

Report # 118
BUSINESS AND POLITICS IN THE MUSLIM WORLD
Central Africa
Hafiz Akif Naeem
Weekly Report from 2 May to 8 May 2010
Presentation: 12 May 2010

1. Politics

Rwanda: Revelations of the Real Evil Intentions of the Self-Professed Humanitarian, Paul Rusesabagina

The New Times

In a court appearance of the would-be presidential candidate, Ms Victoire Ingabire, the prosecutor's witnesses revealed much more than had been expected by the less suspecting.

Indeed, while talking about their relationships with the FDU-Inkingi president, Lt. Col Tharcisse Nditurende and Lt. Col Noel Habiyambere, who used to hold senior positions in the FDLR (Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda) command, bluntly revealed having worked with Ingabire and Paul Rusesabagina to form rebel groups to launch offensives in the country.

Lt. Col Noel Habiyambere, who testified to have worked with Paul Rusesabagina following his desertion of FDLR, revealed that he is the one who informed the latter of Ingabire and Nditurende's plans for establishing a military faction to be named FDU-Inkingi/CDF.

Lt Col Noel Habiyambere further revealed that following this revelation, Rusesabagina recommended that the two former FDLR officers join hands to form a much bigger group.

Nditurende and Habiyambere confessed to the court that prior to their arrest, they were mobilizing FDLR fighters to quit and join Ingabire's FDU-Inkingi/CDF and Rusesabagina's PDR-Ihumure.

According to evidence proffered by the prosecution witnesses, Ingabire and Rusesabagina continued to send money to their vanguard commanders through Western Union to help them in their groundwork activities and also to sustain them in the jungles of North Kivu as well as help them to acquire guns and ammunition for the would-be military wing of the so-called opposition groups.

Although these revelations could appear shocking to some, especially as far as the self-paraded humanitarian Rusesabagina is concerned, those who have in the past read this column will, I believe see it as further evidence on the true character and intentions of Rusesabagina.

As a matter of fact, two years back, we in this column exposed to our readers how Rusesabagina was defrauding western audiences of their hard-earned money for supposedly humanitarian activities which he pretended to be carrying out while he was in reality channeling it to terrorists.

Indeed the latest confessions are evidence of this man who has on record earned a fortune out of a concocted role during the genocide as depicted in the Hotel Rwanda movie.

We described how Rusesabagina and his PDR-Ihumure, after spending time parading as humanitarian and failing to entrench his negationist and revisionist approach on Rwanda's recent history, he could no longer hide his true identity and ideology that is deeply rooted in the infamous Parme hutu which led to the genocide.

Indeed, after amassing hefty sums of money from the movie "Hotel Rwanda", Rusesabagina swiftly changed his carrier and became a politician, hoping to topple the current regime in Rwanda.

He invested in the PDR-Ihumure party, composed of ideologues of Hutu extremists and genocide suspects and has been trotting the world, spreading negative propaganda against the Rwandan Government while subtly portraying himself as the only effective alternative.

We have exposed how he has been ever since closely working with sworn enemies of Rwanda like Charles Onana, Pierre Péan and the Philpots who are all notoriously known for their negationism and closeness with genocide suspects.

These individuals and PDR-Ihumure have like other Rwandan subversive groups in western capitals, been involved in machinations to deny prior preparation of the genocide, and depict genocide as a mere product of a popular furor caused by the death of President Habyarimana.

That is why the fabricated "hero", after aligning with the said Péan, Mushayidi and other insignificant disgruntled individuals to demonize the current Rwandan regime, they proceeded to create a sort of platform consisting of Ingabire's FDU-Inkingi, Rusesabagina's PDR-Ihumure and Mushayidi's Partenariat-Intwari in a move aimed at ensuring better coordination to achieve their evil intentions.

And as if aimed at showing where their sympathy lies, the platform members indeed quickly aligned themselves along the FDLR terrorist group's stand espousing its denouncing of the internationally supported November 09, 2007 Nairobi agreement

between the Governments of Rwanda and DRC to use every means to stop the mayhem caused by this genocidaire organization.

They shamelessly stated in their communiqué that " the presence of Rwandan armed groups in the East of the RDC is a consequence and not the reason of the instability and the insecurity in the region..!" And despite the well documented FDLR atrocities committed against the Congolese population, Rusesabagina still sheds crocodile tears for the same population but avoids mentioning the FDLR as the real perpetrators.

Thus, in feigned compassion for the said population, he once again advocated, in a debate two weeks ago on BBC Imvo n'Imvaho program, for an uncalled for dialogue between the Rwandan government and the group of murderers which he continues to consider legitimate.

We are yet to uncover the reasons behind the timely coincidence of the presence of both Ms Victoire Ingabire and Deo Mushayidi in the region around the same time. It is also, no wonder that Rusesabagina cunningly stayed away as to see what his accomplices would achieve on the terrain while most certainly double-crossing them and as always, opportunistically hoping for the best that would come his way in line with his evil ambition.

Indeed, as their unfortunate plans are being exposed, Rusesabagina has re-energized what he excels in, blackmail. He has of recent aggressively resumed his quest for audiences for luring into giving him more money to refurbish his coffers as it seems his previous investment went to waste following the arrest of his accomplices that are now in the hands of the Rwandan justice.

Having nothing to offer, Paul Rusesabagina has once again taken up the role of spokesperson for the negationists and revisionists of the 1994 genocide. He has maintained a hateful propaganda full of falsehoods and misinformation directed against the government of Rwanda, by raising all sorts of allegations and fabrications aimed at undermining the RPF party and its leadership.

In a lecture he held at Uppsala University in Sweden on April 27, 2010, he shamelessly sustained among other incongruities that " the genocide was a spontaneous and not planned event and that Theoneste Bagosora was wrongfully convicted the Gacaca convicts are taken into DRC to work in mineral deposits the government used helicopters to bombard refugees in Kibeho, etc, etc.

We can only encourage the general public to challenge this dubious individual and deny him open-ended platforms for defrauding the western unsuspecting audiences while also dispelling his falsehoods against Rwanda.

Indeed it is high time members of the International Community disassociated themselves from sworn liars like Rusesabagina and for Rwandan Diaspora members to give their

own contribution in exposing these shameless evil ridden individuals that would only want Rwanda back in the apocalypse of 1994.

We are however now convinced that with more concerted efforts and a determination to deliver to the never again noble cause, the remaining unsuspecting audience will dump him particularly following the exposure of his dirty secrets by his accomplices who are now facing the courts of law.

muhetofe@gmail.com

Rwanda: Ingabire's Other Co-Accused Appears in Court

The New Times

Kigali — A new accomplice in the case involving Victoire Ingabire Umuhuza, was yesterday arraigned before the Gasabo Intermediate Court for mention of his charges.

Capt. Jean Marie Vianney Karuta is accused of being a member a terrorist group and planning activities aimed at causing state insecurity.

Appearing before Judge Maurice Mbishibishi and flanked by his lawyer, Joseph Ngabonziza, Karuta a former FDLR (Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda) officer pleaded guilty.

"I accept everything that the prosecution has against me and I plead guilty; however, I am no longer a security threat that is why I am applying for bail," Karuta told the Court.

He admitted having met with Ingabire and the Secretary General of FDU-Inkingi Jean Baptiste Mberabahizi in Kinshasa, DRC, and briefed them on the situation of his forces in the Congo jungles and what was required to boost them.

According to the prosecutor, Richard Muhumuza, the accused joined the FDLR in November 1998, after completing military training and other military courses in Congolese military academies.

He said that Karuta later defected from FDLR together with Lt. Col Tharcisse Nditurende and Lt. Col Noel Habiyakare and joined hands to form the FDU-Inkingi's armed wing, CDF-Inkingi, whose main aim was to destabilize security in the country.

The two Colonels are also on remand and have pleaded guilty of having acted in cohorts with Ingabire to form the rebel movement.

Dressed in a black andarmy-green shirt, a leather jacket and black trousers, Karuta pleaded with the court to be released on bail.

"I have been willingly admitting to the charges and I am ready to cooperate with the court," Karuta pleaded.

The prosecution immediately objected arguing that the charges were serious and that he should remain in detention in the course of the trial.

Judge Bishibishi set the bail ruling for Monday afternoon.

The same court last month granted Ingabire provisional release but Nditurende and Habiyakare were denied this on basis that they have no permanent residence in Rwanda, having fled the country immediately after the Genocide.

Rwanda: Ingabire Accomplice to Appear in Gasabo Court Today

The New Times

Kigali — Lt. Jean Marie Karuta, one of the suspects accused alongside Victoire Ingabire Umuhiza, for planning activities aimed at causing state insecurity, will today be arraigned before a judge at Gasabo Intermediate Court.

He is the third suspect, after Lt. Col Tharcisse Nditurende and Lt. Col Noel Habiyambere, who were the senior commanders of the FDLR (Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda), to be charged with the crime.

The duo admitted last week before Judge Maurice Mbishibishi to have worked with Ingabire to form an armed group.

They revealed that Ingabire and the Secretary General of FDU Inkingi, Jean Baptiste Mberabahizi, met Nditurende's representative Lt. Karuta Jean Marie in Kinshasa where they discussed and drew a list of what was needed to start the armed group.

Karuta was arrested on Rwandan territory while carrying out criminal activities.

Rwanda: Kagame Sweeps RPF Primaries in the Southern Province

The New Times

Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF-Inkotanyi) members in the eight districts of the Southern Province over the week-end voted overwhelming for incumbent President Paul Kagame as their party candidate at the district level.

The primaries are part of the process to select a candidate to represent the party in the forthcoming Presidential elections slated for August 9 this year.

Results from several districts of the Province show that Kagame carried the districts of Gisagara, Muhanga, Nyamagabe and Ruhango.

According to Fidele Ndayisaba, the RPF-Inkotanyi chairman in the Province, party primaries have given party members right from the village level a chance to decide who their next leader will be. This is contrary to the past where the party candidate was decided at the National Congress.

"Party primaries have shown how RPF is popular right from the village level, party members have overwhelmingly voted for incumbent President Paul Kagame and we hope he will lead the party in this year's Presidential polls," said Ndayisaba.

In Gisagara district, Kagame's challenger; Leandre Karekezi polled 104 votes of the 328 votes cast. The party primaries will continue at the Provincial level on May 9 this month culminating in the National Executive elections where the party candidate for the August presidential polls will be unveiled.

2. Peace keeping/ Conflict Resolution and Security matters

Congo-Kinshasa: Kinshasa Rejects Report of Congolese Army Atrocities

IPS

Mbandaka — A report alleging that government troops summarily executed fifty civilians in early April in fighting around Mbandaka, the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo's northwestern Équateur Province has been rejected by the government.

"About fifty Congolese civilians were killed without warning by the Congolese Armed Forces (known by its French acronym, FARDC) in April 2010," says a report by human rights group ASADHO (Association africaine de défense des droits de l'homme), a group based in Kinshasa, capital of Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

The report also held the Eyélé rebels for the murder of two civilians.

The report lists the victims, and claims that the killings took place while the FARDC was confronting a local rebellion that briefly took control of the airport in Mbandaka.

At a press conference on Apr. 22, Lambert Omalanga Mende, Congolese Minister of Communications and Media, said the report was riddled with inaccuracies. "It was shown that no ASADHO researchers went to Équateur to investigate the allegations contained in the report," he said.

Marie Frechon / MONUC

Mende said that neither the (provincial) Governor Jean-Claude Baender nor any member of his government, the mayor and councillors of Mbandaka, nor General Ekutsu and his

staff of the Third Military Region, nor General Gideon and his police collaborators, or any magistrates remember having met with ASADHO investigators.

The minister said this strips of any credibility the report's claim that investigators had met politico-administrative, judicial, military and police authorities and rejected ASADHO's call for an independent commission be established to shed light on the circumstances around the killings.

Responding without giving details of the researchers who carried out the research, George Kapiamba, vice president of ASADHO, told IPS that "the investigation was indeed carried out by a team of professionals on the ground in Équateur."

A source close to the provincial government who spoke on condition of anonymity told IPS that the report has merit.

"The ASADHO report is quite true on the whole as there were indeed massacres, although it may appear to have exaggerated the number of victims, which does not change the fact that the FARDC executed innocent civilians."

Pierre Bofunda, a former soldier turned human rights advocate, also supported ASADHO's claims of extra-judicial killings by the army. "For example, Monday, April 19, a student and a young pregnant woman were executed at their home in the 'Bolenge pêcheur' neighborhood, about 10 km from the town of Mbandaka."

Bofunda says that continuing insecurity in the province is due to FARDC troops attacking people at night, stealing money, mobile phones and any valuables found on their victims.

"Besides, the provincial governor who attended the open hearing after the double murder of Apr. 19, organised a major campaign the following day against the prevailing insecurity in the province by inviting citizens to take the streets and make an uproar when a neighbor is attacked or when they hear of a case," said Bofunda.

"What do they have to lose by taking the content of this report and launching a proper investigation in collaboration with its authors?" asked Sophie Ekanga, a teacher from Mbandaka. She said she was disgusted that the Congolese authorities were again placing so little value on human life.

Few expect that anyone there will be an investigation, or that anyone will be prosecuted if executions are found to have taken place. Cyprian Abangapakwa, a retired judge, said "The Congolese judicial system, known to be very weak, is not the best institution for the job. Its members can still participate in a investigating committee.

"The fourteen Mbandaka magistrates - ill-equipped, poorly paid, badly housed, scattered throughout the city - are unable to carry out a proper investigation."

Rwanda: Police, RDF Receive Speed Boats

The New Times

Bugesera — The Minister of Agriculture, Dr. Agnes Kalibata, handed over 25 boats worth Rwf 346m to Rwanda National Police (RNP) and Rwanda Defence Forces (RDF) to be used by marines of the two institutions to fight crimes that affect food production around the lakes.

The function took place on the shores of L. Mirayi in Gashora Sector, Bugesera district.

The Minister of Defence, Gen. James Kabarebe received the boats on behalf of the RDF and Musa Fazil Harelimana, the Minister of Internal Security, on behalf of Police

"We found it imperative to protect these lakes which in the end would see increased production from these waters, thus ensuring food security," Kalibata said

She singled out water hyacinth, predator fishing and using unauthorized fishing nets as some of the crimes that have been affecting production on lakes.

"With the help of the police and the army, we believe these hindrances will be done away with and will ensure smooth running of activities in these lakes which will lead to development."She appealed to hundreds of local residents who attended the function to consider this support as theirs and partner with police and army to fight all kinds of crime on the lakes.

Addressing the gathering, Kabarebe observed that lakes in the country have been underutilized and that partnership with other institutions will boost the fishing industry in the country, hence development.

"The security we aim at is getting out of poverty, getting education," Kabarebe said. "Together we can achieve the security the country is aiming at."

Harelimana thanked President Paul Kagame for building supporting institutions, which he described as rare in other countries. He also warned all those who have been indulging in criminal activities around the lakes to desist.

The use of unauthorized fishing nets has been rampant on several lakes in the country. Lakes have also been considered one of the routes to smuggling from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi.

The donation was funded by Africa Development Bank through Inland Lakes Integrated Development and Management Support Project (PAIGELAC) which operates under the Ministry of Agriculture. The boats will be used in fighting crimes in the 17 inland lakes in partnership with fish cooperative societies.

The function was also attended by the Environment Minister, Stanislas Kamanzi, the Commissioner General of Police, Emmanuel Gasana and the Governor of the Eastern Province, Ephraim Kabayija, among others.

Congo-Kinshasa: UN Blue Helmets Assist Locals After Boat Capsizes, Killing Dozens

UN News Service

United Nations peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) are helping residents in the eastern province of Maniema to cross the Congo River after a traditional wooden boat carrying up to 120 people capsized, killing dozens of passengers.

"So far, 42 people have survived. Out of those, 16 are hospitalized. Between 60 and 80 people are missing," Madnodje Mounoubai, a spokesperson for the UN Mission in the DRC (MONUC), told the UN News Centre.

As the search for more survivors continues, local authorities and MONUC have worked together to get a ferry running back and forth over the river.

"MONUC has provided 80 litres of fuel and is going to give another 120 litres of fuel to operate the ferry," Mr. Mounoubai said.

Fearing more possible incidents from overcrowding, authorities yesterday prohibited the use of the traditional boats to cross the river.

With neglected roads and railways, boats are the main way of traversing the vast African country which is emerging from years of instability and civil unrest.

This is the second boat-related emergency that peacekeepers in the country have assisted with in the past month. MONUC peacekeepers rescued 25 passengers stranded on Lake Kivu in early April after a ferry boat they had boarded ran aground on rocks. There were no injuries in that incident.

Kinshasa Rejects Report of Congolese Army Atrocities **Emmanuel Chaco**

IPS

"About fifty Congolese civilians were killed without warning by the Congolese Armed Forces (known by its French acronym, FARDC) in April 2010," says a report by human rights group ASADHO (Association africaine de défense des droits de l'homme), a group based in Kinshasa, capital of Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

The report also held the Eyélé rebels for the murder of two civilians.

The report lists the victims, and claims that the killings took place while the FARDC was confronting a local rebellion that briefly took control of the airport in Mbandaka.

At a press conference on Apr. 22, Lambert Omalanga Mende, Congolese Minister of Communications and Media, said the report was riddled with inaccuracies. "it was shown that no ASADHO researchers went to Équateur to investigate the allegations contained in the report," he said.

Mende said that neither the (provincial) Governor Jean-Claude Baender nor any member of his government, the mayor and councillors of Mbandaka, nor General Ekutsu and his staff of the Third Military Region, nor General Gideon and his police collaborators, or any magistrates remember having met with ASADHO investigators.

The minister said this strips of any credibility the report's claim that investigators had met politico-administrative, judicial, military and police authorities and rejected ASADHO's call for an independent commission be established to shed light on the circumstances around the killings.

Responding without giving details of the researchers who carried out the research, George Kapiamba, vice president of ASADHO, told IPS that "the investigation was indeed carried out by a team of professionals on the ground in Équateur."

A source close to the provincial government who spoke on condition of anonymity told IPS that the report has merit.

"The ASADHO report is quite true on the whole as there were indeed massacres, although it may appear to have exaggerated the number of victims, which does not change the fact that the FARDC executed innocent civilians."

Pierre Bofunda, a former soldier turned human rights advocate, also supported ASADHO's claims of extra-judicial killings by the army. "For example, Monday, April 19, a student and a young pregnant woman were executed at their home in the 'Bolenge pêcheur' neighborhood, about 10 km from the town of Mbandaka."

Bofunda says that continuing insecurity in the province is due to FARDC troops attacking people at night, stealing money, mobile phones and any valuables found on their victims.

"Besides, the provincial governor who attended the open hearing after the double murder

of Apr. 19, organised a major campaign the following day against the prevailing insecurity in the province by inviting citizens to take the streets and make an uproar when a neighbor is attacked or when they hear of a case," said Bofunda.

"What do they have to lose by taking the content of this report and launching a proper investigation in collaboration with its authors?" asked Sophie Ekanga, a teacher from Mbandaka. She said she was disgusted that the Congolese authorities were again placing so little value on human life.

Few expect that anyone there will be an investigation, or that anyone will be prosecuted if executions are found to have taken place. Cyprian Abangapakwa, a retired judge, said "The Congolese judicial system, known to be very weak, is not the best institution for the job. Its members can still participate in a investigating committee.

"The fourteen Mbandaka magistrates - ill-equipped, poorly paid, badly housed, scattered throughout the city - are unable to carry out a proper investigation."

3. Human Rights/ Social Issues

Rwanda: FESPAD 2010 to Proceed Despite Presidential Polls

The New Times

Doreen Umutesi 7 May 2010

[Email](#)|[Print](#)|[Comment](#)

Share:

Kigali — The 7th Edition of the Pan African Dance Festival (FESPAD 2010) will be staged in the last week of July, according to officials.

This was announced Wednesday evening during an event to launch the preparation of the high level week-long festivals slated to run between July 24 and 31.

FESPAD, which brings together participants from various countries across the globe, aims at showcasing the culture of these countries through music and dance.

"Most people were wondering whether the festival would not be affected by the Presidential elections since it's a week prior to Election Day, however, the elections for celebration, so it is good timing," said Joseph Habineza, Minister of Culture and Sports.

FESPAD 2010 will, according to officials, be spectacularly organized and will for the first time in the history of the biannual festival, feature a beauty contest for Miss FESPAD 2010.

It will also feature an International Conference for developing wealth opportunities from the African Cultural Heritage.

Relevant Links

Central Africa

Rwanda

The beauty contest that represents the reflection of the African beauty is the first of its kind and the contestants will come from the participating countries.

At least 31 African countries are expected to attend while invited countries outside the African continent include China, Japan, Vietnam, France and Spain.

Emmanuel Bugingo, the Managing Director FESPAD said that the performances will take place both in Kigali City and other provinces of the country.

"The event is a platform for encounters, exchange of experiences and development of African cultures in their diversity through traditional dances," said Bugingo.

AFRICA: MPs push for continent-wide FGM/C ban

Photo: Bryna Hallam/IRIN

Passing laws against FGM/C will not work without getting villagers on board: community educators in Sierra Leone (file photo)

DAKAR, 5 May 2010 (IRIN) - Parliamentarians from all over Africa are pushing for a continent-wide ban on female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) and are calling on the UN to pass a General Assembly resolution appealing for a global FGM/C ban, as it violates human rights, they say.

Some 17 African states have banned FGM/C, among them Burkina Faso, Togo, Senegal and Uganda.

Members of parliament (MPs) from African nations met in Dakar 3-4 May to exchange lessons learned and actions to take to achieve the ban and resolution. While national human rights laws, and regional treaties such as the 2003 Africa Union Maputo Declaration refer directly or indirectly to FGM/C, separate laws must be passed to address it head-on, said delegates.

Morissanda Kouyaté, representative of the NGO Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices, told delegates: "There is a lot of disparity here. Some countries have passed laws, others have none; and some have laws that are not applied."

Some governments are fully engaged and ready for change, but others, like Sierra Leone, which has high prevalence rates, will take years to shift, said Chris Baryomunsi, an MP from Kanungu in western Uganda.

Decades, not years

Ugandan MP Baryomunsi told IRIN governments should not under-estimate how long it takes to change people's minds on FGM/C: in Uganda it took two decades to get communities on board, he said.

"People have to want the law, otherwise you can't enforce it," he told IRIN.

Uganda passed a law banning FGM/C on 17 March 2010. Baryomunsi has been advocating change since 1990, in what was then a tough climate with several local authorities trying to pass laws to make FGM/C mandatory.

Over many years their views shifted and several of them switched sides to become strong advocates for a nationwide ban, he said.

"Then MPs who wanted to ban FGM/C were voted out of parliament, but now it's the reverse."

Senegal and Togo which banned FGM/C in 1999 and 1998 respectively, were some of the earliest African countries to do so. They have seen what works and what does not, and shared their lessons with others.

N'Deye Soukeye Gueye, head of the Ministry of the Family and advocate of the FGM/C ban in Senegal, told IRIN getting the head of state involved was vital to win over powerful religious leaders.

Advocacy to bring them on board continued before, during and after legislation, she stressed. "Passing the law is just the middle step in a much longer process."

Of 5,000 Senegalese villages targeted by the two national NGOs Tostan and COSEPRAT, 71 percent had abandoned the practice by 2005, according to a government evaluation.

NGOs and UN agencies are instrumental in changing people's attitudes to FGM/C, but ultimately the government has to lead the fight, agreed Baryomunsi. "Many countries leave the struggle to NGOs and UN agencies - but it is governments who sign treaties and enforce the law, and they must lead," he told IRIN.

The Ugandan government puts US\$50 million a year towards implementing the ban, with the UN Population Fund and other agencies providing significant supplementary funds "to make the law bite", he said.

International legislation needed

However, no matter how strong national legislation is, if neighbouring countries do not also pass a ban, people will simply cross borders to undergo the procedure, Togo MP Christine Mensah Atoemne, told IRIN.

In Togo girls travel to Benin, Ghana and Burkina Faso to undergo FGM/C, she pointed out. "We have to develop cross-border strategies to eradicate the phenomenon," she said, adding that FGM/C rates are 6 percent in central Togo and 15 percent in border areas.

In Senegal rates are highest in Podor and Matam on the Mauritania border, and Tambacounda in the eastern-central part of the country, according to Gueye.

Meanwhile, in Dakar delegates put the final touches to the draft resolution they plan to push at the UN General Assembly and pass this year, as well as a list of actions for African heads of state to take to ban the practice when they meet for the African Union summit in Kampala, Uganda, in July.

"We think a GA [General Assembly] resolution will be passed," said Gueye, "There is unanimity in this room. It is ambitious but we need to think on a grand scale."

Rwanda: Human Rights Record Impressive: UN Official

The New Times

Sam Nkurunziza 7 May 2010

[Email](#)|[Print](#)|[Comment](#)

Share:

Karongi — The Human Rights Advisor to the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), Oumar Kane, has described Rwanda's progress in observation of human rights as impressive and promising.

Speaking to The New Times during the national workshop on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Kane said; "we have to appreciate that just 16 years after the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, Rwanda has registered a lot of progress in terms of observing fundamental human rights."

The UPR is process that assesses the human rights situation of all 192 UN Member States on a four-year basis.

The three-day workshop in Karongi brought together members of the taskforce charged with drafting the report on Rwanda's human rights situation.

The taskforce operates under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Kane emphasized that the situation in the country has greatly improved, especially regarding the promotion of women's rights.

"Rwanda certainly is facing some challenges and it is important that the country also adopts the process of UPR since the goal is to improve the human rights situation in all the countries of the world," Kane said.

He pointed out that the UPR provides Rwanda with the possibility of showcasing actions it has taken to improve the human rights situation in the country.

Speaking at the event, the permanent secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Eugene Munyakayanza, underscored that the UPR was of paramount importance to the government.

Relevant Links

Central Africa

Rwanda

Human Rights

"The process is of paramount importance to our government for it will provide useful skills and knowledge on the preparation and presentation of a high-quality report to the human rights council," he said.

"I can assure you that many outstanding and impressive achievements have been registered in this field, and we have to do everything possible to show the world the real picture of our country," he added.

The UPR report should be ready in February next year but the drafting process on the elaboration of the state report is expected to be completed before August this year.

The workshop ends today.

Rwanda: Gaming Corp Honours Genocide Victims

The New Times

Saul Butera 7 May 2010

[Email](#)|[Print](#)|[Comment](#)

Share:

Kigali — Over 100 staff of Rwanda Gaming Corporation (RGC) on Tuesday visited Kigali Memorial Centre, Gisozi to pay their respects to the more than one million people who lost their lives during the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.

During the visit, Rwf 800,000 was donated to the centre.

Speaking after touring the centre, RGC's Chief Executive Officer, Philip Brizoua, said the purpose of the visit was to join the nation in paying respects to the victims.

"We condemn what we have just seen here and we strongly denounce what happened in 1994. We hope everyone joins hands with the government to help rebuild the nation" Brizoua said.

After paying respects at the centre, RGC employees visited Village of Hope, an orphanage in Kimironko where they also donated Rwf0.5m to help the orphans. The orphanage is home to over 300 orphans in child-headed homes.

Brizoua praised the children's courage in taking care of other children and also advised them to strive to uphold the 'Never again' slogan for the better future of the nation.

Rwanda: Indian Varsity Alumni Launched

The New Times

Charles Kwizera 6 May 2010

[Email](#)|[Print](#)|[Comment](#)

Share:

Kigali — An association of former students of Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT) was Tuesday launched in Rwanda by the Minister of Education, Dr. Charles Murigande.

Speaking during the ceremony, Murigande, thanked VIT owner, Dr. Viswanathan for his contribution to the development of Rwanda's human resources by opening the doors of the university to Rwandan students.

The institute has seen over 100 Rwanda students go through it in the fields of IT and Business Management. VIT has been in partnership with the government since 2002.

Murigande called on the alumni to work hard to achieve their goals.

"You should be very hard working, work with integrity and love. You must be able to share knowledge and opportunities and always show care, not only to the members of the association, but also to other people," he counselled.

Viswanathan commended the government for striving to transform the country into a knowledge-based society.

"With all these plans the government has set out to accomplish, countries will soon be sending their students to come and study in Rwanda in a few years," he said.

Relevant Links

Central Africa

Rwanda

Education

On behalf of the former students, Dr. Papias Musafiri, who is currently the Vice Rector in charge of Academics at SFB said they were going to do their best in paying back to their country and thanked the government for enabling them further their studies.

The ceremony which took place at the School of Finance and Banking (SFB) saw Rwanda become the first country to create the Vellore Institute of Technology Alumni Association (VITAA) in Africa.

VITAA has chapters in the Americas, Europe, Australia and all over Asia in which thousands of former students have maintained links between them and the university.

Aimable Manzi was entrusted to head the VITAA Rwanda chapter by his colleagues, deputized by Jean Nepomscene Sebahire, while Sylvester Rwabizi was elected treasurer.

Congo-Kinshasa: UN Presence Crucial Despite Call for Early Withdrawal, Says Relief Chief

UN News Service

3 May 2010

[Email](#)|[Print](#)|[Comment](#)

Share:

The top United Nations humanitarian official today ended a five-day tour to areas of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) that have witnessed some of the worst atrocities against civilians, stressing the vital need that UN peacekeepers remain beyond the August 2011 deadline set by the Government.

"The situation in the DRC remains complex, and the humanitarian needs very high, with grave protection concerns continuing to affect people in the eastern, north-eastern and north-western parts of the country, causing large-scale suffering to hundreds of thousands of vulnerable people," Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator John Holmes said.

Fresh from visits to the strife-torn Kivu provinces in the east, Orientale Province where he denounced "horrific" atrocities committed by the notorious Ugandan rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), and north-western Equateur Province where he condemned the decapitation and other brutal killings of civilians in inter-communal strife, Mr. Holmes today stressed to President Joseph Kabila the need for the continued presence of the UN Mission in the DRC (MONUC).

In a report to the Security Council last month, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said the UN disagreed with the Government's proposed date of August 2011 for the withdrawal of the 11-year-old force, which has helped restore a measure of stability and democratic process to a country torn apart by years of civil war and revolts that led to the greatest death toll since World War II - 4 million people killed by fighting and the attendant starvation and disease.

"In many areas, MONUC is a deterrent against those who terrorize and attack civilians and humanitarian actors alike and their support, especially in Orientale Province and Equateur province, but also in the Kivus, is very important for the continued delivery of life-saving assistance to those in need," Mr. Holmes said today in Kinshasa, the capital.

"I am confident that cooperation between the Government and the United Nations in this domain will continue," he added, stressing to Mr. Kabila and Prime Minister Adolphe Muzito that the humanitarian needs in the DRC remained considerable. "We are committed to respond to the acute needs of the population, but we also need to tackle the underlying root causes."

He also emphasized the importance, for the sake of protecting civilians, of accelerated security sector reform because of the continuing humanitarian consequences of abuses by the Government's armed forces themselves.

Yesterday Mr. Holmes visited the town of Dongo in Equateur province which was attacked in October when inter-communal violence in long-standing disputes over fishing and farming rights intensified into an armed insurgency, with 200,000 people driven from their homes, mostly seeking refuge in the neighbouring Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic (CAR).

"I was particularly distressed by accounts of how local inhabitants suffered at the hands of armed individuals," he said. "The attackers showed utter disregard for civilians. Many were decapitated or otherwise brutally killed, while parts of the town were looted and burned."

Relevant Links
Central Africa
Congo-Kinshasa
Peacekeeping

International Organisations

Conflict

A day earlier he was in Orientale province, near the border with Sudan and CAR, and where more than 300 civilians were reportedly killed in December in one of the LRA's worst recent massacres. Another 250 people, including at least 80 children, were kidnapped in the same attack. In the town of Niangara he heard first-hand accounts from survivors, including one woman whose lips and ear had been torn off two days earlier in a typically barbaric and inexplicable attack.

And the day before that he was in the Kivus, where some 1.4 million people have been internally displaced by fighting between the national army and the rebel Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), as well by local armed militias and bandits.

As well as conferring with Government leaders in Kinshasa today, Mr. Holmes also met with representatives of donor countries. The UN and its partners have requested \$828 million for humanitarian action this year, 27 per cent of which has been received so far. In 2009, out of a requested \$946 million, \$686 million was received.

"We are trying to help people survive and, to the extent possible, live a dignified life," he said. "I hope that donors will continue to be generous in helping us achieve this, because of the extent of the continuing needs."

4. Economy and Energy

Rwanda: Fuel Prices Hike

The New Times

James Karuhanga 7 May 2010

[Email](#)|[Print](#)|[Comment](#)

Share:

Kigali — Despite a firm subsidization strategy, the government yesterday finally succumbed to the mounting pressure from a volatile global oil market and announced an increase on pump prices of both petrol and diesel from Rwf 918 to Rwf 940 per litre.

The increase that was announced by the Ministry of Trade and Commerce Ministry represents 2% and it was described as modest by officials.

In the past few months, concerned government departments and fuel dealers have been engaged in stretched 'internal discussions' aimed at regulating, or even abating, the spill-over effect of what is now a worrying global oil crisis.

"We have realized that there will be need to increase prices in Kigali, starting tomorrow (Friday) - an increase by 22 francs or near that range, on both diesel and petrol," Trade and Industry Minister, Monique Nsanzabaganwa, said in a news conference yesterday.

"Prices on the world market have been increasing sharply since last February when a barrel of crude oil which was at \$70 has now increased up to \$89, and still rising".

According to Nsanzabaganwa, the reasons for the ongoing crisis range from the pirate situation along the Somalia coastline, increased global demand to increasing fuel transport charges from the east African coast.

In addition, is the potential disruption of oil tanker traffic by the oil spill in the US Gulf of Mexico.

The Kenyan pipeline company which the country depends on, has also increased fuel shipment costs through the Mombasa-Eldoret pipeline by about \$5 per cubic metre and this too has had a substantial impact on local pump prices.

Nsanzabaganwa acknowledged that all these factors have brought about the "compound effect" that Rwanda could not escape.

Relevant Links

Central Africa

Rwanda

Petroleum

Business

Energy

Business

"This is not an issue affecting Rwandans only - we (government) are responsible for managing this, together with dealers, and we are still able to keep the increase on the local market not as high as on the world market," said the minister.

She stressed that had it not been for government intervention, the situation could have been much worse - "with prices increasing to Rwf 967 or more."

To stabilize the local market scenario, Charles Lwanga, Rwanda Revenue Authority Director for Research and Planning, told The New Times that last year he government spent Rwf 25 billion in fuel subsidies,

A related MINICOM communiqué notes that the decision to raise pump prices by two percent is "modest" given the current government subsidy on both petrol and diesel which stands at 55 percent and 63 percent, respectively.

Rwanda: Investment Meet to Enhance Business Opportunities

The New Times

Frank Kanyesigye 7 May 2010

[Email](#)|[Print](#)|[Comment](#)

Share:

Kigali — Rwanda investment conference which is slated to open next week in Kigali, will enhance business opportunities for the Rwandan business community since it will focus on forging gainful partnerships and breaking into new markets.

This was revealed yesterday by Claire Akamanzi, the Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Rwanda Development Board (RDB) while addressing members of the press at the institution's premises.

"The forum will give us an opportunity to lobby new business partnership with the business community outside Rwanda," she said.

Akamanzi added that the forum aims at building on Rwanda's expanding network of relationships created by joining the Commonwealth.

"We expect to sell investment opportunities to business investors who have not invested in Rwanda and increase on the investment potential," she noted.

"The forum will promote inward investments and create new business partnerships, anchored in the English speaking world and using key Commonwealth points to break into global markets in Europe, Asia and America".

The event to be held under the theme; 'Accessing an East African Market of 150 Million and Accelerating Growth and Development', is being organized by the government through RDB, in partnership with the Commonwealth Business Council.

Deliberations will focus on investment opportunities in ICT, Tourism, Mining, Agriculture, Manufacturing, Agro-processing, Construction and Real Estate.

Rwanda: Old Age Financial Support, Another Great Initiative

The New Times

6 May 2010

[Email](#)|[Print](#)|[Comment](#)

Share:

Kigali — The recent announcement that the Ministry of Local Government will soon start paying a monthly stipend to the elderly, is yet another indication that government is serious about ensuring the social welfare of the population.

Once implemented, Rwandans over 65 years of age, who have no pension plan, will for the start get Rwf5200 monthly to cater for their needs.

This kind of support will undoubtedly have a very big impact on the lives of seniors, who at their age are not in the best position to work for a living and at times have no other source of income.

Additionally, this money will not only benefit the recipients, but also the communities they live in. By being guaranteed some income, their purchasing power will increase, therefore, injecting money into the local economy within their communities.

However, prior to the implementation of this initiative, ample sensitisation has to be conducted to ensure that this money is not wasted. Families of the seniors should encourage them to budget accordingly, so that the fund sustains them until the next pay check.

Those charged with overseeing the old age Fund, should also keep close watch, making sure that the money gets to the legitimate beneficiaries.

This is a very commendable initiative on the part of the Government, and it portrays the spirit of supporting one another - one of the fundamental Rwandan values.

Rwanda: Govt to Gain From EAC Meet

Edmund Kagire 5 May 2010

[Email](#)|[Print](#)|[Comment](#)

[Share](#):

Kigali — Rwanda is set to benefit from the recent 3rd East African Investment Conference held in Kampala, which saw several investors express interest in investing in the country.

Addressing a joint press conference on the outcomes of the annual meet, the Minister of East African Community, Monique Mukaruliza, said that Rwanda has marketed herself in the region as the leading choice for investors who want to do business in the region.

"The conference touched on a number of areas including supporting the growth of extractive industries, especially through improving local skilled manpower and enforcing import duty exemptions on mining equipment as part of removing barriers," Mukaruliza said.

"We also agreed to market the bloc as a single tourist destination by speeding up processes of having a single entry visa for tourists. We also agreed to ease doing business by fast-tracking the development of infrastructure,"

According to the official, it was agreed in the meeting that the bloc develops efficient transport systems including roads, railways, water and air transport as a means of facilitating investors.

Relevant Links

Central Africa

Rwanda

"Partner states will be required to remove all trade and non-tariff barriers and put incentives in place to facilitate investors go about their work without any hindrance," Mukaruliza added.

She said that previous similar meetings have been vital in attracting investors to the EAC as it provides a platform for investors to meet, interact and share ideas on investing in the region.

The maiden conference was hosted by Rwanda in 2008 while last year it was held in Nairobi-Kenya.

During the Kampala meeting, partner states agreed to facilitate investment in the financial sector, scaling up special economic zones, enhance public private partnerships to become a vehicle for addressing infrastructure challenges.

Rwanda: Indian Firm to Inject Rwf17 Million in IT Training Institute

Alex Ngarambe 5 May 2010

[Email](#)|[Print](#)|[Comment](#)

[Share](#):

Kigali — IHT Network Limited, one of India's largest organisations in providing computer hardware, software and networking training is set to invest Rwf17m as a move to establish a base in the Rwandan market.

The Managing Director of IHT network limited, Umesh Chaudhary said that the company with academic ties with leading companies such as Microsoft, Comptia and Prometric is looking at establishing a network of training centre in East Africa.

"The courses that we will offer have great acceptance in corporate world and students get placed immediately after completion and our placement cell has provided jobs to more than 50,000 students and the facility will be extended to Rwanda," said Chaudhary.

The training centres will run under the franchise arrangement with a local master franchisee in charge of expanding centres with IHT providing training, instructors, technical support.

Chaudhary also said that they are talking to Rwanda Development Board on how to register and they have identified about 5 candidates out of whom they will choose the best master franchisee.

Relevant Links

Central Africa

Rwanda

The IT training company is also set to stomp their presence in the region with a cash budget of US\$60,000 to be invested in Uganda from where they will move to Tanzania.

The company boasts of a large existing network all over India with a student base of 25000 studying in 125 centres expanding to Nigeria as well.

The institutes will offer certificate and diploma courses for a maximum period of 14 months with tuition fees ranging between US\$800 to \$1200.

"We are ready to start as soon as we get a master franchisee, and this will give Rwandan students an international exposure," added Chaudhary.

5. Elections and Governness

6. Refugees and Rebels

Rwanda: DRC Relocates FDLR Elements

The New Times

James Karuhanga 6 May 2010

[Email](#)|[Print](#)|[Comment](#)

Share:

Kigali — Reports from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) indicate that 'disarmed' FDLR elements have been allowed to relocate to Kisenge in DRC's south-eastern Katanga Province.

The United Nations-funded Radio Okapi, revealed Wednesday that the move is a bid to diminish the militia's security threat to Rwanda.

DRC Information Minister Lambert Mende could not be reached yesterday for comment but Maj. Vianney Kazalama, the Congolese army (FARDC) spokesperson in North Kivu, acknowledged the development.

"Those FDLR requested to move and it is in that regard that those not deemed as a danger to Rwanda or had no role in the Genocide moved," Maj. Kazalama said on phone yesterday.

According to Radio Okapi, about 30 FDLR fighters and 106 of their dependants were moved last Sunday from the Masisi region of North Kivu province to Lubumbashi, the capital of Katanga. Later, on Monday, they moved to Kisenge, in the district of Lualaba - which is near the border with Angola.

Nonetheless, Radio Okapi indicates that the group was removed the Rwandan border to ensure their safety until their repatriation to Rwanda.

Even though the relocated FDLR members are reported to have voluntarily disarmed, it is said that their move has caused concern among Kisenge residents.

Relevant Links

Central Africa

Rwanda

Congo-Kinshasa

Arms and Armies

Peacekeeping

International Organisations

Conflict

"Ever since Congo and Rwanda re-established good relations, we are collaborating on this and we have a list of those who are wanted - they can never be taken in this group," said Kazalama.

"They are now 600 kilometers from Lubumbashi - this is not part of the military programme but is instead a new disarmament initiative by Pastor Mulunda Ngoy who is exchanging arms for money".

In a new 'weapons buy-back programme,' in the war-torn eastern province of North Kivu, the DRC government is offering residents as well as militia US\$50 per weapon handed in.

According to a statement issued Tuesday by DRC Information Minister Lambert Mende, the three-month "firearms for \$50" project will "apply the final touches to the process of pacifying the east."

Congo-Kinshasa: Minor Rebels, Major Terror

IRIN

5 May 2010

[Email](#)|[Print](#)|[Comment](#)

Share:

Niangara — They may number as few as 100 men, women and adolescents, but Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) units scattered across the forests of northeastern Democratic Republic of Congo's Orientale Province have sown sufficient terror to make some 318,000 people take flight, abandoning their homes and fields, in many cases to the uncertain sanctuary of urban centres.

Their fear is far from misplaced, for extreme brutality is a tactic in the survival strategy of the northern Ugandan rebel group, which has killed almost 2,000 people in Orientale since December 2007, mostly in the districts of Haut- and Bas-Uele.

Lacking supply lines and widely dispersed since a botched air raid in December 2008, the small groups of LRA fighters operate independently of each other and live off the land; that is to say, off the local population's produce and livestock. Since this population has no desire to share what little they have with a rebellion in which they have no stake at all, they are made to leave.

"The violence of its attacks and the suffering it causes are intended to frighten villagers into not giving its pursuers the information they need to wage a counter-insurgency campaign and to frighten civilians away so they can move with less chance of being spotted," the International Crisis Group said in a recent report on the LRA.

Such calculatedly brutal logic is hard to explain to the victims of violence.

"What can you tell a woman who's had her lips and ears cut off for nothing?" UN humanitarian chief John Holmes said after visiting the Haute-Uele town of Niangara, the geographical centre of Africa, during a tour of DRC's most troubled areas.

Holmes also told reporters the UN was investigating reports of yet another LRA massacre, in February 2010, in the village of Kpanga. If claims that 100 people were murdered in this incident are verified, it would bring the total number of people killed by the LRA this year to over 500.

The number of attacks in the Ueles reached 19 in March, up from February's seven, according to data compiled by the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

Litany of abuse

For its part, the DRC government, which, in the run-up to elections due in 2011, is keen to demonstrate it has control of its vast territory, has described reports of recent large-scale LRA massacres as exaggerated, a ploy by aid workers to justify their presence.

This is not a view shared in Niangara, where officials told the visiting Holmes about the lack of security, exhausted food stocks and non-existent communications in the area.

Unlike many towns across DRC now, there is no mobile phone network in Niangara, which means it is impossible to raise the alarm in the event of an attack. The town is barely accessible by road.

"[There is] killing, rape, forced displacement, deserted schools, arson, looting, mutilation of different parts of the body..." civil society representative Floribert Tongole said during

an explanation to Holmes's delegation of the wide-ranging effects of the LRA presence here.

"Every week there are new attacks, some even in the town of Niangara itself," he added.

Tongole said LRA fighters were just a couple of kilometres away from the town. "Last week they chopped a woman's lips off," he said.

According to others in Niangara, three LRA members were arrested on 1-2 May after being found by residents inside the town.

"We can't go to our fields because we are afraid of the rebels," one Niangara resident told IRIN.

"Many IDPs are staying with host families here, so they share what food they have. That means there is not much left," he added.

"Is [LRA leader] Joseph Kony bigger than the United Nations?" a representative of Niangara's women asked at the meeting with Holmes.

The UN's peacekeeping mission in the DRC, MONUC, has estimated the number of LRA in Orientale at around 100. Another 100, including Kony himself, are thought to be holed up in neighbouring Central African Republic. Others could be in Southern Sudan.

Even with so few fighters, the LRA has made it too dangerous for aid workers to reach around a third of the IDPs in the Uele districts.

"It's pure terrorism. The numbers don't mean anything; what counts is their capacity to harm the population," said one humanitarian worker in Haut-Uele.

Weak military coordination

He added the LRA were aided by the lack of coordination between the various military forces present in Orientale: MONUC, which plays little direct role in tackling the rebels; the poorly-trained, over-stretched Congolese army, 6,000 of whom are deployed in Haut-Uele; and troops from the Ugandan army, which led the December 2008 operation.

Uganda's military invitation expired in March 2009 and only a few "intelligence officers" are supposed to be in DRC now. But in reality 1,000-3,000 ground troops are estimated to be still deployed.

MONUC has no contact at all with the Ugandan military in Orientale, according to a senior MONUC officer who spoke to IRIN in Niangara, adding that the UN force did support the Congolese army with logistics, transport, food, fuel and training.

According to OCHA, these Congolese troops are not always a force for good, and are sometimes "responsible for some human rights abuses... such as extortion of food and other goods and forced labour."

Nor are they always an effective deterrent to LRA movements, according to OCHA, which in a March summary of the humanitarian situation in Orientale Province said Congolese "soldiers are unable to stop these repeated incursions [into towns], which they prefer to blame on local bandits."

What next?

Relevant Links

Central Africa

Congo-Kinshasa

Arms and Armies

Refugees

Conflict

Killing Kony appears to be a priority for Uganda. Even Holmes spoke in Niangara of the necessity of "putting an end to him and his colleagues," given Kony's repeated refusal to sign a peace deal.

But in A Regional Strategy Beyond Killing Kony, the International Crisis Group, while describing the LRA as a "causeless and homeless guerilla group for which the most pressing concern is day-to-day survival", sounded alarm bells about such a narrowly focused military objective.

Even if "the LRA has a generally low level of coordination and cohesion ... [and] may be close to collapse as an organization... individuals and groups have proved extremely resilient."

"If the LRA were to disintegrate further and even if the army killed or captured Kony, there is a serious risk that isolated groups of fighters would continue to make civilians suffer across the region," the report warned.

[This report does not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations]

UN Mission's Departure Will Lead to Congo Crisis, Say Rebels

Peter Clotney 05 May 2010

VOA

Photo: AFP

UN Mission in Democratic Republic of Congo and DRC soldiers get ready to deploy from Gemena (2009 file photo)

Share This

Digg

Facebook
StumbleUpon
Yahoo! Buzz
del.icio.us

A leading member of a coalition of rebel groups in the Democratic Republic of Congo said they are “strongly” against the announced departure of the U.N. Peacekeeping Mission (MONUC) from the country.

Didier Bitaki told VOA Wednesday Congo would be plunged into chaos if the U.N. peacekeepers are pulled out.

“We still have a problem of security because we don’t have an army, because our army is acting like rebels, like militias. So, if MONUC forces leave Congo now it means that we drive the country into a new crisis that would not get a solution... MONUC helps to secure the local population and protecting civilians,” he said.

The U.N. Mission in Congo employs the largest peacekeeping operation in any country with an estimated budget of more than \$1 billion.

The U.N. Security Council mandated its peacekeepers to “use all necessary measures” to protect Congo’s unarmed civilian population.

But, Lambert Mende, Congo’s information minister, recently said President Joseph Kabila’s government is forming a competent national army to take over after the U.N. Peacekeeping Mission, known as MONUC, withdraws next year.

“We have decided that they [MONUC] withdraw before the end of 2011 because we are living under an exceptional period for 11 years now. We think that enough is enough, and we need really to recover a normal way of living as a country... So, we do not like to be something like a weight for humanity and the world,” he said.

Bitaki said Congo will become a failed state if the U.N. peacekeepers leave.

“The armed groups are saying we cannot allow, understand or accept so that the United Nations to say that the army should lead Congo. It means that they need Congo to become a Somalia,” Bitaki said.

President Kabila’s government has denied accusations that it failed to fully implement several peace accords with different rebel groups.

But, Bitaki said the government is refusing to take care of former rebels.

“We gave all our combatants to the government in January 2009 for them to be integrated into the regular army. But, unfortunately, the government forces are just leaving the army and they go to the bush to stay there because they are not well treated in the army. People that are fighting against the government are the former soldiers that left the army because they were not paid,” Bitaki said.

He also said that his group has presented a petition to the U.N. Mission’s Headquarters in Congo’s capital, Kinshasa, about their opposition to the departure of the peacekeepers.

DRC: Gaston Mbali, "When we heard the whistles, we knew we should escape"

Photo: Anthony Morland/IRIN

Gaston Mbali...too scared to go home

NIANGARA, 5 May 2010 (IRIN) - Since June 2009, when a Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) unit attacked his village, Gaston Mbali, 30, an agricultural trainer, has lived in a

rudimentary camp for displaced people in Niangara, an isolated town in the Haut Uele District of the Democratic Republic of Congo's Orientale Province.

In the first few months of 2010 alone, the LRA murdered several hundred people in DRC, prompting some 318,000 to flee their homes and abandon their fields for the uncertain sanctuary of provincial towns such as Niangara.

“It was a Tuesday, last June. When we heard whistles, we knew to try to escape. That is how they communicate. Around 15 of them came into the village. They looked about 25 or 30 years old and wore military uniforms and dreadlocks.

“They started killing people, both with guns and machetes. They caught my cousin Mapakasse and tied him up then beat him to death. I was hiding in a field and saw them kill three people in all - my cousin, a pastor and a woman.

“They burnt many houses and stole the livestock. They seemed to be drunk or drugged.

“Eight of us travelled together here, to Niangara. We had no time to collect anything from our houses. We walked for three days through the forest; it was very tiring and we had nothing to eat.

“The whole village, around 1,000 people, made their way here. But 55 people in all were missing, either killed or captured.”

“Life here is very difficult. We have nothing to eat, other than the few things we can grow, such as beans and peanuts.

“With the LRA still there, how can we go back to the village? We know they are still there because sometimes people try to return to get crops from their fields and they don't come back.

“We will stay here until the LRA leave our area. It is not time to go yet.”

“I feel safe in Niangara because the army and MONUC [UN Mission in DRC] are here. But the LRA are only one kilometre away.

“There are no means of communication [no mobile phone network]. If there is an attack, we need to be able to phone to alert people.

“These huts don't keep out the rain; the plastic sheeting we were given barely lasted one month.

“There is no work here. In Nawe [his home village], we worked in the fields and sold some of what we grew and also fish. Now we are afraid to go through the forest; you cannot travel even one kilometre from here. The LRA stay in the forest. On Sunday [2

May], during the day three of them were captured here in town. They were in civilian clothes but they admitted they were LRA.”

Central Africa

UNHCR Regains Access to DRC Refugees in The Republic Of Congo

Kim Lewis | Washington 04 May 2010

VOA

Share This

Digg

Facebook

StumbleUpon

Yahoo! Buzz

del.icio.us

“With the water levels being so low, sometimes we hit sand on the river—that slows us down. We need to off-load supplies so the staff can move. This means you have staff but you don’t have supplies or you have supplies but you don’t have staff.”

The UNHCR says its teams have now regained access to some 35,000 Congolese refugees now on the Republic of Congo side of the Oubangui River. They are part of a larger group of some 114,000 refugees who have fled clashes sparked by fishing and farming disputes in Equateur Province in northwest Democratic Republic of Congo.

The refugee agency says its efforts in the border area are one of the most complex logistical operations it has ever undertaken in this part of Africa. UNHCR spokesperson Fatoumata Lejeune-Kaba explained the conflicts in the region and the challenges her organization faces in helping the refugees:

“In Equateur Province in late October, a group of Enyele militia attacked a rival ethnic group called the Munzale over fishing and farming rights. What looked like a local conflict that has been going on for decades, all of a sudden turned out to be a major conflict that spread to the rest of Equateur Province, and as a result we had 114, 000 people flee to the northern part of the Republic of Congo and about 20,000 to Central African Republic.”

She said her agency is struggling to help the 114, 000 refugees whose only access is by the river. Lejeune-Kaba said another complicating factor is insecurity in the area:

“For five weeks we were cut off from about 35,000 of the refugees that we were trying to help and they started arriving in November of last year. The two Congos are so close. They are separated by the Ouangui River. But it’s a distance that takes less than ten minutes to cross on a speed boat.”

Lejeune-Kaba explained the daily hardships UNHCR workers face as they carry out their mission:

“With the water levels being so low, sometimes we hit sand on the river—that slows us down. We need to off-load supplies so the staff can move. This means you have staff but you don’t have supplies or you have supplies but you don’t have staff. They work seven days a week. Also they are living in almost the same condition as the refugees,” said Lejeune-Kaba.

UNHCR Regains Access to Nearly 35,000 DRC Refugees in Republic of Congo

Kim Lewis 04 May 2010

VOA

Share This

Digg

Facebook

StumbleUpon

Yahoo! Buzz

del.icio.us

Related Articles

Northern Republic of Congo Faces Refugee Crisis

The UNHCR says its teams have now regained access to some 35,000 DRC refugees now on the Republic of Congo (ROC) side of the Oubangui River. They are part of a larger group of some 114,000 refugees, who have fled clashes sparked by fishing and farming disputes in Equateur Province in northwest Democratic Republic of Congo.

The refugee agency says its efforts in the border area are one of the most complex logistical operations it has ever undertaken in this part of Africa.

UNHCR spokesperson Fatoumata Lejeune-Kaba says, "In Equateur Province in late October, a group of Enyele militia attacked a rival ethnic group called the Munzale over fishing and farming rights. What looked like a local conflict that has been going on for decades, all of a sudden turned out to be a major conflict that spread to the rest of Equateur Province."

Besides the 114,000 people that fled to the northern part of the Republic of Congo, another 20,000 crossed into Central African Republic.

She said her agency is struggling to help the refugees in ROC, whose only access is by the river. Insecurity makes matters worse.

"For five weeks we were cut off from about 35,000 of the refugees that we were trying to help and they started arriving in November of last year. The two Congos are so close. They are separated by the Ouangui River. But it's a distance that takes less than ten minutes to cross on a speed boat."

Lejeune-Kaba says UNHCR workers face many hardships as they carry out their mission.

"With the water levels being so low, sometimes we hit sand on the river—that slows us down. We need to off-load supplies so the staff can move. This means you have staff but you don't have supplies or you have supplies but you don't have staff. They work seven days a week. Also they are living in almost the same condition as the refugees," said Lejeune-Kaba.

Rwanda: Three Genocide Fugitives Located in the Netherlands

The New Times

James Karuhanga 5 May 2010

Email|Print|Comment(3)

Share:

Kigali — A week after Prosecution revealed that it would soon issue a warrant of arrest for a top Genocide fugitive in the Netherlands ex-FAR Maj. Pierre-Claver Karangwa three other alleged Genocide suspects are confirmed to be living in the same country.

They were identified as Charles Ndereyehe Ntahontuye, the former Director General of ISAR-Rubona, an agricultural institute, Venant Rutunga, a former regional director of ISAR and Jean Baptiste Nyabusore an influential figure in the Northern Province during the Genocide.

Nyabusore was the Director of another agricultural institute, ISAE-Busogo.

Speaking particularly about Ntahontuye, Prosecution spokesperson Augustin Nkusi, noted that the fugitive was 'very active' in the Genocide especially in the then Butare, now Huye District.

"If you consider everything, the money, and how it was raised by Ntahontuye, he was very committed in the plan to wipe out the Tutsi he worked with soldiers in Butare, compiled lists of Tutsi to be killed. He was very involved in the Genocide as an organizer."

Sources say that during the Genocide, Ntahontuye, 61, in collaboration with others, among them Rutunga, are alleged to have been at the forefront of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rubona.

It is claimed that Ntahontuye, as ISAR boss, forcefully instructed all employees (starting from May, 1994) to always contribute 20 percent of their salary into a fund then called their "auto-defense civile," which was money meant to motivate the soldiers and militias to kill.

The ISAR group allegedly used the funds to provide soldiers and Interahamwe militia with equipment including machetes worth one million francs.

"Even after deducting this amount (20%) he continued retaining whole salaries of Tutsi employees at the institute who had already been killed in the genocide," Nkusi explained.

Ntahontuye's charges range from conspiracy to commit Genocide to public incitement and crimes against humanity.

It is said that Ntahontuye and Rutunga used their authority, influence as well as ISAR resources to communicate with other institutions, including the Gendarmerie of Butare, as they allegedly shared a common goal - killing all Tutsi.

Rutunga is currently believed to be working as a guest researcher at the Netherlands's Wageningen University and Research Centre - ISRIC.

Nyabusore is accused of having been an influential figure in Busogo-Mukingo Commune.

He Nyabusore allegedly financed and supported the establishment of a militia group in Busogo called "Virunga Force Amahindura" and he allegedly hosted regular meetings at his home and ISAE offices, in which plans to kill the Tutsi were hatched.

Relevant Links

Central Africa

Rwanda

Prominent figures who attended include Esdras Baheza a businessman, Colonel Ephrem Setako, currently sentenced to 25 years in Arusha, Gen. Augustin Bizimungu, also detained in Arusha, Joseph Nzirorera, a former minister and many others.

Nyabusore is alleged to have played a big role in the killings of the Tutsi in places like Busogo, Rwinzovu, Shingiro, Karera and Nyabirehe.

Sources say he probably lives in the Dutch city of Eindhoven. Over 10 other Genocidaires are said to be holed up in the Netherlands.

Dutch judges and prosecutors have visited Rwanda, following up on Genocide fugitives in their country and, some progress has been registered.

A case in hand is that of Joseph Mpambara, who was in March 2009 convicted of torture and sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment by Dutch courts.

Health

DRC: Water crisis hits Mbuji-Mayi

Photo: Peter Martell/IRIN

Residents of Mbuji-Mayi have had to walk several kilometres daily in search of water after a landslide damaged the town's water supply (file photo)

KINSHASA, 4 May 2010 (IRIN) - Hundreds of thousands of residents of Mbuji-Mayi, central Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), are caught up in a water crisis since a landslide damaged the town's water supply in March.

Some of the town's three million residents now walk more than 20km daily in search of water, with reports that a water vendor died recently after a lorry ran over him as he ferried water for sale in Mbuji-Mayi.

“Lack of water in Mbuji-Mayi has been dire for several weeks now; at the moment people are obliged to walk over 20km to fetch water for domestic use from small rivers around the town,” Theodore Thiyekele, a Catholic priest, told IRIN. “Others are buying drinking water from young men who fetch it from sources far away from the town.”

He said the water-sellers used bicycles to ferry the drums full of water and were often at risk of road accidents.

Thiyekele said the water shortage had pushed up prices, with many residents struggling to raise the 500 francs (US\$0.50) water vendors were now demanding for a 20-litre jerry can of water. Most of Congo’s population lives on less than \$2 daily.

Call for patience

Innocent Kamondji, the provincial director of the Water Board Supplier, known as REGIDESO, has urged patience as more time was needed to fix the main pipes that channel water to the town.

Kamondji said: “Water supply to Mbuji-Mayi Town was affected by a landslide on 23 March... We are working hard to replace the broken pipes, especially [now] that the provincial government has released some funds to restore the water [supply] in Mbuji-Mayi town.”

He said the reconnection of the town’s water was not only dependent on the water supply board but also on the state roads company, which is supposed to help with grading part of the land hit by the landslide.

Photo: IRIN

Mbuji-Mayi Kasai-Orientale Provincial authority has released \$31,000.

Marcel Ndikayi Mande, Kasai-Oriental Minister of Public Works, told IRIN that part of the funds would be allotted to the water board to acquire new and bigger pipes and an engine that would be used to pump water.

Mande added that these were only temporary measures until a programme funded by the African Development Bank to upgrade the town’s water supply system was up and running.

“We are waiting to start the work of replacing [the] old water supply in the coming months,” Mande said. “It will consist of putting new pipes of 1,000m³ replacing old ones of 500m³. At the moment there are invitations to tender that have been published as the first step for the whole programme.”

Mbuji-Mayi’s water supply network was set up years ago when the town had an estimated 500,000 inhabitants, against three million now.

Coming Together to Fight Malaria

Isaiah Esipisu

IPS

Credit: John Robinson/IPS

Drug-resistant parasites are rendering traditional drugs ineffective. See slideshow

LUBUMBASHI, Apr 26 (IPS) - Eight faith-based organisations have set up a pilot project in the Democratic Republic of Congo to support the fight against malaria.

The initiative, dubbed the Coalition of Religious Organisations for Health (CORESA, after its French acronym) will receive some money from the Global Fund for HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis, as well as raise money independently for malaria prevention.

CORESA will see Catholics, Methodists, and Anglicans; Seventh Day Adventists, Apostolics and members of the DRC's Kimbanguiste Church, as well as the country's Muslims involved in raising \$75 million dollars from around the world to purchase and distribute 2.5 million mosquito-nets.

Studies have shown that if people in malaria-affected communities sleep under insecticide-treated nets, the incidence of the disease can be dramatically reduced.

"That is the reason why we are considering free distribution of at least three nets per family to all families in the DRC as our first priority," said Dr Assumani N'simbo, a Muslim cleric and vice president of CORESA.

The project is spearheaded by the United Methodist and Anglican Churches of the DRC and the United States. It will reach out to all Congolese, regardless of their religious beliefs.

The United Methodist Church has already established 215 hospitals and clinics around the country. "By forming CORESA, the church is now moving from building structures to providing services," said Shannon Trilli, the executive director for the United Methodist Committee on Relief, Malaria.

"Over 70 percent of people in Africa are religious. It is therefore easier for them to access services provided at their religion level than at the government level."

Churches and mosques in the U.S. and Asia have agreed to raise money to purchase nets, while their counterparts in the DRC have been given the responsibility of raising awareness communities, educating them on the use of the nets, and distributing them. So far, 150 volunteers from the various communities of belief have been trained to educate the public on proper use of mosquito-nets through a project known as Nurse for Life, run by the Anglican Church in DRC.

"The United Methodist Church in the DRC has also been appointed as a sub-recipient of money from the Global Fund," said Trilli.

If the project succeeds, then it will be duplicated in several other African countries, according to CORESA officials. The DRC's health minister, Dr Augustine Ilunga, confirmed that the malaria burden in the Congo is very high.

"Due to the high rate of malaria incidence in our country, we welcome any group willing to help us reduce the burden. Intervention from religious groups is all the more welcome because apart from keeping the government accountable, they will be able to reach out to more masses through their religious organisations," said the minister.

DRC, despite being one of the countries supported by the Global Fund, does not yet provide free malaria treatment for children below the age of five as is the case in other African countries enrolled in the funding programme.

Free treatment of malaria and distribution of mosquito-nets is limited to the rural areas of DRC, where pregnant women and children attending clinics are eligible. People living in urban centres have to pay five dollars for their children to be treated of malaria, according to Ilunga. However, this does not go down well with the urban poor. "I lost one of my children to malaria because I could not afford treatment," said Mukumbi Mugalu, a father of 19. "Five dollars is a lot of money to spend on malaria treatment, considering that I earn approximately two dollars per day."

Mugalu - who says his wife, Baya Bawili, has remarkably given birth to seven sets of twins, one set of triplets, and three more children besides - was grateful to the CORESA initiative for providing his family with six treated nets.

"Malaria has been the biggest challenge in raising up these children," said Bawili after receiving six treated nets. One of their daughters, Batatu Yawari, had been diagnosed with malaria, but her father was still trying to scrape together the money to buy medication.

CORESA president, Catholic Father Bertin Subi, said the initiative was conceived to prevent exactly such desperate situations.

At its launch ahead of World Malaria Day on Apr. 25, CORESA distributed 30,000 nets donated by the Anglican Church, through an initiative known as Nets for Life.

Rwandans Happy With Education And Health Services

The new times

Fred Ndoli 6 May 2010

[Email](#)|[Print](#)|[Comment](#)

Share:

Kigali — A survey by the Public Policy Information, Monitoring and Advocacy (PPIMA) project of the Rwanda Civil Society, shows that 90 percent of Rwandans are happy with the education and health services offered by the government. 84 percent of the people interviewed said they have health insurance under Mutuelle de Sante.

The survey was released yesterday during a three-day workshop organized by Rwanda Civil Society and Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) in conjunction with CARE International and Save the Children Fund UK.

The workshop that attracted participants from Malawi, Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda aims at exploring best practices from the region on how to enhance the role of the citizens and civil society in monitoring and providing feed back to governments on how policies can be more effective.

However, the survey also shows that 92 percent of Rwandan communities don't receive enough information on the national budget hence have no idea of how the budget concerns them.

It also shows 50 percent of the activities outlined in performance contracts of local government institutions are fulfilled.

According to the PPIMA survey, the ignorance of the communities on government policies and how they can utilize them is attributed to lack of information.

PPIMA, is a three-year old civil society support project aimed at promoting an active interest among Rwandan civil society organizations and citizens in public policy affairs.

Rwanda: 34 U.S Peace Corps Members Sworn-in

The New Times

Irene V. Nambi 6 May 2010

[Email](#)|[Print](#)|[Comment](#)

Share:

A group of 34 American Peace Corps volunteers were yesterday sworn-into serve in various sectors in a bid to help in the achievement of the country's major development goals.

The swearing in ceremony was held at the residence of the US Ambassador, Stuart Symington.

According to the Country Director of Peace Corps in Rwanda, John Reddy, the group has undergone a 10-week training programme in Nyanza that mainly focused on learning Kinyarwanda as well as technical and cross-cultural studies.

"The volunteers will stay in Rwanda for two years and during that time, they will be assigned to work with various organisations in the areas of health, capacity building and economic growth issues," Reddy explained.

Ambassador Symington challenged the volunteers to strive to change the world, adding that they should use these networks to advance the vision that was initiated by President John F. Kennedy.

"In 1960, when John F. Kennedy called upon the youth to serve in other nations of the world, we were a nation of immigrants. Today, America is not only connected to the world by the things we buy, but there are direct links, even for our President."

"Let us hold onto the vision to reach out and do something that no one else has done. It has followed generations and it is now in your hands," Symington said.

Relevant Links

Central Africa

Rwanda

U.S., Canada and Africa

Peacekeeping

Conflict

The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Health, Dr. Agnes Binagwaho, also noted that Rwanda is a country that has a miraculous recovery story.

She acknowledged the role of the partners, adding that the new group will join in the country's journey to achieve major development goals.

On behalf of the volunteers, Portia Washington, said that Rwanda is a very beautiful country adding that the group is determined to play their part in the respective sites that they have been assigned to.

This is the third group of Peace Corps volunteers to serve in the country since the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. So far, 94 Peace Corps volunteers have worked in the Education and Health sectors.

Rwanda: MIFOTRA Launches Anti-HIV/Aids Campaign

Frank Kanyesigye 5 May 2010

[Email](#)|[Print](#)|[Comment](#)

Share:

Kigali — In a bid to maintain a healthy workforce, the ministry of Public Service and Labour (MIFOTRA) has embarked on a nationwide sensitisation campaign to fight against HIV/AIDS within the public sector.

Speaking to The New Times, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry, Samuel Mulindwa, said that the countrywide awareness campaign is designed to raise awareness.

"Our main target is to make sure that, workers in the public sector know about the causes and the consequences of the virus so that they can protect themselves when still early," he said.

"Educating the workers in the sector about the scourge and how to avoid it will significantly reduce the spread of the HIV/AIDS"

"There is a very good work going on in several districts countrywide and workers are being sensitized on how to work with fellow colleagues who are HIV positive without discriminating them" Mulindwa explained.

"We are calling upon all the workers in the public sector to voluntary test for the HIV/AIDS," adding that they need to spread the information and reduce the scourge"

MIFOTRA is partnering with UNICEF (The United Nations International Children's Fund) and CNLS (National Centre for the fight against HIV) to fight against HIV/AIDS in the public sector.