

Report # 121
BUSINESS AND POLITICS IN THE MUSLIM WORLD
Central Africa
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Weekly Report from 23 May to 29 May 2010
Presentation: 2 June 2010

Security Dynamics in Africa's Great Lakes Region

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Lynne Rienner, 2006,

Source: Foreign Affairs; Mar/Apr2007, Vol. 86 Issue 2, p183-184, 2p

Africa's Great Lakes region includes the countries to the east and north of the Democratic Republic of the Congo that have been involved in a complex set of violent conflicts that started with the Rwandan genocide in 1994 and have resulted in well over five million casualties since then. Low levels of economic development and extremely poor infrastructure--as well as highly polarized ethnic conflict, weak and illegitimate states, and the not-always-helpful role of outside powers--have abetted the continuation of conflict. Khadiagala has put together a solid collection of essays that examine the current impasse from the perspective of the different countries involved and the outside powers that have sought to mediate the conflict. The book lacks a true analytic framework, and too much of the material is now more than half a decade old, and so it is unlikely to prove useful to policymakers. But the book does provide an excellent introduction to what some observers have called Africa's First World War. The authors emphasize the indivisibility of the conflicts across the countries involved. Progress in one country typically is not possible without progress in neighboring countries. The essays also make clear that regional peace and, eventually, economic development is highly unlikely without external assistance. South Africa's efforts at mediating between the Hutu and Tutsi groups in Burundi, well documented in a chapter by the South African scholar Chris Landsberg, offer some useful insights in that regard.

Book Review

This book is a good piece of academic writing as far as security and conflict is concerned. Conflict is one of the basic realities in Great Lakes region particularly after the genocide in Rwanda which later affected the neighboring country DR Congo as well. KHADIAGALA pointed out rightly in his essays about the negative role of external powers and neighboring countries. Mostly countries are weak in infrastructure and in economic development due to the conflict. However this book does not provide a fundamental framework to analyze the current situation and also based on obsolete approach. Anyhow he provided the evidence for the mediation by the South Africa and

argued that without economic assistance by the economic powers this region can not achieve and prosperity.

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Summary

1. Politics

World Press Freedom Debated at International Conference

The World Congress of the International Federation of Journalists is meeting in Cadiz, Spain to discuss press freedom around the world. And tensions between some African governments and the media were addressed. Delegates heard from Pansy Tlakula, Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information of the African Commission for Human and Peoples' Rights. She says many individuals and organizations have told her there is "increasing animosity" between journalists and African governments. Tlakula says that the journalists feel that there is undue restrictions on freedom of expression and that they've been targeted and frightened, harassed. Governments, on the other hand, feel that the media reports very irresponsible way without due regard to the privacy of the people they're reporting on. She concluded with the emphasis on the contractive dialogue between journalists and government.

Rwanda: Ingabire 'Lawyer' Not Accredited

Peter Erlinder, the American lawyer who is in the country to defend Victoire Ingabire, the embattled leader of the yet-to-be-registered political party, FDU-Inkingi has not yet received official approval from the relevant authorities, to practice in the country. Erlinder, who was the lead counsel for Major Aloys Ntabakuze at the International Criminal Tribunal of Rwanda (ICTR), has been expressing his readiness to defend Ingabire in her ongoing case, but authorities say he has processes to follow before expressing his intentions.

Rwanda: Government Committed to Good Governance-Musoni

The Government is committed to continue promoting and achieving good governance as the first pillar of the country's Vision 2020 through its medium and long term policies and practices. This was said by the Minister of Local Government, James Musoni, while opening a two-day seminar on Governance aimed at assessing the 2009 Global Integrity Report on Rwanda which opened in Kigali. Addressing the meet organized by Rwanda Governance Advisory Council (RGAC) in collaboration with Global Integrity, Musoni said that the government has a common goal of promoting good governance through enhancing civil liberties, political rights, voice and accountability, transparency and the fight against corruption. Global Integrity which included Rwanda for the first time in its 2009 report, ranked the country on several indicators, among them, Civil Society Organizations (CSO), Media and Public Information where the country scored 63%. On the elections sub-indicators, the country scored 83%. On Administration and Regulation Rwanda scored 80%, 88% on Oversight and regulation and 81% on Anti-Corruption.

2. Peace keeping/ Conflict Resolution and Security matters

Congo-Kinshasa: Security Council Agrees to Convert UN Mission in Country into Stabilization Force

The Security Council extended the current mandate of the United Nations peacekeeping force in the Democratic Republic of the Congo by one month and agreed to transform the operation so that from then on it becomes a stabilization mission in the vast African nation. Council said in a unanimously adopted resolution that in view of the new phase that has been reached in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations mission in that country, MONUC, shall, as from 1 July 2010, bear the title of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) the MONUC's mandate now extends through 30 June, when it becomes MONUSCO, which has been authorized to stay in the DRC until 30 June next year. The Council decided that MONUSCO shall comprise, in addition to the appropriate civilian, judiciary and correction components, a maximum of 19,815 military personnel, 760 military observers, 391 police personnel and 1,050 personnel of formed police units.

3. Pan Africa

East Africa: Regional Body to Sign Security Pact with AU

The International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) will soon sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the African Union (AU) aimed at harmonizing peace and security approaches, a senior ICGLR official has said. The meeting, which is a follow up on the ICGLR summit that was held in Lusaka, Zambia last year, is geared towards discussing among other issues, the path to ensuring lasting peace, stability and development in the region. On peace and security, the ICGLR boss said that there is still a challenge in tackling the remaining armed groups and negative forces operating in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Rwanda: Books - Speaking Truth to Power - Tajudeen Abdul-Raheem

While the World Celebrated the First Anniversary of the Life And Legacy of Dr. Tajudeen Abdul Raheem at London's Amnesty International Human Rights Action Centre, Africans on the Continent have taken a moment to reflect on the impact of a man who was for many the flag-bearer of Global Pan-African thought. The latest compilation book of Tajudeen's postcards, Speaking Truth to Power, in order to appreciate the essence of the man who dedicated his adult life to African liberation. He was the former United Nations Millennium Campaign Deputy Director for Africa and Director of Justice Africa. According to the view of columnist, Tajudeen returns repeatedly on his day, Africa Day, with a clear demand: "You need to ask yourself whether by your action or inaction you are part of the problem or part of the solution. Happy Africa Day!

Rwanda: Kaberuka Re-Elected

Dr. Donald Kaberuka has been re-elected as the President of the African Development Bank (AfDB), giving him five more years at the wheel of the continent's development bank. Addressing a press briefing shortly after his re-election, the President said he would focus on accelerating economic integration of the continent, which is still largely viewed through the prism of natural resources. Kaberuka said he would achieve this by working closely with regional economic commissions. The former Rwandan finance minister was first elected as the 7th President of the Bank in 2005. In 2009, the Bank's project and program approvals, more than doubled to \$12 billion compared to \$5.4 billion in 2008.

4. Economy and Energy

Rwanda: Experts Commend Financial Sector Progress

Making Finance Work for African Partnership (MFW4A) said that Rwanda's financial sector is small but growing; a partnership of development partners for African countries coordinated by the African Development Bank (AfDB) is making better the financial sector. The new website was launched in a bid to support the efforts of African countries to boost economic growth and reduce poverty by promoting financial sector development. Its main functions include the coordination of donor and stakeholder activities, promoting country- and region-led financial sector development activities, advocacy, outreach, and knowledge management. Coordinated by the AfDB and supported by 12 development partners, the website will serve as a knowledge hub and repository for financial sector development in Africa, and as a platform for information exchange among practitioners. The website also includes an interactive session (blogging) called "Africa Finance Forum" where prominent economists, academics, and financial sector practitioners will discuss current issues in African financial sectors. The Making Finance Work for Africa Partnership was established in 2007, at the Annual Meetings of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

East Africa: Rwanda Tops EAC As Best Business Haven - IFC-WB

Rwanda is East Africa's best destination for investment, says a new report released by the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the World Bank. The report shows areas where individual economies in the East African Community (EAC) shine, and notes that reforms make Rwanda one of the fastest places in the world to start a business. It is followed by Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Burundi respectively. Securing credit is very straightforward in Kenya, and Tanzania ranks well in enforcing contracts.

Rwanda: Tourism Receipts Rise 5 Per Cent

Intensive marketing of Rwanda's tourism products and a steady recovery in the global economy have helped the country register a 5 percent rise in tourism revenues to \$44.4m

in the first quarter of 2010 compared to \$42m in the same period last year, according to official statistics.

5. Elections

Burundi: Govt's Opposition Demand Re-Election

Burundi's major opposition parties have demanded a re-vote of this week's local-level elections, which have so far given an extraordinary landslide victory to the ruling party. In a letter signed by eight parties, they said that the vote, started on Monday to elect 1,935 local politicians, had been ruined with "mass fraud orchestrated by the ruling party." They also threatened to boycott the rest of the elections. The protest is an early sign that the elections, which many feared could lead to violence, won't run as smoothly as hoped. The polls are the first phase of a summer-long election marathon that includes votes for Members of Parliament and President. These early local votes are supposed to set the tone for the rest. The document, signed by the opposition parties, including the recently demilitarized National Liberation Forces, which was an active rebel group until last year, claimed that there had been widespread vote-rigging. Human rights watchdogs have warned of election violence as political parties bolster their ranks with former soldiers. Both the ruling party and the opposition have claimed that each side is raising youth militias to act as activist thugs.

EU Observers Praise Burundi Election despite Opposition Complaints

Michael Onyiego | Nairobi 28 May 2010

The ruling party in Burundi has claimed victory in local elections held Monday. Despite two delays and opposition complaints, the head of the European Union election observer mission said the vote met international standards, and she praised the efforts of the central African nation. Voter turnout was very high. More than 90 percent of the Burundi's 3.5 million registered voters participated. On Thursday, the head of the European Union election observer team, Renate Weber, released the mission's preliminary analysis of the polls, and praised Burundi for its civic participation. Weber said the initial round of voting was conducted in a peaceful atmosphere, and she expressed satisfaction with the overall process. Official results released Friday show the ruling National Council for the Defense of Democracy winning easily. According to the results, the ruling party captured about 64 percent of the vote. The former rebel group National Liberation Forces took 14 percent of the vote.

6. U.S-Africa

Rwanda Tells Off U.S. on Human Rights Claims

The Rwandan government has told off the United States over the human-rights situation in the country, saying that America does not understand Rwanda. Rwandan foreign minister and government spokesperson Louise Mushikiwabo said America's understanding of Rwanda had to be "contextualized." Moreover he said that Rwandans in

Rwanda don't have any anxiety. They are at a very exciting time of their history. Earlier this week, top American diplomat Johnny Carson warned that the Rwanda government was tightening political expression in the country, and criticized the arrest of an opposition politician. Mr Carson, speaking to the United States Congress in Washington DC, said that the political environment in Rwanda was "riddled by a series of worrying actions," including the arrest of a controversial opposition candidate.

Rwanda: U.S. Official Pledges Support to Region's 'Positive Momentum'

The US senior diplomat for African affairs concluded a two-week tour of Africa and the Great Lakes, last week, and was briefing US lawmakers on the latest developments in the region. Following his recent tour of the great lakes region, Johnnie Carson, the United States Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, has pledged to support what he says is a "positive momentum," in the region. According to the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Information Programs, Carson told the U.S. Congress that the situation in Africa's Great Lakes region has improved and the US remains "dedicated to doing what we can to keep that positive momentum going. He said central to those efforts is improving the situation in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where the continuing presence of armed groups has been making worse by the lack of state authority.

7. Environment

Gabon hopes for cash for forest protection

Gabon's President Ali Bongo Ondimba on his way to an international conference on climate change and forests hopes he can cash in aid funds in return for further forest protection. A Gabonese climate council was launched according to press release of presidency. Gabon has done much to protect its rainforest, already in 2005 being classified the best in Africa in Yale University's Environmental Sustainability Index. 80 percent of Gabon's landmass is covered by rainforest, which forms part of the vast Congo Basin. And the Congo Basin is the world's largest carbon sink after the Amazon and is estimated by scientists to capture more than 70 million tonnes of carbon each year. While most other countries in the Congo Basin - including Congo Kinshasa (DRC), Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea - have lost large parts of their virgin forests to more or less uncontrolled logging, Gabon over the last decade has taken a number of actions to improve forests. President Bongo therefore has taken a greater interest in the carbon trade, hoping his large protected forests finally will pay off. Today, the Gabonese President arrived at the Oslo Climate and Forest Conference as one of very few state leaders, hoping to sell Gabon as a preferable carbon sink to industrial countries.

Rwanda: Environmental Watchdog Issues New Guidelines

Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA) has released new guidelines in environmental education and training. The guidelines contained in a paper titled 'Rwanda Environmental Education for Sustainable Development Strategy', also include a five-year

action plan for 2010-2015 highlighting areas of interest to consider when dealing with environmental conservation.

Rwanda: NAFA to Validate Forestry Strategy

The National Forestry Authority (nafa) is Currently Drafting a New Three year strategic plan to be implemented in managing forest resources and optimize their economic and ecological functions in a sustainable manner. Minister of Forestry and Mineral Resources Bazivamo, noted that the government perceives environmental protection as one priority area that is a strong pillar to sustainable development.

1. Politics

World Press Freedom Debated at International Conference

VOA

The World Congress of the International Federation of Journalists is meeting in Cadiz, Spain to discuss press freedom around the world. And tensions between some African governments and the media were addressed.

Delegates heard from Pansy Tlakula, Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information of the African Commission for Human and Peoples' Rights. She says many individuals and organizations have told her there is "increasing animosity" between journalists and African governments.

"Maybe animosity is too strong, but each side is not happy with another," she says.

Tlakula adds, "The journalists feel that there is undue restrictions on freedom of expression and that they've been targeted and intimidated, harassed. Governments, on the other hand, feel that the media reports very irresponsible way without due regard to the privacy of the people they're reporting on. And that's what led to the statement that I made."

Does each side have a point?

"I think it depends on the context," she says, "If you look at what happens in some parts of the continent, you still have criminal defamation laws that are used to prosecute journalists that report negatively on the authorities."

On the other hand, she says, "I think there is a need for the journalist community to pay particular attention on issues of professional ethics, on values of fairness (and) accurate reporting. And by saying this I do not for once suggest that if a journalist acts in an irresponsible manner that in itself justifies the restriction of freedom of expression."

A free press

"Free press, in particular, and freedom of expression, in general (are) very important not only on the African continent, but everywhere else in the world because without free press you cannot have democracy. You cannot have good governance. You cannot have the rule of law. You know, the media act as a watch dog against those who are in power," she says.

Many rights groups have accused some countries in Africa of muzzling and harassing the media, such as Eritrea, Somalia and Zimbabwe, among others. Tlakula says those issues

can be addressed. She in the past, in Eritrea, the commission “adjudicated on a complaint that involved journalists, who were incarcerated in Eritrea.”

Many journalists remain in jail there and Tlakula says it may be time to attempt another mission there.

“We have reached the point where I think we need constructive dialogue with the government of this country, where maybe my office, together with media practitioners and media organizations and governments, can sit around a table and try and find each other,” she says.

This week, the Zimbabwean government announced it would allow the licensing of four newspapers, after years of being criticized by rights groups for its media policies.

“Zimbabwe has come a long way. And I think the fact that four newspapers were registered is a step in the right direction. And we have to encourage the government of Zimbabwe to continue with media reforms to open up spaces for journalists to operate freely,” she says.

The IFJ says it represents 600,000 journalists in 125 countries.

Rwanda: Ingabire 'Lawyer' Not Accredited

The New Times

Kigali — Peter Erlinder, the American lawyer who is in the country to defend Victoire Ingabire, the embattled leader of the yet-to-be-registered political party, FDU-Inkingi has not yet received official approval from the relevant authorities, to practice in the country.

Erlinder, who was the lead counsel for Major Aloys Ntabakuze at the International Criminal Tribunal of Rwanda (ICTR), has been expressing his readiness to defend Ingabire in her ongoing case, but authorities say he has processes to follow before expressing his intentions.

Ingabire is facing charges of associating with a terrorist group, propagating the Genocide ideology, revisionism and ethnic division.

A senior lawyer at the Kigali Bar Association, the body that is responsible for accrediting all lawyers before they can practice in the country, has denied having received any application from the American lawyer asking for a go-ahead to practice.

"We have never stopped anyone from practicing in the country, as long as they fulfil the legal requirements--that is reciprocity, where two countries have a mutual arrangement to allow lawyers from either countries to practice," the lawyer said.

"We also haven't seen any documents from the bar association, from his country of origin to confirm whether indeed he is a recognised member of a bar association. Once we have these requirements, any one is allowed to practice. We haven't received anything from Erlinder."

In a phone interview with The New Times, Erlinder indeed agrees that there are procedures to be observed but could not confirm whether he has been given a green light to defend Ingabire.

"I have undertaken the processes, but at this moment, that is a radical question and I am not ready to speak about it this afternoon. I can talk about it tomorrow," Erlinder said.

He said that he has written to the Prosecutor General, Martin Ngoga, and the Minister of Justice, Tharcisse Karugarama, informing them of his intentions but the Justice Minister in an interview, said the only communication he received was in form of greetings.

"I saw the letter but it only contained greetings to me. I am not responsible for any accreditations," Karugarama said.

Ngoga also received a copy of the same letter but he says beyond the letter there other procedures to be followed.

"As far as the procedure to accredit a foreign lawyer to practice or appear in any case in Rwanda, I have no communication to that effect," Ngoga said.

"Other communications from this lawyer, formal or through the press are short of that requirement."

In an earlier interview with The New Times, Karugarama said that for Erlinder to be on Ingabire's defence team, he should first meet the requirements that authorise lawyers to practice in Rwanda.

"There are laws that govern lawyers in Rwanda. It is not a jungle where everyone walks in to practice law. If he meets the conditions, defending someone is his right," Karugarama said. "I don't think a Rwandan lawyer can just go to America or any other European Country and start practicing law. I guess they also have laws in place. The fact that he defended Bagosora or any other Genocidaire does not give him passage to practice in Rwanda."

Prior to travelling to Rwanda, Erlinder and a group of other lawyers of ICTR convened a conference in Brussels, Belgium which attracted several wanted Genocide fugitives, including Eugene Rwamucyo.

Rwamucyo, was arrested by French Police on Wednesday.

Erlinder is also a self-proclaimed genocide denier. A day before the 12th commemoration of the 1994 Genocide, he sent an open letter to Stephen Harper, the Canadian Prime Minister, in which he clearly denied the genocide.

The letter contained statements that deny, minimize, justify the 1994 genocide and also attempted to portray a negative image of the current leadership by denying the role it played in halting the genocide.

He completely denies the fact that genocide took place in Rwanda and prefers to use ambiguous, misleading and negating terminologies such as "terrible massacres", "horrific events", "massive civilian killings" and "civilian-civilian massacres".

Rwanda: Government Committed to Good Governance-Musoni

The New Times

Kigali — The Government is committed to continue promoting and achieving good governance as the first pillar of the country's Vision 2020 through its medium and long term policies and practices.

This was said Tuesday by the Minister of Local Government, James Musoni, while opening a two-day seminar on Governance aimed at assessing the 2009 Global Integrity Report on Rwanda which opened in Kigali.

Addressing the meet organized by Rwanda Governance Advisory Council (RGAC) in collaboration with Global Integrity, Musoni said that the government has a common goal of promoting good governance through enhancing civil liberties, political rights, voice and accountability, transparency and the fight against corruption.

"For the past few years, Rwanda has steadily improved in governance and I am certain that evidence speaks for itself," Musoni said.

The Minister added that the country has dedicated a lot of efforts towards reconstruction of the nation and its social capital anchored on good governance, underpinned by a capable state alongside the other Vision 2020 pillars.

"This conviction is shown in several institutions we have started and supported, including the Ombudsman's office, the Office of the Prosecutor General and the Auditor General's office which oversee compliance, respecting and observing government policies, rules on corruption and accountability," Musoni noted.

He added that the country will continue supporting institutions like the RGAC whose mandate is to network with other expert institutions on the globe to promote and monitor good governance.

According to Prof. Anastase Shyaka, the Executive Secretary of RGAC, the meeting aimed at identifying mechanisms of how to use the findings of the Global Integrity Report on Rwanda to impact on governance.

"In general, Rwanda performed well with a score of over 70 percent-particularly excelling in 3 of the 6 areas that the report covered, including the categories of anti-corruption, oversight and regulation and administration and regulation." Shyaka said.

He however noted that the report highlights some areas where improvement is needed, which includes access to public information and accountability.

Global Integrity which included Rwanda for the first time in its 2009 report, ranked the country on several indicators, among them, Civil Society Organizations (CSO), Media and Public Information where the country scored 63%.

On the elections sub-indicators, the country scored 83%. On Administration and Regulation Rwanda scored 80%, 88% on Oversight and regulation and 81% on Anti-Corruption.

"Rwanda showed very interesting trends and it is very encouraging though there are some areas where improvements need to be made but all in all, significant reforms have been made in the area of governance particularly dealing with corruption," said the Nathaniel Heller, the Managing Director of Global Integrity.

He added that Global Integrity, one of the leading international non-profit organizations which track governance and corruption trends around the world will continue assessing Rwanda. The research is done in collaboration with Legatum Institute.

2. Peace keeping/ Conflict Resolution and Security matters

Congo-Kinshasa: Security Council Agrees to Convert UN Mission in Country into Stabilization Force

UN News Service

The Security Council today extended the current mandate of the United Nations peacekeeping force in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) by one month and agreed to transform the operation so that from then on it becomes a stabilization mission in the vast African nation.

"In view of the new phase that has been reached in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations mission in that country, MONUC, shall, as from 1 July 2010, bear the title of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic

Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO)," the Council said in a unanimously adopted resolution.

MONUC's mandate now extends through 30 June, when it becomes MONUSCO, which has been authorized to stay in the DRC until 30 June next year.

The resolution also authorized the withdrawal of up to 2,000 UN military personnel by 30 June this year from areas where security has improved enough to allow their removal.

The Council decided that MONUSCO shall comprise, in addition to the appropriate civilian, judiciary and correction components, a maximum of 19,815 military personnel, 760 military observers, 391 police personnel and 1,050 personnel of former police units.

It also authorized the mission to keep a reserve force capable of redeploying rapidly elsewhere in the country, while concentrating its military forces in the east of the country.

The Council stressed that the DRC Government bore the primary responsibility for security, peace building and development in the country, and encouraged Kinshasa to remain fully committed to protecting the population through the establishment of professional and sustainable security forces.

It also encouraged the Government to promote non-military solutions as an integral part of the overall solution for reducing the threat posed by Congolese and foreign armed groups and to restore full State authority in the areas freed from armed groups.

"Future reconfigurations of MONUSCO should be determined on the basis of the evolution of the situation on the ground," the Council said in its resolution.

Any future reconfiguration will be based on the following consideration - the completion of the ongoing military operations in the Kivu provinces and Orientale province; an improved capacity of the DRC Government to effectively protect the population through the establishment of sustainable security forces with a view to progressively take over MONUSCO's security role; and the consolidation of State authority across the territory, through the deployment of Congolese civil administration, in particular the police, territorial administration and rule of law institutions in areas freed from armed groups.

MONUC's current mandate was due to expire on Monday.

In his latest report on MONUC, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon had recommended that the 20,000-strong MONUC force begin a drawdown of troops by 30 June. The Government had proposed a total withdrawal of the peacekeeping forces by 30 August 2011.

Earlier this month, members of the Security Council visited the DRC to hear the opinion of the Government there on the future of MONUC.

They also noted that substantial progress had been made since the deployment of the mission in 1999 to monitor the implementation of the peace process that was intended to end civil war in the DRC.

MONUC peacekeepers have also been providing logistical support to the Congolese national army in its operations against Rwandan Hutu rebels and other insurgent groups in the restive eastern provinces of North and South Kivu.

3. Pan Africa

East Africa: Regional Body to Sign Security Pact with AU

The New Times

Kigali — The International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) will soon sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the African Union (AU) aimed at harmonizing peace and security approaches, a senior ICGLR official has said.

Ambassador Liberata Mulamula made the disclosure during the opening of the eleven-member bloc's Inter-ministerial Committee Meeting currently underway in Kampala, Uganda.

"We expect to conclude the MoU with the African Union before the end of this year," Mulamula told the participants.

Foreign Affairs Permanent Secretary Eugene Munyakayanza is representing Minister Louise Mushikiwabo at the meeting.

The meeting, which is a follow up on the ICGLR summit that was held in Lusaka, Zambia last year, is geared towards discussing among other issues, the path to ensuring lasting peace, stability and development in the region.

Mulamula said that the regional organization had made progress in signing MoUs with seven regional blocs, and said these had played a huge role in defining the scope of cooperation.

She urged ministers from partner states in those organizations to render necessary support to ensure success of joint programmes.

"Our appeal to the ministers is to support these efforts and avoid duplication of efforts and initiatives that overstretch our limited resources," she said.

On peace and security, the ICGLR boss said that there is still a challenge in tackling the remaining armed groups and negative forces operating in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

In his opening statement, Uganda's Minister of Internal Affairs, Kirunda Kivenjinja, said there is still need for member states to implement the pact on security, stability, and development in the region.

"The national and regional processes should be effectively interlinked if we are to fully realize total peace and security, democracy and governance," he said.

Youth representatives at the meeting called upon member states to engage them in trans-boundary activities to encourage ownership and posterity.

Rwanda: Books - Speaking Truth to Power - Tajudeen Abdul-Raheem

The New Times

Opinion

While the World Celebrated the First Anniversary of the Life And Legacy of Dr. Tajudeen Abdul Raheem at London's Amnesty International Human Rights Action Centre, Africanists on the Continent have taken a moment to reflect on the impact of a man who was for many the flag-bearer of Global Pan-African thought.

I sat this weekend to read the latest compilation book of Tajudeen's postcards, *Speaking Truth to Power*, in order to appreciate the essence of the man who dedicated his adult life to African liberation.

The former United Nations Millennium Campaign Deputy Director for Africa and Director of Justice Africa lost his life 25 May 2009 in Nairobi en route to launch a maternal health campaign in Kigali.

Speaking Truth to Power is a well-balanced meal for the novice to expert Pan-Africanist, and reads with the pace and tone of a man committed to African people over political alignment.

From urging African leaders to hasten toward continental unity to charging men to play critical roles in ending violence against women, Tajudeen illustrates his acute awareness of the most pressing issues in contemporary African affairs.

Of particular relevance today are the articles, "Every day should be a woman's day," "Africa without borders," and "Africa Day: who says slavery is dead?" The first article mentioned reminds readers that "the world cannot be a better place if women's conditions are not better in it" and calls for true liberation and equality across gender.

The second postcard applauds the efforts made within East Africa to drive socio-political and economic integration, particularly with Rwanda and Burundi joining the East African Community.

In the third, which posted exactly four years ago today, Tajudeen, does not fail to bring our attention to the essential question for every person moving toward a better Africa. Speaking from the land of the greats, Tajudeen returns repeatedly on his day, Africa Day, with a clear demand: "You need to ask yourself whether by your action or inaction you are part of the problem or part of the solution. Happy Africa Day!"

'Speaking Truth to Power' is a good book for those who want a broad-spanning look into the mind of a true Pan-African leader. For those who read for enlightenment, find a copy of the book and turn on the light.

For those with differing views, grow more committed in your stance only after giving Dr. Tajudeen Abdul-Raheem your time and your ear. The man who simply said "Don't agonise! Organise!" becomes clearer through the compilation.

Pambazuka Press, dubbed the progressive Pan-African publisher, disseminates analysis and debate on the struggle for freedom and justice in Africa through the voices of the peoples of Africa and global South.

Amir Demeke is an international correspondent with Black Power Media ("Nothing More, Nothing Less"), an independent media group that centers on the experiences and liberation of African people.

Rwanda: Kaberuka Re-Elected

The New Times

Dr. Donald Kaberuka has been re-elected as the President of the African Development Bank (AfDB), giving him five more years at the helm of the continent's development bank.

Kaberuka, who was contesting unopposed, was re-elected on yesterday during the ongoing annual meetings of Board of Governors in the Ivorian capital, Abidjan.

Addressing a press briefing shortly after his re-election, the President said he would focus on accelerating economic integration of the continent, which is still largely viewed through the prism of natural resources.

"Africa is still viewed as the continent to supply oil, minerals ... During my second term of office we shall deploy all the talent and energies to accelerate economic integration of the continent," he said.

Kaberuka said he would achieve this by working closely with regional economic commissions.

The former Rwandan finance minister was first elected as the 7th President of the Bank in 2005.

AfDB

The Annual Meetings were preceded by technical meetings.

Since his election, Dr. Kaberuka has carried out major reforms to refocus the ADF's agenda on regional economic integration, private sector, infrastructure, governance, and a special initiative for post conflict countries and fragile states.

In 2009, the Bank's project and programme approvals, more than doubled to \$12 billion compared to \$5.4 billion in 2008.

In a related development, Governors of the Bank on Thursday also approved tripling of the Bank's capital resources to nearly \$100 billion, signaling strong confidence in the bank's management.

This substantial increase allows the AfDB to sustain a higher level of lending - even to the private sector - in response to overwhelming demand in all countries.

4. Economy and Energy

Rwanda: Experts Commend Financial Sector Progress

The New Times

Abidjan — Rwanda's financial sector is small but growing, a partnership of development partners for African countries coordinated by the African Development Bank (AfDB) dubbed "Making Finance Work for African Partnership (MFWW4A)" has said.

According to MFWW4A, while financial supervision, oversight, and regulation are weak, the government has undertaken significant reforms and banks' soundness and performance has considerably improved since 2005.

"While access to financial services remains limited, ongoing reforms are rapidly improving Rwandans' ability to participate in the financial sector: over 30 percent of households now have bank accounts," says the MFWW4A website that was launched on Monday during the ongoing African Development Bank (AfDB) meetings.

The new website was launched in a bid to support the efforts of African countries to boost economic growth and reduce poverty by promoting financial sector development.

Its main functions include the coordination of donor and stakeholder activities, promoting country- and region-led financial sector development activities, advocacy, outreach, and knowledge management.

Coordinated by the AfDB and supported by 12 development partners, the website will serve as a knowledge hub and repository for financial sector development in Africa, and as a platform for information exchange among practitioners.

"The Partnership's mission is to bring together African governments, development partners and the private sector to unleash the potential of the financial sector to drive economic development and reduce poverty across the continent," MFWW4A says.

According to the forum, dynamic and efficient financial sectors can play a major role in increasing private investment, creating jobs and raising incomes.

The MFWW4A website also notes that less than 20 percent of African households have access to formal financial services while credit to the private sector accounts for less than 30 percent of total lending.

It comprises five main components including country hub: where users can access African country profiles, with up-to-date data and statistics on the financial sector.

It also has thematic hub section which provides information on all the areas of financial sector development covered by the Partnership, from access to finance and financial sector news section.

The website also includes an interactive session (blogging) dubbed "Africa Finance Forum" where prominent economists, academics, and financial sector practitioners will discuss current issues in African financial sectors.

The Making Finance Work for Africa Partnership was established in 2007, at the Annual Meetings of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

It provides an opportunity for policymakers, private sector innovators and technical assistance providers to identify and discuss the most pressing priorities for African financial sector development.

East Africa: Rwanda Tops EAC As Best Business Haven - IFC-WB

The New Times

Kigali — Rwanda is East Africa's best destination for investment, says a new report released by the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the World Bank.

The report shows areas where individual economies in the East African Community (EAC) shine, and notes that reforms make Rwanda one of the fastest places in the world to start a business.

It is followed by Kenya, Uganda Tanzania and Burundi respectively. Securing credit is very straightforward in Kenya, and Tanzania ranks well in enforcing contracts.

The survey further notes the bloc's economies continue to improve but still have a long way to go.

Reacting to the survey, Rwanda Development Board's Chief Operations Officer, Claire Akamanzi, noted that critical barriers remain in time and cost of liquidating a business, and difficulties in cross-border trade, however they are being addressed.

"We must first of all note that according to that report, Rwanda is in the first position in EAC in the ease of doing business. This is in recognition of the depth and breadth of business reforms that we continue to implement,"

"When it comes to liquidating or insolvency, Rwanda is ranked as a 'no practice' country because there weren't enough insolvency cases in court,"

"However, since we passed the insolvency law in 2009, we have already seen about 10 cases in court so the landscape is changing for the better"

She stressed that trading across borders is a challenge because Rwanda is a landlocked country.

"This increases the cost of importing and exporting as we have to go through Uganda to Mombasa where the bulk of our goods come through" "To mitigate this, we are working with the rest of EAC to streamline procedures, eliminate non-tariff barriers and build regional infrastructure. This, we believe, will improve trading across borders," Akamanzi said.

The IFC- World Bank report takes a close look at business regulations in each EAC country and highlights that the region has pockets of good practices that if adopted by all EAC countries, could yield a very healthy business environment.

Rwanda: Tourism Receipts Rise 5 Per Cent

The New Times

Kigali — Intensive marketing of Rwanda's tourism products and a steady recovery in the global economy have helped the country register a 5 percent rise in tourism revenues to \$44.4m in the first quarter of 2010 compared to \$42m in the same period last year, according to official statistics.

Rwanda Development Board (RDB)-Tourism and Conservation said, Monday, that from January to March this year Rwanda hosted an estimate 159,977 visitors and recorded a remarkable 8 percent increase in international visitors' arrivals and 25 percent increase in leisure visitors.

Annette Mbabazi, the Media and events Officer at RDB-Tourism and Conservation said: "This increase is attributed to the intense campaign and promotion of Rwanda's beauty, especially at international fairs and online.

"After analysing the visitor arrival statistics together with the Directorate of Immigration and Emigration, the park activities equally increased with the recorded park activities amounting to 9,592 park visits."

This corresponds to an 18 percent increase compared to last year at the same period, she said.

Famous for its highland gorillas and hilly landscapes, Rwanda also registered an increase of 12 percent in gorilla visits, Akagera 25 percent and volcanoes 19 percent, RDB said. However, Nyungwe visits slid by 6 percent.

Rwanda expects the number of overall visitors to reach 750,000 people in 2010, increasing tourism receipts by 7 percent to \$187m.

5. Elections

Burundi: Govt's Opposition Demand Re-Election

The Monitor

Bujumbura — Burundi's major opposition parties have demanded a re-vote of this week's local-level elections, which have so far given an unprecedented landslide victory to the ruling party.

In a letter signed by eight parties, they said that the vote, started on Monday to elect 1,935 local politicians, had been ruined with "mass fraud orchestrated by the ruling party." They also threatened to boycott the rest of the elections. "Opposition parties categorically reject the provisional results," the letter said.

The protest is an early sign that the elections, which many feared could lead to violence, won't run as smoothly as hoped. The polls are the first phase of a summer-long election marathon that includes votes for Members of Parliament and President. These early local votes are supposed to set the tone for the rest.

The document, signed by the opposition parties, including the recently demilitarized National Liberation Forces, which was an active rebel group until last year, claimed that there had been widespread vote-rigging.

The leader of the opposition FNL, Agathon Rwasa, also threatened to pull out of the rest of the elections, which could bring Burundi's tattered peace to the brink of war. According to the a recent data from Burundi's national election commission, President Nkurunziza's CNDD-FDD party had garnered over 70 per cent of the vote, with some estimates ranging as high as 80 per cent.

"We do not accept these results and the commission should take into account," Mr Rwasa said. "We will not make fools of ourselves by taking part in the rest of the elections." Over 3.5 million voters have registered for Burundi's elections, which people hope will bridge the gap between civil war, to a stable, growing East African economy. But the opposition parties said many more, unregistered, had voted also.

Human rights watchdogs have warned of election violence as political parties bolster their ranks with former soldiers. Both the ruling party and the opposition have claimed that each side is raising youth militias to act as activist thugs. The country is emerging from a long civil war that killed hundred of thousands of people. Most of the political parties in this year's elections are former rebels and there are fears that peace will disintegrate if the polls become too divisive.

EU Observers Praise Burundi Election Despite Opposition Complaints **Michael Onyiego | Nairobi 28 May 2010**

VOA

The ruling party in Burundi has claimed victory in local elections held Monday. Despite two delays and opposition complaints, the head of the European Union election observer mission said the vote met international standards, and she praised the efforts of the central African nation.

On Monday, May 24 the citizens of Burundi cast their ballots to select members of local councils across the country. Voter turnout was very high. More than 90 percent of the Burundi's 3.5 million registered voters participated. Monday's local balloting was the first of five elections in the central African nation in coming months, which will include the selection of a president and parliament.

On Thursday, the head of the European Union election observer team, Renate Weber, released the mission's preliminary analysis of the polls, and praised Burundi for its civic participation. Weber said the initial round of voting was conducted in a peaceful atmosphere, and she expressed satisfaction with the overall process.

"So far the elections have taken place in a calm atmosphere," said Weber. "We are definitely extremely impressed with the massive participation of the people to the vote and we definitely are convinced that this is an extraordinary civic attitude. And it shows that the people of Burundi really want to be involved in the democratic development of their country."

Official results released Friday show the ruling National Council for the Defense of Democracy winning easily. According to the results, the ruling party captured about 64 percent of the vote. The former rebel group National Liberation Forces took 14 percent of the vote.

Despite the confidence of international observers, Monday's poll was not without controversy. The vote was initially scheduled for Friday, May 21st but delayed twice due to logistical issues.

Opposition groups expressed concerns about the moves and raised questions about the credibility of the vote. Though all parties eventually accepted the postponement, the National Liberation Forces called the results "impossible."

Eight opposition parties demanded a revote on Wednesday, and accused the electoral commission of an anti-opposition bias. The commission has stood its ground and asked for proof of the alleged fraud.

According to Weber, the delays had no effect on the voting process. The EU official dismissed concerns that opposition complaints would affect the election and called on all sides to deal with the issue through official channels.

"It is normal after an election to hear some actors who do not want to recognize or accept the result of an election. But, the truth is that they have to do it in the proper, legal way. So they have to file official complaints, either to the national commission or to those provincial commissions. And they have to come with the evidence of what they said. When someone speaks about fraud, they have to come with the evidence to prove it," said Weber.

Burundi has remained relatively calm throughout the voting process. Despite opposition concerns, there has been no real threat of boycott. Burundi is still recovering from a civil war that ended several years ago.

Attention now turns to presidential elections being held on June 28. As of Thursday, seven candidates, including six from the opposition, had registered as candidates. The ruling party candidate and current president Pierre Nkurunziza will face a strong challenge from National Liberation Forces candidate Agathon Rwasa. The president is also up against two former presidents of Burundi as well as two candidates from a breakaway faction of his own party. Mr. Nkurunziza is widely expected to win next month.

6. U.S-Africa

Rwanda Tells Off U.S. on Human Rights Claims

Daily Nation on the Web

Kigali — The Rwandan government has told off the United States over the human-rights situation in the country, saying that America does not understand Rwanda.

In an email exchange with local reporters Rwanda's foreign minister and government spokesperson Louise Mushikiwabo said America's understanding of Rwanda had to be "contextualized."

"Rwandans in Rwanda don't have any anxiety. They are at a very exciting time of their history," the minister said.

Earlier this week, top American diplomat Johnny Carson warned that the Rwanda government was tightening political expression in the country, and criticized the arrest of an opposition politician.

This comes in the wake of a series of grenade attacks that have shook the capital, Kigali, and cast into question the country's stability ahead of presidential elections this August.

Mr Carson, speaking to the United States Congress in Washington DC, said that the political environment in Rwanda was "riddled by a series of worrying actions," including the arrest of a controversial opposition candidate.

"We appreciate, in the context of the most tragic event in recent history -the genocide - the need for security, stability, and reconciliation is critical, but long-term stability is best promoted by democratic governance and respect for human rights," Mr, Carson said.

In recent weeks international watchdog Human Rights Watch has been kicked out of the country and two of the most popular independent newspapers suspended and taken to court.

Victoire Ingabire, who returned to Rwanda in January to run for president has been arrested and accused of divisionism and 'genocide ideology.'

Two other political parties -- one accused of being ethnically divisive, and the other made up of former ruling-party officials -- have also been unable to register.

But Rwanda's foreign minister Louise Mushikiwabo said that the United States had an "out-of-Rwanda reading" of the country, and that the current politics needed to be "contextualized."

The issue of context is vital in criticism from abroad, and is one of the bedrocks of its development policy and political identity.

Rwanda: U.S. Official Pledges Support to Region's 'Positive Momentum'

The New Times

Kigali — Following his recent tour of the great lakes region, Johnnie Carson, the United States Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, has pledged to support what he says is a "positive momentum," in the region.

According to the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Information Programmes, Carson told the U.S. Congress Tuesday that the situation in Africa's Great Lakes region has improved and the US remains "dedicated to doing what we can to keep that positive momentum going."

He said central to those efforts is improving the situation in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), "where the continuing presence of armed groups has been exacerbated by the lack of state authority."

The US senior diplomat for African affairs concluded a two-week tour of Africa and the Great Lakes, last week, and was briefing US lawmakers on the latest developments in the region.

The US is helping train the DRC army with a focus on human rights practices, Carson said.

"The judicial and penal systems in the DRC are broken, and impunity rather than accountability reigns. Illegal natural resource exploitation funds armed gangs.

"President Kabila has taken important steps to address insecurity, but they remain insufficient," Carson said, adding that the US is looking forward to the DRC's imminent national elections in September 2011.

"In my conversations with President Kabila last month, I stressed the importance of adhering to this democratic electoral calendar. The government has promised that the elections will be free, democratic and transparent. We hope that this will be the case."

7. Environment

Gabon hopes for cash for forest protection

Afrol News

Gabon's President Ali Bongo Ondimba on his way to an international conference on climate change and forests hopes he can cash in aid funds in return for further forest protection. A Gabonese climate council was launched today.

Omar Bongo, Gabon's ex-President and father of the incumbent may have acted five years too early when he decided to effectively protect large parts of his country's vast rainforests. The deceased President hoped for an ecotourism boom, but nowadays, forest protection is far more profitable.

Several billion dollar deals have been announced during the last two years, where industrial countries sponsor forest protection and regeneration in developing countries in a new type of climate deal. Protecting or re-establishing forests - which function as the world's lungs by consuming CO₂ - is considered one of the most effective ways to limit global warming. Industrial countries "buy off" potential logging and as such get climate quotas enabling them to continue emission of greenhouse gases.

Only today, a deal between Indonesia and Norway was announced, where the latter is to pay Indonesia US\$ 1 billion for an immediate moratorium on logging concessions. Earlier, Brazil and Guyana have achieved even greater sums, while Tanzania is the only African country securing a major forest protection award.

Gabon has done much to protect its rainforest, already in 2005 being classified the best in Africa in Yale University's Environmental Sustainability Index. 80 percent of Gabon's landmass is covered by rainforest, which forms part of the vast Congo Basin. And the Congo Basin is the world's largest carbon sink after the Amazon and is estimated by scientists to capture more than 70 million tonnes of carbon each year.

While most other countries in the Congo Basin - including Congo Kinshasa (DRC), Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea - have lost large parts of their virgin forests to more or less uncontrolled logging, Gabon over the last decade has taken a number of actions to improve forests.

Equatorial tropical rainforest in Gabon conservation and sustainable forest management:

Large parts of the country have been set aside as national parks and reserves. Gabon had expected to pay for the management of these valuable parks by establishing a large ecotourism sector. While many exiting destinations have already been constructed, others are still waiting for investors and revenues from the new sector have yet to take off.

President Bongo therefore has taken a greater interest in the carbon trade, hoping his large protected forests finally will pay off. Today, the Gabonese President arrived at the Oslo Climate and Forest Conference as one of very few state leaders, hoping to sell Gabon as a preferable carbon sink to industrial countries.

To make sure his initiative to save the global climate is taken seriously, a Gabonese climate council was inaugurated by the President before his departure in Libreville today. The Climate Council is to "recommend ways in which to develop the nation sustainably while combating climate change and preventing species loss," according to a press release from the Libreville presidency.

Gabon's new Climate Council comprises members of government from key ministries, including finance, foreign affairs, agriculture, health, defence, and technical experts. They are set to formulate recommendations and to "define the financial costs of integrating climate change considerations into national development policies and projects."

The Gabonese statement, issued in several languages, emphasises on Gabon's large efforts to protect its forests and on the immense value of the Congo Basin as a carbon sink. President Bongo announced he will use his voice at the Oslo conference to focus on "reducing carbon emissions generated by deforestation and the degradation of forests."

Rwanda: Environmental Watchdog Issues New Guidelines

The New Times

Kigali — Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA) has released new guidelines in environmental education and training.

The guidelines contained in a paper titled 'Rwanda Environmental Education for Sustainable Development Strategy', also include a five-year action plan for 2010-2015 highlighting areas of interest to consider when dealing with environmental conservation.

"In order to enhance the delivery of its mandate in promoting sustainable development, REMA recognises the need to have a clear strategy for Environmental Education for Sustainable Development (EESD)," the document's executive summary states.

"It therefore became paramount to develop an implementation strategy to guide and give direction to the provision of EESD in all sectors of the economy".

Speaking to The New Times, REMA's Director of Education, Rachael Tushabe, said the paper guide in proper environmental conservation.

She also revealed that the document comes on the back of Rwanda adopting the United Nations General Assembly resolution designating a UN decade of education for sustainable development.

The country is among the few African countries to come up with such an environmental strategy.

Rwanda: NAFA to Validate Forestry Strategy

The New Times

The National Forestry Authority (nafa) is Currently Drafting a New Three year strategic plan to be implemented in managing forest resources and optimize their economic and ecological functions in a sustainable manner.

Speaking to officials in the forestry sector during a workshop held in Kigali yesterday, the Minister of Forestry and Mineral Resources, Christophe Bazivamo, said that the underlying goal of the strategy is to increase institutional support to forestry stakeholders as well as raise public awareness of the importance of forests.

"When someone wants to start a farm, he or she easily clears or burns away part of forest cover without evaluating the impact this might cause," Bazivamo said.

"The forestry sector must get due attention and support it needs so that we can all have a safe and beneficial environment".

Bazivamo also noted that the government perceives environmental protection as one priority area that is a strong pillar to sustainable development.

"Through the National Forestry Fund, the government directly supports and replenishes the sector. This goodwill and commitment it shows must flow into the public so that they can utilize forests in a conservative manner," he said.

The Director General of NAFA, Frank Rutabingwa, told the stakeholders that the new forestry strategy will support the implementation of several plans with an aim of improving the management of forest resources.

"In the next 3 years, we will seek to increase the area and diversity of national forest resources through agro-forestry research as well as carry out forestry education in schools and communities," Rutabingwa said.

He added that NAFA will train and support farmers to engage in agro-forestry and forestry seed business.

"Our strategy will pursue the same overall goal of the forest policy, which aims to make the forestry sector one of the bedrocks for sustainable economic development of the country," Rutabingwa added.