

Disclaimer:

This media monitoring is sent to you only for your information. The inclusion of the attached news items is not an endorsement of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region in Africa or that of the United Nations Organization. Further use or distribution of this media monitoring must be guided accordingly.

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



MEDIA MONITORING

20 March 2015

UN envoy outlines progress in DR Congo from ‘shattered’ country to ‘proud nation’

Source: UN News Centre

New York, 19 March 2015 - The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is unified with a “clear, shared and celebrated” identity, the top United Nations envoy there told the Security Council today, as he briefed on the latest developments in the vast African nation.

“It is no longer at war, neither in transition. It is a proud nation,” said Martin Kobler, the Secretary-General’s Special Representative and head of the UN peacekeeping mission in DRC (MONUSCO). “When [the original mission in the country] MONUC arrived, some 15 years ago, the country was socially, economically and politically shattered. When MONUC arrived, the country was at civil war.”

Mr. Kobler, who was joined in briefing the Council by the Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, Said Djinnit, described the Government’s efforts to restore security, saying it had succeeded in freeing a large amount of territory from armed groups, which were now limited to the country’s eastern provinces.

“The overall security situation however is still not stable, let alone irreversible,” he said. “Many still live in fear of rape, fear of attack, fear of being robbed of already meagre possessions. This fear affects every aspect of daily life.”

He said more work was needed to reduce the threat from armed groups and violence against civilians to a level that can be effectively managed by Congolese institutions and to achieve stability through the establishment of functional, professional, accountable State institutions and strengthened democratic practices.

Disclaimer:

This media monitoring is sent to you only for your information. The inclusion of the attached news items is not an endorsement of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region in Africa or that of the United Nations Organization. Further use or distribution of this media monitoring must be guided accordingly.

“Our combined efforts against the ADF, like the operations against the M23 two years ago, has forged a bond between the FARDC [national army] and MONUSCO soldiers: they are now brothers in arms,” said Mr. Kobler, stressing that the FDLR remained the biggest threat to peace and security in the Great Lakes region and stressing the need for joint efforts to tackle that threat.

Mr. Kobler noted that FARDC officers who had formerly commanded units with a credible history of human rights violations were brought in and the UN was forced to suspend participation in and support for operations under their command.

“The decision to suspend support is upholding indisputable values enshrined in the protection of human rights,” he said. “We want to support the fight against the FDLR and implement our human rights policy. We do not want to choose between fighting the FDLR or upholding human rights.”

He said he knew that the Government and President Kabila had a zero-tolerance policy on human rights violations, adding that he was confident that appropriate action would be taken to remedy the “unfortunate situation” soon.

Tackling the FDLR also required a well-functioning demobilization and repatriation process and effective extension of State authority, he said, underscoring the need for non-military initiatives against the FDLR.

“There is no purely military solution to the problem of the FDLR,” he said. “Surrendered FDLR elements are still in the camps of Kanyabayonga, Walungu and Kisangani where they maintain intact a perfectly well functioning military structure. A few FDLR combatants have disarmed, yes, but their demobilization has not yet started, let alone their repatriation.”

As he stressed the need to build an atmosphere of confidence and trust between the Government and MONUSCO, he said the two were aligned on goals, including the wellbeing of the population, bringing an end to violence in the east and the eventual departure of the Mission.

“With more security in more places, the time will come for MONUSCO to begin its gradual drawdown,” he said. “As I have always said: MONUC entered through the west, MONUSCO will exit through the east. MONUSCO will not stay in the DRC forever. We look forward to the day when MONUSCO can leave Congo, with continuing development support transferred to our colleagues in the UN Country Team.”

To ensure that peace was sustainable and that the persistent cycle of violence was disrupted, it was vital to address the root causes of the conflict. One area of focus was on natural resources crime and a task force was working to help safe guard the natural

Disclaimer:

This media monitoring is sent to you only for your information. The inclusion of the attached news items is not an endorsement of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region in Africa or that of the United Nations Organization. Further use or distribution of this media monitoring must be guided accordingly.

wealth of DRC for future generations. It would also work to address the underpinnings of conflict.

Citing figures on the value of illegal natural resources exploitation in eastern DRC of \$1 billion per year, he added that up to 98 per cent of the net profits from illegal natural resources exploitation – mainly gold, charcoal and timber – go to transnational organized criminal networks, as opposed to funding rebel groups.

“How many hospitals could be built if illegal trade would become legal? How many kilometres of road rehabilitated? How many teachers paid?” he asked. “The objective is clear: Turning gold into taxes; turning taxes into schools; turning schools into a prosperous future.”

He also looked ahead to upcoming elections, welcoming the publication of the global electoral calendar and adding that all parties were responsible for ensuring an atmosphere conducive to achieving peaceful elections. He also expressed concern about the recent arrests of several dozen civil society actors.

“The region remains at a crossroads,” Mr. Djinnit told the Council. “Despite notable progress, significant challenges remain to be addressed to achieve the goals in the framework agreement.”

Armed groups had to be neutralised and relations between the countries in the region had to be improved to remove misunderstandings and suspicions, he said, adding that he was keen to support rapprochement to foster a climate of cooperation. In addition, the region was in a “crucial electoral cycle” that would make a major contribution to strengthening democracy and stability.

Over and above those goals, he said it was essential to deal with the deep-seated instability in the DRC. He promised that his office would contribute to all initiatives already underway, prioritising action to achieve sustainable solutions on citizenship and property.

He underlined the importance of civil society and women in implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework – signed by Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, DRC, the Republic of Congo, Rwanda, South Africa, South Sudan, Uganda, and Tanzania – which encompasses commitments at the national, regional and international levels to bring peace and stability to the eastern DRC and the region, and he called for the continued engagement of the Security Council on the issue.

“We have seen considerable progress in overcoming the tragedies of the past,” he said. “But we are yet to achieve irreversible progress.”

Disclaimer:

This media monitoring is sent to you only for your information. The inclusion of the attached news items is not an endorsement of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region in Africa or that of the United Nations Organization. Further use or distribution of this media monitoring must be guided accordingly.

UN envoy urges joint efforts against armed group FDLR

Source: Xinhua News Service

United Nations, 19 March 2015 - The UN envoy to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) on Thursday called for joint efforts to fight the armed group Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) as the country is still facing security threat from the group.

Martin Kobler, the UN Secretary-General's special representative and head of the UN peacekeeping mission in DRC (MONUSCO), made the appeal while briefing the Security Council at a meeting on DRC.

"The overall security situation however is still not stable, let alone irreversible," he said. "Many still live in fear of rape, fear of attack, fear of being robbed of already meagre possessions. This fear affects every aspect of daily life."

More work is needed to reduce the threat from armed groups and violence against civilians to a level that can be effectively managed by Congolese institutions and to achieve stability through the establishment of functional, professional, accountable state institutions and strengthened democratic practices, Kobler said.

The greatest threat to peace and security in the Great Lakes Region remains the FDLR, said Kobler, who stressed the need for joint efforts to fight the armed group.

Tackling the FDLR requires a well-functioning demobilization and repatriation process and effective extension of state authority, he said, underscoring the need for non-military initiatives against the FDLR.

"There is no purely military solution to the problem of the FDLR," he said.

Also on the FDLR, Said Djinnit, the special envoy of the UN chief for the Great Lakes Region who attended the meeting, encouraged the DRC government and the UN Mission to engage in a structured strategic dialogue to resume full cooperation.

"The DRC and the Great Lakes Region have made considerable progress in overcoming the tragedies of the past but they are yet to achieve irreversible progress for lasting peace," Djinnit added.

As the primary remnant Rwandan Hutu rebel group fighting in the eastern part of the DRC, the FDLR is recognized by the Council as a group whose leaders and members were among the perpetrators of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda.

Disclaimer:

This media monitoring is sent to you only for your information. The inclusion of the attached news items is not an endorsement of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region in Africa or that of the United Nations Organization. Further use or distribution of this media monitoring must be guided accordingly.

The eastern DRC has witnessed the threat posed by armed groups to state authority and civilian security since early 2012.

UN calls for return to joint operations against combatants in Congo

Source: dpa Deutsche Presse-Agentur

New York, 19 March 2015 - The United Nations and Congo should work jointly against a group of Rwandan insurgents, a policy that has been rendered impossible because of Congo's insistence on taking unilateral action, warned the UN Thursday.

Briefing the UN Security Council, Martin Kobler, head of the UN peacekeeping mission to Congo, said that the UN and the Congolese government need to stand united against the armed group Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR).

"The greatest threat to peace and security in the Great Lakes Region remains the FDLR," Kobler said.

The joint operation became endangered in January, when Congo opted to carry out military action on its own, with the UN providing logistics, fuel and food rations for troops.

Even that support was suspended last month after the Congolese army appointed two generals accused of human rights violations. The UN has called on Congo to remove generals Bruno Mandevu and Fall Sikabwe, who are on the UN's "red list" for alleged rights violations.

"We should not be divided in this. Operations were jointly planned," Kobler said.

"The decision to suspend support is upholding indisputable values enshrined in the protection of human rights," Kobler said.

"We want to support the fight against the FDLR and implement our human rights policy. We do not want to choose between fighting the FDLR or upholding human rights."

Congolese Foreign Minister Raymond Tshibanda told the council that his country was not aware that the generals had been accused of human rights violations by the UN.

"This situation is not the fault of the DRC [Democratic Republic of Congo]," said Tshibanda.

"The Congolese authorities were not informed before the appointment to the post that the officers were listed as red."

Disclaimer:

This media monitoring is sent to you only for your information. The inclusion of the attached news items is not an endorsement of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region in Africa or that of the United Nations Organization. Further use or distribution of this media monitoring must be guided accordingly.

Tshibanda said that, under UN peacekeeping guidelines, the Congolese government has full autonomy to appoint military personnel, which can be blocked if objections to an appointment are "well documented."

The UN insists that it had drawn the government's attention to the red list.

Military operations were launched when FDLR combatants failed to surrender and demobilize by a January 2 deadline set by the Southern African Development

Community and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region.

The FDLR has been destabilizing the security and humanitarian situation in eastern Congo and also often crosses the border into Rwanda to stage attacks.

DR Congo, UN Security Council at loggerheads over troop drawdown

Source: AFP World News

United Nations, 19 March 2015 - The Democratic Republic of Congo demanded the speedy removal of thousands of peacekeepers Thursday, insisting at a UN Security Council meeting that Kinshasa is ready to assume "full responsibility for its security."

Foreign Minister Raymond Tshibanda urged council members to respect his country's "legitimate aspiration" to assume full control of its security a decade and a half into a UN peacekeeping mission there.

But Martin Kobler, the head of MONUSCO, the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the DR Congo, cautioned that a gradual pullout of troops is needed to minimize the risk of renewed violence in the volatile central African country, home in recent decades to some of the bloodiest outbreaks of violence anywhere in the world.

Kinshasa's President Joseph Kabila has called for a major drawdown of MONUSCO forces, the UN's biggest peace mission.

But Kobler said that while the country may one day be stable enough to protect its people, it hasn't reached that point yet.

"MONUSCO will not stay in the DRC forever," Kobler said.

"However, more needs to be done to reduce the threat from armed groups and violence against civilians to a level that can be effectively managed by Congolese institutions," he said.

Disclaimer:

This media monitoring is sent to you only for your information. The inclusion of the attached news items is not an endorsement of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region in Africa or that of the United Nations Organization. Further use or distribution of this media monitoring must be guided accordingly.

The DRC will only "achieve stability through the establishment of functional, professional and accountable state institutions and through strengthened democratic practices," he said.

The two sides have long been at loggerheads over the timetable for a removal of the UN troops. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in January proposed trimming some 2,000 peacekeepers from MONUSCO, while the DRC is seeking a more substantive immediate drawdown of about 6,000 troops.

In recent years, human rights groups and UN investigators have documented several cases of attacks on civilians by Congolese troops, including widespread rape, notably in the eastern part of the country.

UN officials also are pushing for aggressive efforts to disarm dozens of rebel and splinter groups still intact after two decades of conflict in the eastern DRC, much of it fueled by the lucrative trade in minerals.

Tshibanda said his country has made "major" political and economic progress and had succeeded in getting the upper hand over the Hutu rebels with the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda, accused of fomenting unrest in the east.

The rebels are accused of having played a role in the mass slaughter that year of some 800,000 people in Rwanda -- mainly from the Tutsi minority, before a Tutsi-led rebel front seized power.

Kobler said the presence of armed groups in the east remain a concern as does "the overall security situation" in the DRC, which he said "is still not stable, let alone irreversible."

Many still live in fear of rape, fear of attack, fear of being robbed of already meager possessions," Kobler said.

"This fear affects every aspect of daily life."

Kobler also assailed the arrests several days ago of "over 40 civil society actors" saying that those detentions are evidence of insufficient "political space for civil society" that is needed in order to hold planned elections, which are scheduled for November.

In January, Kinshasa was rocked by bloody protests against a bill seen as an attempt to extend Kabila's 14-year-long hold on power.

Disclaimer:

This media monitoring is sent to you only for your information. The inclusion of the attached news items is not an endorsement of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region in Africa or that of the United Nations Organization. Further use or distribution of this media monitoring must be guided accordingly.

RDC : Redimensionner la Monusco

Source: BBC

20 March 2015 - En dehors de crises courantes que traverse le pays, la tension monte entre le gouvernement congolais et la mission onusienne.

Les deux généraux aux commandes dans l'armée congolaise sont sur la liste rouge de la Monusco, soupçonnés d'avoir commis de graves violations des droits de l'homme.

Cependant, Kinshasa joue la sourde oreille face au refus de la mission de collaborer avec l'armée congolaise dans la traque des FDLR et demande le redimensionnement de la Monusco.

Abordant le point des deux années de mise en œuvre de l'accord cadre pour la paix, la sécurité et la coopération pour la République Démocratique du Congo, l'envoyé spécial du Secrétaire général, Said Djinnit insiste sur la nécessité de maintenir un état de veille dans la région.

Les prochaines élections en RDC constituent l'autre préoccupation du Conseil de sécurité.

Les 15 membres du conseil entendent réagir dans les tout prochains jours avec l'adoption d'une résolution prioritairement sur le redimensionnement de la MONUSCO.

RDC: 180 associations des droits humains veulent un nouveau mandat fort de la Mission de l'ONU

Source: AFP

Kinshasa, 19 mars 2015 - Près de 180 associations congolaises de la société civile et de défense des droits humains ont jugé crucial que le nouveau mandat de la Mission de l'ONU en République démocratique du Congo (Monusco), dont l'exercice actuel se termine fin mars, soit fort afin de stabiliser l'est du pays et garantir des élections apaisées.

La partie orientale de la RDC continue d'être le théâtre de plusieurs affrontements armés. Plusieurs poches d'insécurité persistent dans certaines localités de cette partie du pays avec des dizaines de groupes armés encore actifs, indique le communiqué de 179 associations.

Disclaimer:

This media monitoring is sent to you only for your information. The inclusion of the attached news items is not an endorsement of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region in Africa or that of the United Nations Organization. Further use or distribution of this media monitoring must be guided accordingly.

Il est (...) crucial pour la Monusco d'avoir un mandat fort et d'assurer que celui-ci soit bien respecté sur le terrain. Les soldats de maintien de la paix doivent être prêts à prendre des mesures proactives et concrètes pour protéger les civils en danger, poursuit le texte.

Le climat politique est tendu en RDC, marqué par le débat sur un éventuel troisième mandat du président congolais Joseph Kabila, arrivé au pouvoir en 2001.

En janvier, de violentes manifestations (27 à 42 morts, selon les sources) ont éclaté principalement à Kinshasa en raison d'un projet de révision de la loi électorale qui aurait pu permettre à M. Kabila de rester en poste après fin 2016, date du terme de son mandat, alors que la Constitution lui interdit de briguer un nouveau quinquennat.

Dimanche dernier, une trentaine de personnes a été arrêtée lors d'une rencontre organisée par des militants pro-démocratie congolais, sénégalais et burkinabè.

Depuis, plusieurs personnes ont été relâchées, mais les étrangers ont été expulsés mercredi soir et les Congolais risquent de passer en justice, accusés d'avoir cherché à perturber le processus électoral et démocratique en RDC.

A l'approche de la présidentielle et des législatives prévues en novembre 2016, la Monusco doit être prête et capable de documenter et dénoncer publiquement les violations des droits humains liées aux élections à travers le pays, estiment les associations.

Cela nécessitera une présence forte dans les provinces aussi bien à l'ouest du pays qu'à l'est, ainsi qu'une collaboration renforcée avec la société civile dans toutes les provinces du pays, ajoutent-elles, alors que la mission onusienne compte réduire progressivement ses effectifs.

Les Casques bleus sont présents depuis 1999 en RDC, dont la partie orientale est instable depuis près de 20 ans. La Monusco, aujourd'hui forte de quelque 20.000 hommes, essentiellement déployés dans l'est, ne parvient pas à rétablir la sécurité dans la région aux côtés de l'armée congolaise.

Les relations entre l'armée et la Monusco sont au plus mal depuis que l'ONU a refusé de soutenir la traque des rebelles hutus rwandais des Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR), arguant que deux généraux de l'armée chargés des opérations étaient soupçonnés de violations des droits humains.

D'aucuns se demandent s'il est dans l'intérêt de la RD Congo de renoncer au soutien de la Monusco pourtant bénéfique à des millions de civils pour protéger seulement les

Disclaimer:

This media monitoring is sent to you only for your information. The inclusion of the attached news items is not an endorsement of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region in Africa or that of the United Nations Organization. Further use or distribution of this media monitoring must be guided accordingly.

deux généraux, a souligné jeudi la Voix des sans Voix, l'une des principales ONG congolaises.

Nous ne voulons pas choisir entre lutter contre les FDLR ou faire respecter les droits humains, a affirmé jeudi sur Tweeter le chef de la Monusco, Martin Kobler, actuellement à New-York pour une réunion du Conseil de sécurité consacrée à la RDC.

Congo pushes back against UN peacekeeping force; cut planned

Source: Associated Press

United Nations, 19 March 2015 - Congo's foreign minister says friction with the U.N.'s largest peacekeeping force over human rights violations by two Congolese generals is not his country's fault, and he says the time has come for Congo to take full responsibility for its security.

Foreign Minister Raymond Tshibanda addressed the U.N. Security Council after weeks of tension in which the U.N. force backed out of a joint operation against a rebel force in the eastern part of the country. The U.N. has said the two generals have been heavily involved in "massive human rights violations."

An annoyed President Joseph Kabila wants the U.N. force cut by at least 6,000, and Tshibanda said negotiations start Monday on how to reduce the peacekeeping mission.

Diplomats say a more modest cut of 2,000 is expected.

Central Africa: 11th Meeting of the ICGLR Regional Committee against the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources, Nairobi-Kenya 19th to 20th March 2015

Source: AllAfrica.com

19 March 2015 - Nairobi - Members of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) Regional Committee against the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources [held on] 19th March, 2015 (...) their 11th Meeting at Laico Regency Hotel in Nairobi, Kenya. The two days Committee meeting meets twice a year to follow up on regional and local activities related to the 6 tools that aim to prevent the illegal exploitation of natural resources in Member States.

Disclaimer:

This media monitoring is sent to you only for your information. The inclusion of the attached news items is not an endorsement of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region in Africa or that of the United Nations Organization. Further use or distribution of this media monitoring must be guided accordingly.

The meeting intends to provide latest updates and discuss the implementation status of the six tools to fight the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources in each Member State; Updates by Member States on the implementation of the communiqué adopted by ICGLR Ministers of Mines Meeting on 6th November 2014 in Kinshasa, DRC on the Self-Financing Mechanism of the Regional Initiative on the fight against the illegal exploitation of Natural Resources. Implementation by Conference Secretariat on the recommendations of the previous meetings and the Regional Initiative on the fight against the illegal exploitation of Natural Resources and to consider the EITI implementation report as well as the report on the integration of the Artisanal Small Scale Mining Sector into EITI in MS;

The Pact on Security, Stability and Development of the 12 Member States of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) adopted the Protocol against the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources. The latter is mainly implemented by Member States under the coordination of the Regional Committee on the Regional Initiative against the illegal exploitation of Natural Resources whose mandate is determined by this protocol.

The meeting organised by the ICGLR Secretariat, with the support of GIZ and the ICGLR National Coordination Mechanism in Kenya, is also attended by representatives of the ICGLR Regional Women Forum, Chairman of the Audit Committee, Relevant Conference Secretariat staff, the National Coordination Mechanism in Kenya, and partners in the implementation of the RINR.

Press contact: Macdonald Mwakasendile - ICGLR Communication Officer-Tel: +257 79 856 659

La Suisse préconise la résolution des conflits fonciers pour pacifier la région des grands Lacs

Source: ACP via digitalcongo.net

Le ministre des Affaires foncières Dieudonné Bolengelenge, a reçu mercredi l'ambassadeur de Suisse en RDC, M. Jacques Gremaud venu lui rendre une visite de courtoisie au cours de laquelle le diplomate helvétique a proposé à son Hôte que la résolution des conflits fonciers au niveau régional est une des solutions de parvenir à la pacification de cette région.

Kinshasa, 19 mars 2015 - L'ambassadeur de Suisse en RDC, Jacques Gremaud, a préconisé la résolution des conflits fonciers comme solution première pour ramener la

Disclaimer:

This media monitoring is sent to you only for your information. The inclusion of the attached news items is not an endorsement of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region in Africa or that of the United Nations Organization. Further use or distribution of this media monitoring must be guided accordingly.

paix dans la région de Grands Lacs, à l'issue de la visite de courtoisie qu'il a rendue mercredi au ministre des Affaires foncières, Dieudonné Bolengege.

« La plupart des conflits fonciers au niveau régional voire familial dans nombreux pays ont pour cause principale le domaine foncier », a déclaré M. Jacques Gremaud, précisant que ce secteur fait partie du programme de coopération suisse pour la région des Grands Lacs.

Cette visite lui a permis d'appréhender la vision et la politique du gouvernement dans ce domaine, a-t-il affirmé, en énumérant notamment la vision d'éradication de la mafia foncière.

Les rebelles rwandais interdisent aux habitants de Lubero de sortir de leurs villages

Source: ARI

Kigali, 19 mars 2015 - La société civile du Nord-Kivu indique que les habitants de plusieurs villages situés au Sud de Lubero sont pris en otage par les rebelles rwandais des FDLR qui leur interdisent de sortir de leurs villages.

Selon un communiqué de la société civile, les rebelles rwandais veulent utiliser ces populations comme bouclier humain pour dissuader l'armée congolaise de les attaquer dans ces localités.

« Depuis le début de la semaine, nous sommes alertés sur une certaine virulence de ces rebelles rwandais des FDLR dans les villages de Luofu, Miriki, Kasuho et Bunyatenge. Les populations sont prises en otage par les FDLR. Les FDLR veulent les prendre en bouclier humain pour éviter toute attaque éventuelle des FARDC (Forces Armées de la RDC). Et c'est ce qui fonde d'ailleurs notre inquiétude pour l'instant », indique Omar Kavota, porte-parole de la société civile du Nord-Kivu.

L'armée congolaise a lancé le 24 février dernier une offensive contre les rebelles rwandais des FDLR à partir de la cité d'Uvira au Sud-Kivu.

Une opération similaire est également menée au Nord-Kivu pour traquer ces combattants rwandais, présents sur le territoire congolais depuis plus de 20 ans.

Disclaimer:

This media monitoring is sent to you only for your information. The inclusion of the attached news items is not an endorsement of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region in Africa or that of the United Nations Organization. Further use or distribution of this media monitoring must be guided accordingly.

DR Congo groups seek stronger UN presence ahead of polls

Source: AFP World News

Kinshasa, 19 March 2015 - Nearly 180 civil society and rights groups have urged strengthened powers for the UN mission in DR Congo to ensure peaceful elections due in November and help end unrest in the country's volatile east.

The appeal by the 179 groups came just ahead of the expiry of the UN mission's mandate at the end of the month, and in the wake of political unrest over fears President Joseph Kabila could seek to stay on beyond the end of his mandate by 2016.

The groups said it was vital for the UN mission, known by the French acronym MONUSCO "to have a strong mandate and to ensure that this is respected on the ground."

A strengthened MONUSCO presence was vital for legislative and presidential elections due in November. Protests over Kabila's alleged attempt to seek a third term has claimed up to 42 lives this year, according to rights groups.

The mission "should be ready and capable of documenting and publicly denouncing rights violations linked to the elections nationwide," they said.

"This would involve a strong presence in the provinces ...and deeper collaboration with civil society."

The UN mission has been deployed in DR Congo since 1999 and comprises some 20,000 troops essentially based in the country's east.

"Eastern DRC continues to be the scene of several armed clashes," the groups also said in a joint statement.

"There are several unsafe pockets in this part of the country where dozens of armed groups are still active," they said.

Tens of thousands of people died and more than 100,000 fled their homes during clashes between a militia and army forces in February and March 2013 in the east, according to the UN.

Disclaimer:

This media monitoring is sent to you only for your information. The inclusion of the attached news items is not an endorsement of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region in Africa or that of the United Nations Organization. Further use or distribution of this media monitoring must be guided accordingly.

Rapes of babies surface in DR Congo: Mukwege

Source: AFP World News

Panzi (DRC), 19 March 2015 - Rapes of young children and even babies have surfaced in the Democratic Republic of Congo, further worsening the sexual violence ravaging the country like a "cancer," Denis Mukwege, a global expert on treating gang rape victims, told AFP.

Dr Mukwege, who in November received the European Parliament's Sakharov rights prize, said such atrocities began to surface around a year and half ago, with one recent case involving a girl of around 15 months old.

"How can someone kidnap a child at night and bring her in the bush to rape her?" Mukwege said from his office at a hospital in Panzi, outside the city of Bukavu in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, a region wracked by years of violence.

He said 30 children had been raped in that manner in the nearby village of Kavumu.

"The condition of the babies who arrive to us like that at the hospital is dramatic. These are things that are completely new."

Armed groups vying for control of the region's vast mineral wealth often use mass rape to terrorise the local population.

Mukwege however said fewer rape victims were admitted over the past two years to his hospital as the army carried out offensives against rebel groups and militias in the east.

But at the same time, "several types of rapes that we had not seen before" were rearing their head, he said, referring to the rape of children.

"We now see sexual violence spreading in cities and spreading far from the epicentre in the east," he said. "It's as though rape techniques have been refined."

- 'Impunity for sex offenders' -

Mukwege said this phenomenon was due to two factors: "the general impunity for sexual offenders" and the fact that former fighters were let loose into civil society without adequate support or counselling.

"This evil is spreading in society like cancer," Mukwege said. "We have all ignored the way these people were themselves destroyed. They were both executioners and victims."

Disclaimer:

This media monitoring is sent to you only for your information. The inclusion of the attached news items is not an endorsement of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region in Africa or that of the United Nations Organization. Further use or distribution of this media monitoring must be guided accordingly.

"When you take a child of 10 to 12, teach him how to rape, kill and destroy -- something that he has done for five, six or eight years, and then you place him in society without any treatment, you bring back a dangerous person," said Mukwege, the son of a Pentecostal minister and himself a preacher.

Mukwege said there had been no progress in a controversial tax dispute with Congolese authorities that threatens the very survival of the hospital he founded in 1999.

The Panzi hospital has been locked in a row with tax authorities since late last year, but mediators from the health ministry stress there was no fraud by the clinic. They say that a difference in estimates was due to conflicting "interpretations" of the tax code.

"We haven't been told anything," Mukwege said. "They continue to demand \$600,000 (560,000 euros) but that would mean simply shutting down the hospital."

- 'Speak about the sick' -

Mukwege has launched an impassioned plea for good governance and argues that misrule and insecurity keep the vast, resource-rich African nation in deep poverty.

In 2012, the doctor miraculously escaped a bid to kill him by armed men who temporarily held family members hostage and gunned down his driver.

After more than two months in Europe, Mukwege today moves round his own clinic accompanied by two Pakistani soldiers from the large UN peacekeeping mission in the country.

Heaped with international awards for his medical achievements and ethical stance, Mukwege decisively brushes aside rumours he may harbour presidential ambitions.

In January, Kinshasa was rocked by bloody protests against a bill seen as an attempt to extend President Joseph Kabila's hold on power in the nation he has led for 14 years.

Mukwege fobbed off speculation he was planning to launch a political career ahead of presidential elections due late in 2016.

"Why do people want to talk about something I am not going to do?" he said. "Let us speak about the sick!"

Disclaimer:

This media monitoring is sent to you only for your information. The inclusion of the attached news items is not an endorsement of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region in Africa or that of the United Nations Organization. Further use or distribution of this media monitoring must be guided accordingly.

International court judges recommend starting trial in Congo

Source: Associated Press

The Hague, Netherlands 19 March 2015 - International Criminal Court judges have recommended starting the trial of a former militia leader in Congo, so the case can be brought closer to communities that were affected by the atrocities he is charged with.

If the court's president agrees to the recommendation, it would be the first trial to start outside the ICC's Hague headquarters.

Bosco Ntaganda is charged with crimes including murder, rape, sexual slavery and using child soldiers in the eastern Congolese province of Ituri from 2002-2003. His trial is to start in June.

Ntaganda was indicted in 2006, but the government in Kinshasa did not seek to arrest him until he rebelled as part of a different group, M23. He was sent to the court in 2013 after M23 splintered and he fled to neighboring Rwanda.

U.N. peacekeepers previously supported blacklisted Congo generals

Source: Reuters

Reporting by Michelle Nichols; Editing by Christian Plumb

United Nations, 19 March 2015 - U.N. peacekeepers previously worked with two Democratic Republic of Congo generals accused of abuses, but have refused to support the men in a new campaign against Rwandan rebels because Congolese authorities did not investigate the allegations, said a U.N. envoy on Thursday.

Under the United Nations human rights due diligence policy, the world body has to ensure its support to non-U.N. security forces does not contribute to grave human rights violations.

U.N. peacekeepers and the Congolese army (FARDC) jointly planned a military campaign to take on the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) rebels, which includes former soldiers and Hutu militiamen responsible for Rwanda's 1994 genocide, after it failed to meet a January deadline to disarm.

However the U.N. mission, known as MONUSCO, withdrew its support for the planned offensive after Congo appointed the two generals at the last moment who are on the U.N. mission's red list, which signifies allegations of human rights abuses.

Disclaimer:

This media monitoring is sent to you only for your information. The inclusion of the attached news items is not an endorsement of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region in Africa or that of the United Nations Organization. Further use or distribution of this media monitoring must be guided accordingly.

Martin Kobler, head of the U.N. mission, said that peacekeepers had previously supported one general during a 2010 operation against the Lord's Resistance Army rebel group and the other general last year against the Ituri Patriotic Resistance Force, another insurgent group.

Kobler said MONUSCO had granted waivers "in a too generous way" to allow peacekeepers to previously support the generals despite what he called "a credible history of human rights violations."

"We were giving the waivers in former incarnations because we thought the government was now taking punitive actions and giving the cases to the military prosecutor. This was not done in several cases," he told reporters after briefing the U.N. Security Council. "This is a fight against impunity."

Congolese troops launched their own operation against the FDLR last month and Foreign Minister Raymond Tshibanda told the Security Council that several areas had already been cleared.

He said more than 200 combatants - 91 of which were child soldiers - had already been captured or surrendered.

"The remainder of rebel troops are now going into the deep forest, moving therefore away from the Rwandan border where it was believed they were creating insecurity for our neighbor," Tshibanda said.

The FDLR, made up of an estimated 1,400 fighters, has been at the heart of years of conflict in Central Africa's Great Lakes region.

Kobler said he was confident the government would take appropriate action to remedy the situation with the tarnished generals. "The more we support, the quicker the operations will have success," he said.

He said since 2012 the U.N. mission had screened 2,592 people under the human rights due diligence policy and 118 officers had been classified red. "These 118 are the problem and here we cannot cooperate," Kobler said.

Disclaimer:

This media monitoring is sent to you only for your information. The inclusion of the attached news items is not an endorsement of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region in Africa or that of the United Nations Organization. Further use or distribution of this media monitoring must be guided accordingly.

Kikwete addresses EALA, warns of possible violence in Burundi elections

Source: NTV

Kikwete urged EAC member states to be ready to help restore peace in Burundi if violence erupts after the polls.

19 March 2015 - President of the United Republic of Tanzania Jakaya Kikwete is warning that violence could break out in the Burundi general elections scheduled for 26th June. Kikwete, who is also the chairman of the East African Community, was giving the state of community address to the East African Legislative Assembly sitting in the Burundi capital Bujumbura. Kikwete urged member states to be ready to help restore peace in Burundi if violence erupts after the polls.

La frontière entre la Zambie et la Tanzanie fermée suite à des affrontements

Source: Xinhua

18 March 2015 - Le poste frontière entre la Zambie et la Tanzanie a été fermé suite à des affrontements du côté tanzanien de la frontière, a rapporté mercredi le journal Times of Zambia.

La frontière de Nakonde, située au nord de la Zambie, a été fermée mardi suite à des affrontements entre des partisans de partis politiques dans la ville frontalière tanzanienne de Tunduma pour une parcelle de terre disputée.

Le secrétaire permanent de la province de Muchinga, Bright Nunbwe, a déclaré que les autorités ont fermé la frontière alors que la situation s'est envenimée du côté tanzanien, affectant des centaines de commerçants et de transporteurs proches de la frontière.

La police zambienne a depuis été mise en alerte à la frontière pour s'assurer que la confusion ne se répande pas du côté zambien.

L'officiel a indiqué que le flux du trafic se dirigeant vers la Zambie a été affecté, et que des camions-citernes transportant des produits pétroliers ont été interdits dans un rayon de 10 km de la frontière.

Un grand nombre de négociants transfrontaliers se sont faits bloquer, certains d'entre eux n'ayant même rien pu acheter. La plupart des magasins du côté de la frontière

Disclaimer:

This media monitoring is sent to you only for your information. The inclusion of the attached news items is not an endorsement of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region in Africa or that of the United Nations Organization. Further use or distribution of this media monitoring must be guided accordingly.

tanzanienne ont été fermés, alors que près de 500 camions ont été abandonnés du côté tanzanien de la frontière.

Sudan will not give up 14-Mile to South Sudan: Bashir

Source: Sudan Tribune

Khartoum, 19 March 2015 – The incumbent president and candidate of the ruling National Congress Party for a new mandate reassured East Darfur tribes that his government will not give up the disputed area of 14-Mile to South Sudan.

The 14-Mile area, located between Northern Bahr el Ghazal and East Darfur states, is claimed by Darfur Rizeigat tribe and South Sudanese Malual Dinka. The dispute over this grazing area prevented the operationalisation of the buffer zone and together with Abyei region hamper the normalisation of relations between the two countries.

In a speech delivered at an electoral rally held in the capital of east Darfur El Daein on Thursday, Bashir hailed the participation of the Rizeigat in the war against the South Sudanese rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM).

He further rejected South Sudan's claim over 14-Mile border area and pledged not to concede an inch of the contested grazing area located South to Bahar Al-Arab or Kiir river.

"For those who dare to claim the ownership of 14-Mile, we tell them that this 14-Mile is not yours. Our border includes 14-Mile area and we will not give up an inch of this territory," he said.

Sudan says the region is part of its territory since the British rule and refers to an agreement reached in 1924 by two colonial commissioners of Bahr el-Ghazall and Darfur giving the Rizeigat 40 mile of grazing land south to the Bahr al-Arab/Kiir river.

Bashir also denounced the continuation of the tribal conflict between the Ma'alia and Rizeigat over land ownership and called on two nomadic groups to end this old dispute.

The former officer of the Sudanese army criticised the failure of the traditional leaders of the two tribes to end the conflict during all the past year adding he learnt about it in 1967 when he visited Adila and Abu Karnika at that time.

Over 500 people were killed from both sides since the eruption of the tribal clashes in July 2013. The conflict between the Ma'alia and Rizeigat also displaced [up] to 55,000 civilians.

Disclaimer:

This media monitoring is sent to you only for your information. The inclusion of the attached news items is not an endorsement of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region in Africa or that of the United Nations Organization. Further use or distribution of this media monitoring must be guided accordingly.

Soudan du Sud : les rebelles refusent de finir la guerre, sauf sur victoire militaire d'un camp

Source: VOA

Un porte-parole des rebelles sud-soudanais a estimé à Addis Abeba que le conflit, entré dans son 16e mois au Soudan du Sud, ne se terminerait que par la victoire de l'un des deux camps, rapporte jeudi l'AFP.

20 mars 2015 - Le porte-parole des rebelles a affirmé ne pas croire à une solution diplomatique.

"Les combats continueront jusqu'à ce qu'un camp soit défait" militairement, a déclaré dans la capitale éthiopienne Lony Ngundeng, porte-parole militaire des rebelles fidèles à l'ancien vice-président Riek Machar, qui affrontent depuis décembre 2013 l'armée sud-soudanaise loyale au président Salva Kiir.

"Le monde entier s'est tourné vers le Soudan du Sud, mais la diplomatie n'a rien apporté", a souligné cet ancien colonel de l'armée sud-soudanaise, moins de deux semaines après que les pourparlers à Addis Abeba entre MM. Kiir et Machar destinés à trouver un accord de paix eurent abouti le 6 mars à un constat d'échec.

Après un an de négociations stériles dans la capitale éthiopienne, qui n'ont abouti qu'à une série de cessez-le-feu jamais respectés, les deux dirigeants n'ont pas réussi à se mettre d'accord sur une formule de partage du pouvoir, suscitant la colère de la médiation de l'Igad, organisation intergouvernementale est-africaine.

Des observateurs ont accusé MM. Kiir et Machar de continuer de privilégier la solution militaire au conflit durant leurs discussions et de ne pas être sincères dans les négociations.

"Même si un accord de paix était signé, comment allez-vous convaincre les gens dont la famille a été tuée de l'accepter?", a poursuivi Lony Ngundeng, tout en assurant que, malgré le récent constat d'échec, les pourparlers de paix "n'étaient pas terminés" et pourraient reprendre.

L'actuel conflit au Soudan du Sud, indépendant depuis juillet 2011 seulement, a éclaté le 15 décembre 2013 à Juba au sein de l'armée sud-soudanaise, minée par les antagonismes politico-ethniques alimentés par la rivalité entre MM. Kiir et Machar à la tête du jeune régime sud-soudanais.

Disclaimer:

This media monitoring is sent to you only for your information. The inclusion of the attached news items is not an endorsement of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region in Africa or that of the United Nations Organization. Further use or distribution of this media monitoring must be guided accordingly.

Des groupes armés et milices tribales se sont joints aux combats qui se sont rapidement propagés ailleurs dans le pays et se sont accompagnés de massacres et atrocités contre les civils sur des bases ethniques.

Central African Republic Militia Clash with UN Troops in Capital

Source: Bloomberg

By Jean-Louis Gondamoyen

20 March 2015 - United Nations troops seized heavy weapons in the capital of Central African Republic after fighting with members of a militia group that controls the city.

The fighting began after mainly Christian anti-balaka militias in Bangui opened fire on French soldiers patrolling a neighborhood known as the 4th arrondissement, Sgt. David Mbono, part of the Congolese UN contingent, said in an interview on Tuesday. UN troops weren't injured in the clashes, which lasted almost three hours, he said. Igor Lamaka, a spokesman for the anti-balaka militia, said by phone that the French hadn't asked for permission to enter the area.

"The government welcomes the actions of the international forces who showed the anti-balaka that the 4th arrondissement is not an occupied territory," Nicaise Samedi Karnou, the minister of public security, said by phone.

The Central African Republic has been gripped by lawlessness since Seleka, an alliance of mainly Muslim anti-government militias, overthrew Christian President Francois Bozize in March 2013. The takeover was marked by the widespread killing of civilians. A transitional government that came to power in January 2014 has yet to extend its authority beyond the capital, Bangui.

The Red Cross deposited the bodies of four militia members and two civilians at the morgue on Tuesday, Bruno Yanganda, a local Red Cross coordinator, said in an interview.

To contact the reporter on this story: Jean-Louis Gondamoyen in Bangui at jgondamoyen@bloomberg.net

To contact the editors responsible for this story: Nasreen Seria at nseria@bloomberg.net Karl Maier

Disclaimer:

This media monitoring is sent to you only for your information. The inclusion of the attached news items is not an endorsement of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region in Africa or that of the United Nations Organization. Further use or distribution of this media monitoring must be guided accordingly.

Almost all mosques destroyed in Central African Republic unrest

Source: AP

United Nations, 18 March 2015 - Almost all of the 436 mosques in the Central African Republic have been destroyed by months of vicious fighting between Christians and Muslims, the US ambassador to the United Nations said on Tuesday, calling the devastation "kind of crazy, chilling."

Samantha Power spoke to reporters after a Security Council visit last week to the country. She expressed concern about an upcoming possible security vacuum as European Union and French forces pull out and a UN peacekeeping force is still not at full strength.

At least 5,000 people have been killed since Central African Republic exploded into unprecedented sectarian violence in December 2013. Nearly 1 million of the Texas-sized country's 4.5 million residents have been displaced. Many of those who have fled are Muslim.