it out."

In 2013, Rwanda attracted global attention when it exported 2,466,025kgs of Coltan- this accounted for 28% of total 8,807,232Kg of tantalum produced globally. Rwanda earned \$134.5M in revenue from the Coltan.

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The Ministry of Natural Resources and Mines says Rwanda is now the world's single largest exporter of tantalum mineral and that the 2013 export were only a small portion of the country's production capacity.

Critics from across the globe continued to accuse Rwanda of siphoning Coltan from DRC and exporting it as with origin from Rwanda.

Kagame said that Rwanda harbours excessive tantalum minerals 'of even good quality' than others in the region.

On the claims that Rwanda could be mixing its resources with those from DRC, Kagame told KTPress "It is simple. These are simple things you can have evidence for, because, you can come and visit the mines and see people mining and test the minerals.

Sometimes the World creates mountains out of nothing and just enjoy spreading rumours and confusion."

The President added that his government is ready to facilitate whoever feels interested in proving Rwanda's state of minerals.

Rwanda has managed to successfully satisfy requirements of US Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (DFA) that controls the purchase of minerals sourced from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and its 11 neighbours.

In 2013, Countries subjected to DFA law contributed only 23% of global coltan exports.

In response to the Dodd-Frank legislation, Rwanda has a Minerals Traceability Program where all minerals mined there are tagged from the mine-sites until they are ready to be exported.

Companies sourcing minerals from Rwanda are forced to export only those that are conflict-free.

## **DR Congo: UN mission chief voices 'full solidarity' as Govt. battles armed groups**

Source: newKerala.com

**New York, 17 January 2015** - The top United Nations official in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has expressed 'full solidarity' and support for the country's Government as it continues in its fight against armed groups operating in the eastern part of its territory.



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"The current fight against the Front de Resistance Patriotique de l'Ituri (FRPI) shows our determination to neutralize all the groups that have inflicted untold suffering on the Congolese population," Martin Kobler, head of the UN Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), declared in a press release issued earlier Friday.

"All the armed groups must now understand that any further attempt to use civilians as human shields shall not be tolerated," he declared, echoing media reports that armed groups wreaking havoc in the vast country's restive eastern provinces have a reputation for using civilians as human shields when attacks threaten.

Kobler's comments follow a series of operations conducted against numerous armed groups operating in the DRC, including the FDLR (Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda), which missed a deadline for the unconditional surrender of its forces on 2 January. The UN Security Council subsequently appealed to Congolese President Joseph Kabila to authorize UN-backed action against that group.

They also come after a recent joint Congolese army (FARDC)-MONUSCO attack against the Ugandan-based rebels, Allied Democratic Forces, in the DRC's North Kivu region and the arrest of Cobra Matata, the leader of the FRPI.

Meanwhile, the MONUSCO press release added, the fight against the remnants of the FRPI remains ongoing, with the group, which boasts a contingent of some 300 child combatants among its ranks, standing accused of gross human rights violations and illegal traffic of natural resources.

"I am more particularly shocked by the use of children by FRPI; it is a war crime," continued Mr. Kobler.

"I fully support Government's in firmly standing against all form of impunity for such a crime. These children have the right to a future." Speaking in South Africa today where he was holding extensive consultations with senior local officials regarding the urgent security and political issues facing the DRC and surrounding region, Said Djinnit, the UN's Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, echoed Mr. Kobler's appeal for decisive action against the armed groups active in the DRC.

"We continue to witness horrific acts of violence perpetrated by illegal armed groups in eastern DRC, many of which directed at women and children," Djinnit declared in a press release.

"The six-month deadline given to the FDLR to voluntarily disarm by the International Conference on the Great Lakes region (ICGLR) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) expired on 2 January, and in the absence of progress, military



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action by the Government of DRC and MONUSCO should now commence without delay."

The UN Special Envoy commended the South African Government's "firm support" for the UN Force Intervention Brigade's mandate and said he looked "forward to prompt and decisive military action" against the FDLR, with "every effort made to protect the civilian population."

In addition, he voiced satisfaction over the ongoing preparations for a Great Lakes Private Sector Conference in 2015 which, he said, would help boost regional investment and growth and bring concrete opportunities to the Great Lakes region at large.

"It is time for the region to turn the page, tackle decisively the root causes of the recurring cycles of violence, remove obstacles to progress, and take full advantage of the enormous opportunities for business and economic development through cooperation."

## **Tanzania says ready to take on Rwandan rebels in Congo**

Source: Reuters

Writing by Ed Cropley and David Lewis; Editing by Ralph Boulton

**15 January 2015** - Tanzania is ready to take on Rwandan Hutu rebels in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), President Jakaya Kikwete said, suggesting a joint offensive with U.N.-backed, South African forces is imminent.

The U.N. mission in Congo said government troops and peacekeepers were intensifying deployments towards rebel positions but insurgents were also mobilising and mixing with civilians, raising the risk of them being used as human shields.

Congo's army and a 3,000-strong South African, Tanzanian and Malawian U.N. intervention force is due to launch an offensive against Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) rebels, which have been at the heart of years of conflict in central Africa's Great Lakes region.

In a statement issued late on Tuesday after talks with South African Defence Minister Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, Kikwete dismissed talk he was reluctant to tackle the FDLR.

"There are people who pretend to read Tanzania's mind," Kikwete said. "They claim that Tanzania has no intention of taking on rebel groups in the DRC. These are bizarre

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people because Tanzania, like South Africa and Malawi, has troops in the DRC with a firm United Nations mandate."

Speculation over Tanzania's readiness to tackle the FDLR stems from a number of statements suggesting some sympathy to their cause. Kikwete has previously suggested Rwanda should talk to the FDLR, something Kigali has ruled out. Last year, Tanzania's government labelled the FDLR "freedom fighters".

South African President Jacob Zuma was in Luanda on Wednesday for talks with his Angolan counterpart, Jose Eduardo dos Santos, that are expected to focus on security in eastern Congo, home to an estimated 1,400 seasoned FDLR guerrillas.

The militia, which includes ethnic Hutu soldiers responsible for carrying out Rwanda's 1994 genocide, failed to meet a January deadline to disarm and surrender.

South Africa's foreign ministry did not comment on Zuma's discussions. But in a statement after the U.N. Security Council backed military action, Pretoria said it was committed to the "neutralisation of negative forces in the eastern DRC".

A spokesman for the U.N. mission said peacekeepers and government troops were advancing into FLDR areas and would start military operations "when the time was right".

However, he warned that rebels were mixing with civilians, "probably to avoid being targeted or so they could use them as human shields".

The United Nations has been under pressure to take out remaining guerrilla movements in eastern Congo after defeating the Tutsi-led M23 rebel group in 2013.

## **Congo presidential poll could be delayed: government spokesman**

Source: Reuters

**Kinshasa, 16 January 2015** - Presidential elections scheduled for next year in Democratic Republic of Congo could be delayed until 2017, a government spokesman told French radio on Friday.

President Joseph Kabila has yet to declare his intentions, but Congo is rife with speculation that he is looking for ways to remain in charge of the vast nation after his second elected five-year term ends in 2016.

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Opposition parties claim that a revision to the country's electoral code under consideration in parliament, which would require a national census before the polls, is a ploy to extend Kabila's rule.

"[The election] could take place in 2016 or it could take place in 2017," Lambert Mende said in an interview on Radio France Internationale.

Mende defended the revision of the electoral law, saying a census was necessary to ensure a smooth electoral process.

The reforms cleared a preliminary vote in parliament this week. Opposition leaders have called on people to occupy the parliament building on Monday to block passage of the proposed law.

## **Congo-Kinshasa: Uvira - La population se plaint du retrait des casques bleus à Kiliba**

Source: Radio Okapi

**17 janvier 2015** - Des casques bleus pakistanais se sont retirés, jeudi 15 janvier, de la localité de Kiliba pour se redéployer à Mushule, une autre localité située dans les moyens plateaux d'Uvira (Sud-Kivu). La population qui a assisté à ce départ se plaint et redoute que la contrée soit de nouveau en proie aux rebelles burundais des Forces nationales de libération (FNL), accusés de diverses exactions dans la contrée.

Le chargé de l'information publique de la Monusco à Uvira, Jean-Tobie Okala, appelle cette population à l'apaisement:

«Ce sont des opérations qui sont planifiées. C'est dans l'ordre normal des choses. Je profite de cette occasion pour assurer la population que ce sont des bases de déploiement temporaire de nos unités qui viennent en appui aux FARDC. Là où on estime que leur présence est requise, elles vont s'installer là-bas. Donc, les populations de Kiliba n'ont pas à s'inquiéter de quoi que ce soit».

Il a assuré que la Monusco continue d'appuyer les FARDC à partir de sa base temporaire de Mushule dans la cadre des opérations conjointes contre les rebelles FNL.

Plus de deux semaines après le début des opérations militaires menées contre ces rebelles burundais, en territoire d'Uvira (Sud-Kivu), la Monusco avance un bilan provisoire de 29 blessés, 2 morts et des combattants FNL en débandade.

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## **Le Commissaire à la paix et à la sécurité de l'UA conclut des consultations en Afrique du Sud sur la situation dans la région des Grands Lacs**

Source: Alwihda Info

**18 janvier 2015** - Le Commissaire à la paix et à la sécurité de l'Union africaine (UA), Smail Chergui, a eu, vendredi 16 janvier 2015, à Pretoria, une rencontre avec la Ministre sud-africaine des Relations internationales et de la Coopération, Maite Nkoana-Mashabane. L'Afrique du Sud préside l'Organe de coopération en matière politique, de défense et de sécurité de la Communauté de développement de l'Afrique australe (SADC).

La rencontre a été l'occasion de faire le point de la mise en œuvre de l'Accord-cadre sur la paix, la sécurité et la coopération pour la République démocratique du Congo (RDC) et la région, en particulier le désarmement des Forces démocratique de libération du Rwanda (FDLR). A cet égard, la Ministre a réaffirmé la détermination et l'engagement de l'Afrique du Sud, qui est l'un des pays fournisseurs de contingents à la Brigade d'intervention de la MONUSCO, en faveur de l'utilisation de la force contre les FDLR, conformément aux résolutions pertinentes du Conseil de sécurité des Nations unies et aux décisions prises en la matière par la SADC et la Conférence internationale sur la région des Grands Lacs (CIRGL).

L'entretien avec la Ministre sud-africaine a également permis de discuter d'autres questions liées à la promotion de la paix et de la sécurité en Afrique, y compris dans l'espace SADC. Dans ce contexte, le processus de sortie de crise au Lesotho, avec la tenue des élections prévues le 28 février 2015, a été abordé. Enfin, le Commissaire et la Ministre ont eu un échange de vues sur la tenue, en Afrique du Sud, dans le courant de cette année, de l'Exercice Amani Africa II, qui devrait permettre de valider la réalisation de la pleine capacité opérationnelle pour la Force africaine en attente. Le Commissaire a saisi l'occasion pour remercier l'Afrique du Sud d'avoir offert d'abriter l'Exercice.

## **Lawmakers from Great Lakes meet in Nairobi over security issues**

Source: Xinhua

**Nairobi, 19 January 2015** - Lawmakers from the Great Lakes Region will meet in Kenya next week to discuss political and security challenges in the region, officials confirmed on Thursday.

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Kenya's Senate Speaker Ekwee Ethuro said the Fifth Plenary Session of the Forum of Parliaments of the 12-member International Conference of the Great Lakes Region will take place from Jan. 20 to 22 in Nairobi.

Ethuro said the purpose of the meeting is to discuss the role of parliaments in ensuring peace and stability in the region which has been rocked by conflicts.

"The forum provides a platform for exchange of views on conflict resolution, experiences and dialogue amongst Parliaments of Member States," Ethuro said in a statement received in Nairobi.

The three-day meeting will bring together Parliaments of Angola, Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Republic of Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo), Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia.

Ethuro said the conference, aimed at promoting Security, stability and development in the Great Lakes Region, will focus on Central African Republic, South Sudan, DR Congo and Sudan countries that have been affected by endless conflicts of armed militias.

"Another focus on the conference will be the role of Parliaments of Member States in the fight against illegal exploitation of natural resources in the region and the implementation of related international and legal instruments," he said.

According to Ethuro, youth unemployment, infrastructure development and investment promotion in the Great Lakes Region will also feature during conference.

## **EAC, COMESA launch roundtables to support Burundi's elections**

Source: Xinhua

**Bujumbura, 19 January 2015** - The East African Community (EAC) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) on Thursday launched roundtables aimed to consolidate regional stability through peaceful elections in Burundi and aimed to prevent conflicts before, during and after elections due between May and September, Burundian First Vice-President Prosper Bazombanza said here on Thursday while officially launching the two-day roundtables.

The ceremonies of launching the roundtables on peaceful elections in Burundi brought together several officials including Burundian government officials, diplomats accredited to Burundi, members of the Burundian National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI), leaders of political parties, members of the private sector, media members,

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representatives of the civil society, women's groups and youths' groups as well as senior wise officials from the EAC and COMESA blocs who will chair the roundtables.

"These roundtables will help Burundian electoral stakeholders prevent conflicts before, during and after elections," said Burundian First Vice-President Prosper Bazombanza.

He commended the EAC and the COMESA for those roundtables that will promote the "existing dialogue" ahead of the east African country's elections.

"This initiative of roundtables by the two regional blocs (EAC and COMESA) meant to create a good environment for peaceful elections in Burundi are supported by the African Union and the European Union. Those roundtables will be decentralized up to the provincial and communal levels and will end in May just before the start of the elections," said East African Community (EAC) Secretary General Richard Sezibera.

According to Sezibera, those roundtables will enhance the Burundian electoral process, through boosting dialogue among electoral stakeholders and various groups including the youths and women.

"To succeed the electoral process, I call on Burundi's international partners to fund the elections because I heard there is still a gap to get the required funding," said Sezibera.

The Chairperson of the Committee of Elders at the COMESA, Bethuel Kiplagat, said Burundi's elections that will take place between May and September, will "obviously" have an impact on the region.

"The elections that will be held since May in Burundi will obviously have an impact to the whole region. If elections are held in a free, fair and inclusive way, the region will copy from the Burundian experience and if elections are not peaceful or undemocratic, the region will suffer bad impacts of bad elections," said Bethuel Kiplagat, Chairperson of the Committee of Elders at the COMESA.

Kiplagat, who is a Kenyan national, indicated that the whole east African region suffered the impact of bad post-electoral violence in Kenya in 2007, stressing that fuel became scarce in Burundi because the country could not get fuel supplies from Kenya.

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## Burundi opposition leader sentenced for five years for bribery

By AFP

**16 January 2015** - A top Burundi opposition leader has been sentenced to five years in jail for bribery following a sex scandal he claims was created to block him from running for president.

Frederic Bamvuginyumvira, a former Burundi vice-president and current deputy leader of the Front for Democracy (Frodebu) party, told AFP late Thursday the sentence by the country's anti-corruption court was made to "remove me from the electoral race."

Bamvuginyumvira was arrested in December 2013 "while having sex... in a house of ill repute". He was later charged with trying to bribe a police officer after his arrest, charges he has denied.

His lawyer Fabien Segatwa said Bamvuginyumvira remained free pending an appeal, but that the sentence removed him from the "election race."

Burundi, a small nation in central Africa's Great Lakes region, emerged in 2006 from a brutal 13-year civil war and its political climate remains fractious ahead of the polls in May and June.

President Pierre Nkurunziza, in power since 2005, is expected to run for a third term in office despite opponents' claims that a new mandate would violate Burundi's constitution.

See also: Man gets 35 years for killing child

"It was expected because the regime of Pierre Nkurunziza has decided to crush the opposition ahead of the elections," Bamvuginyumvira added, who had been tipped as a candidate for the main coalition opposition Democratic Alliance for Change (ADC).

Bamvuginyumvira, a highly respected leader with a reputation for being tough on graft, was Burundi's vice president from 1998 to 2001. He had been touted as one of the most serious potential opposition presidential candidates.

Concern is growing in Burundi over the risk of violence ahead of elections, with a string of attacks including a five-day battle earlier this month between the army and rebels.

Opposition politicians and critics say the government is doing all it can to clamp down on political challengers ahead of the elections, including arrests, harassment and a clampdown on free speech.



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## **Uganda says rebel LRA commander in custody of Central African Republic**

Source: Reuters World Service

**Kampala, 17 January 2015** - Ugandan forces have handed a commander from the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) into the custody of the Central African Republic's government, the Ugandan army said on Saturday, moving his transfer to the International Criminal Court a step closer.

The U.S. army said last week Dominic Ongwen had surrendered, marking a major success in the campaign to crush the LRA, a group that first rose up against Uganda in the late 1980s and which gained a reputation for massacres and mutilating victims.

Ongwen, 34, was in recent days held by the Ugandan contingent of the U.S.-backed AU Regional Task Force, set up to fight the LRA. Uganda had said he would be sent to the court in The Hague by the Central African Republic government.

Uganda's military spokesman, Paddy Ankunda, said in a statement that Ongwen was now in the custody of the Central African Republic. "He was flown to Bangui," he said, before his transfer to The Hague, without saying when that would be.

ICC had issued a warrant to arrest Ongwen for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

## **Surrendered LRA commander moved to Central African Republic**

Source: Associated Press

**Bangui, 17 January 2015** - Authorities in Central African Republic say a Ugandan rebel commander who recently surrendered is now in the capital and awaiting extradition to face international war crimes charges.

Dominic Ongwen is expected to be transferred to the International Criminal Court later Saturday, according to Ghislain Grenzengue, Central African Republic's chief prosecutor.

Ongwen surrendered in a remote part of the country's east near Uganda. He was a longtime commander within the Lord's Resistance Army, a fearsome group blamed for slaughtering countless civilians and forcing others into slave labor.

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The court's warrant of arrest for Ongwen lists seven counts of alleged individual criminal responsibility including crimes against humanity, enslavement, murder and inhumane acts of inflicting serious bodily injury.

## Ugandan rebels kidnap 10 in Congo

Source: dpa Deutsche Presse-Agentur GmbH

**Beni (DRC), 16 January 2015** - A Ugandan rebel group on Friday kidnapped about 10 people in northern Congo, witnesses said.

Those kidnapped by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) included women and local traders. They were abducted outdoors near the village of Pangali in the region of Bondo, said a nurse who witnessed the events and requested anonymity.

Bondo has often been targeted by the LRA, which killed half a dozen people there on January 2, local official Floribert Ekili said.

The group also kidnaps men to force them to become fighters and women to become sex slaves.

The LRA has terrorized East and Central Africa for decades. One of its top commanders, Dominic Ongwen, was arrested last week by US forces in the Central African Republic.

Ongwen is due to face trial before the International Criminal Court in The Hague. The main LRA leader, Joseph Kony, has evaded capture by operating out of dense jungle in Central Africa.

## Un chef de milice anti-balaka arrêté par l'Onu en Centrafrique

Source: Reuters

Par Crispin Dembassa-Kette; Jean-Stéphane Brosse

**Bangui, 18 janvier** - Le parquet centrafricain a annoncé dimanche l'arrestation par la Minusca, la force de l'Onu dans le pays, d'un chef de milice anti-balaka recherché depuis des mois pour meurtre, rébellion, viol ou pillage.

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Rodrigue Ngaibona, dit "Andilo", a été appréhendé samedi à Bouca, à environ 300 km au nord de Bangui, la capitale, a déclaré le procureur général de Bangui, Maurice Dibert Dollet.

Il n'a pas exclu que le suspect soit jugé devant la Cour pénale internationale, qui enquête sur les exactions en République centrafricaine.

"Andilo" a été transféré au cours de la nuit à Bangui et placé en garde à vue. Un mandat d'arrêt avait été diffusé à son encontre en mai dernier.

Les chefs des anti-balaka, qui disent avoir transformé les ex-milices chrétiennes en mouvement politique, ont jugé que l'arrestation de Ngaibona pourrait remettre en cause les efforts de réconciliation.

La République centrafricaine a basculé dans le chaos en 2013 lorsque les rebelles musulmans de l'alliance Séléka ont pris le pouvoir dans le pays à majorité chrétienne. Les abus alors commis par la Séléka ont provoqué par la suite les représailles du camp chrétien ou animiste.

Le pays reste divisé entre le sud à dominance chrétienne contrôlé par le gouvernement et le nord contrôlé par les rebelles et à majorité musulmane.

## Thirteen Burundi sailors missing

Source: By SAPA

**Bujumbura, 15 January 2015** - Thirteen crew of a Burundian vessel are feared to have died on a return trip from Tanzania, the maritime authorities said Thursday.

Maritime authority director Melchior Nahimana said the boat belonging to Burundi's Tanganyika Transport Company had gone missing on Lake Tanganyika after leaving Kasanga port in Tanzania on Tuesday.

The boat was returning from Zambia and made a stopover in Tanzania. It was not carrying passengers. Only one of the 14 crew on board was rescued. He was in too poor a condition to give details on what had happened.

The authorities did not say whether the boat had sunk or give details on the rescue. It was not known if the boat had taken cargo or passengers to Zambia.