

Report # 128
BUSINESS AND POLITICS IN THE MUSLIM WORLD
Central Africa
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Summary

1. Politics

Rwanda: Protests Force Spanish PM to Skip Date with Kagame

Spanish Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero opted out of an UN-sponsored meeting with Rwandan leader Paul Kagame, after protests that Kagame's regime was linked to Rwanda's genocide. It is the first of the MDG Advocacy Group set up last month by the United Nations to advance the Millennium Development Goals, which include halving extreme poverty by 2015, with Zapatero and Kagame named co-chairs. The Spanish judiciary accuses Kagame of fomenting the ethnic clashes in a bid to seize power. The Rwandan officers are accused of murdering nine Spanish missionaries and expatriates allegedly witnesses to massacres.

Rwanda: Kagame in Spain for MDG Advocacy Group Meeting

President Paul Kagame and Spanish Prime Minister, Jose Luis Zapatero, co-chaired the first meeting of MDG Advocacy Group in Madrid. The two co-chairs, announced last month by the UN Secretary General, will lead a group of eighteen eminent personalities from around the world who have shown outstanding leadership in promoting implementation of the goals.

2. Peace keeping/ Conflict Resolution and Security matters

Burundi's Military on High Alert Following Uganda Attack

An official with Burundi's army said the military has been put on high alert to protect unarmed civilians, as well as the country's sensitive installations, following Sunday night's deadly twin blasts in Uganda's capital, Kampala. Spokesman for Burundi's army, said the military is encouraging Burundians to report anything suspicious ahead of the upcoming parliamentary election scheduled for July 23.

Congo-Kinshasa: Media Buzz On Order to Release Lubanga

The order issued by judges for Congolese war crimes accused Thomas Lubanga to be released has received wide coverage online. Media from all continents have reported the story, as have bloggers, with many dwelling on the causes of the stay of proceedings and resultant order for Mr. Lubanga's release. Others sounded out parties to the trial, and yet some looked at the way forward was likely to be. Judges ruled that Mr. Lubanga - the first person tried at the International Criminal Court (ICC) should be released unconditionally if the prosecution did not appeal the release order within five days. The stay of proceedings which preceded the release order arose from the failure by the Office of The Prosecutor (OTP) to implement an order by judges to reveal the identity of an

individual who helped prosecution investigators identify persons who testified against Mr. Lubanga.

3. Social issues/ Human Rights

Rwanda: Use Film to Tell Region's Story

The Rwanda Film Industry, commonly known as "Hillywood", has organized a festival, currently taking place, with audiences across the country getting the opportunity to watch our own movies - acted, filmed and produced by Rwandans themselves. Movies have been produced about Rwanda, however, more often than not, they have misrepresented Rwanda's story. Hillywood, over the years, has shown there is potential among Rwandans to entertain, inform, and educate through films.

Rwanda: Cultural Values Key for Devt - New Study

A study commissioned by Unity Club in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion has revealed that, emphasis on cultural values is a major contributor to social harmony and national development.

Rwanda: Teachers Discuss Genocide Studies

Educators have been urged to take it upon themselves to courageously teach their students about the Genocide if they are to be agents of change. The advice was given by the Rector of Kigali Institute of Education (KIE) Prof. George Njoroge, during a workshop on teaching Genocide and community cohesion.

4. Elections

Rwanda Arrests Second Umurabyo Journalist

Saidati Mukakibibi is the second journalist from the independent newspaper Umurabyo arrested in the past week. The Reuters news agency quotes a police spokesman as saying Mukakibibi wrote articles comparing the president with Hitler. He said the articles were accompanied by a photo of Mr. Kagame in front of a Nazi swastika that the publishers had inserted in the picture.

Rwanda: EU Chief Clarifies on Election Observer Mission

The head of delegation of the European Union clarified that the union will not send observers to Rwanda for the presidential elections slated for next month because of limited financial resources.

Investigation Demanded into Rwandan Party Official's Death

The chairman of Rwanda's opposition Democratic Green Party has called on President Paul Kagame's government to begin a thorough investigation into the murder of the vice president of his party. Frank Habineza said, despite repeated appeals to the government, the minister of interior has refused to give the opposition leaders protection after they received several threats ahead of the upcoming presidential election scheduled for August 9. Several human rights organizations have accused President Kagame's government of strongly repressing dissenting views ahead of the upcoming election, a charge the government denies.

Rwanda: Unity Body Roots for Accurate Reporting

The president of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC), Bishop John Rucyahana, has called on the media to always report accurately, saying that would be a descent contribution towards the country's development. He was addressing a press conference which was called to emphasize the need to hold peaceful elections.

5. Economy and Energy

Rwanda: Advocacy Group to Speed up MDGs

President Paul Kagame, in Madrid, Spain, Co chaired the first public meeting of the UN's Millennium Advocacy Group. Kagame, one of the lead advocates for the MDGs, has been called upon along with other advocates, to offer practical guidance, build partnerships, as well as mobilize key government actors, civil society and the private sector, in an effort to speed up achievement of the goals. In his opening remarks, President Kagame highlighted critical elements in achieving the MDGs, pointing out that the solutions to development challenges must be owned and driven locally. He noted the need for developing countries to mobilize their own human and financial resources, and the importance of private sector involvement.

Rwanda: Fertilizers Will Boost Farmers' Incomes

Officials from the Ministry of Agriculture announced that a new system where farmers will be able to get fertilizers, at subsidized prices, using their electronic identity cards at agro-sales points near them, has been introduced. The ministry said that equipment, fitted with the latest technology had been imported and will be installed in each of the sectors across the country. Farmers will use their national IDs to print vouchers that will enable them access the fertilizers from suppliers.

6. Health

Rwanda: African Youth Discuss Maternal Health

Youth representatives from 37 African countries have converged in Kampala, Uganda to discuss health and maternal problems that affect the continent, ahead of the African Union (AU) summit.

7. Refugees/ Rebel Groups/ IDPs

The United Nation's estimates 20,000 civilians in eastern Congo have been forced to flee their homes over the past week as violence increases along the volatile border with Uganda. The latest fighting has scattered people in the Beni region, located in the northernmost part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo's North Kivu province. This past week, the Congolese Armed forces has been trying to root out the remnants of the Allied Democratic Forces, a Ugandan rebel group that has remained dormant for several years in North Kivu.

ICC Orders Former Congolese Militia Leader's Release

A family member of former Congolese militia leader Thomas Lubanga said the family welcomes the news that Lubanga has been ordered released. The International Criminal Court (ICC) ruled Thursday that Lubanga should be freed without condition unless prosecutors can appeal the ruling. The ICC in The Hague July 8 ordered the suspension of Lubanga's trial because prosecutors refused to give his defense lawyers the name of a person connected with the case.

Central African Republic: Protection of Displaced Vital to Peace, Says UN Expert

The protection of 200,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) is an integral element of the peace-building process in the Central African Republic (CAR), a United Nations human rights expert said today following a week-long visit to the country.

Uganda Urged to Stop Returning Refugees to Rwanda

Advocates for refugee rights are criticizing the Ugandan government for forcibly returning hundreds of refugees to Rwanda, calling it a violation of national and international law. Kampala-based organizations the Refugee Law Project and the International Refugee Rights Initiative have called on the Ugandan government to immediately halt the removal of Rwandan refugees living in southwestern Uganda.

Rwanda: Over 1800 Refugees Repatriated From Uganda

Rwandan refugees estimated between 1,800 and 1,900 Rwandan refugees were on Wednesday night repatriated from Kyaka II and Nakivale refugee camps of western Uganda. The returnees arrived with their luggage through Gatuna border post and were received by central and local government officials.

Congo-Kinshasa: Improvements Necessary to Deal with IDPs, U.S. Official Says

Tens of thousands of people in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) have been fleeing a government offensive against Ugandan rebels, adding to the nearly 2.5 million people who have already become internally displaced or refugees in neighboring countries. U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Reuben Brigety recently visited camps for the displaced and refugees. There are about 450,000 Congolese citizens that have been forced to be refugees, and therefore displaced across borders from Congo to the nine surrounding countries and its borders. And there are two million Congolese that are displaced internally inside their own country.

Details

1. Politics

Rwanda: Protests Force Spanish PM to Skip Date with Kagame

Radio France Internationale (Paris)

Spanish Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero on Friday opted out of an UN-sponsored meeting with Rwandan leader Paul Kagame, after protests that Kagame's regime was linked to Rwanda's genocide. Bowing to mounting pressure from several Spanish political parties, Zapatero assigned foreign minister Miguel Angel Moratinos to replace him.

He also moved the meeting, which is expected to be attended by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, from government headquarters to a Madrid hotel.

It is the first of the MDG Advocacy Group set up last month by the United Nations to advance the Millennium Development Goals, which include halving extreme poverty by 2015, with Zapatero and Kagame named co-chairs.

In 2008 Spain's High Court announced its intention to prosecute 40 Rwandan army officers for genocide, crimes against humanity and terrorism related to events that took place between 1994 and 2000, including under Kagame's rule.

The Spanish judiciary accuses Kagame of fomenting the ethnic clashes in a bid to seize power. The Rwandan officers are accused of murdering nine Spanish missionaries and expatriates allegedly witnesses to massacres.

The Coordinating Committee for Development NGOs in Spain sparked off the protests on Thursday, saying the UN's choice of Kagame for the post was "questionable".

It criticized "Zapatero's passivity for accepting without objection to work beside someone accused of genocide".

There was no reaction Friday either from Kagame or Ban to Zapatero's decision not to attend.

Rwanda: Kagame in Spain for MDG Advocacy Group Meeting

The New Times

President Paul Kagame and Spanish Prime Minister, Jose Luis Zapatero, will today co-chair the first meeting of MDG Advocacy Group in Madrid.

The two co-chairs, announced last month by the UN Secretary General, will lead a group of eighteen eminent personalities from around the world who have shown outstanding leadership in promoting implementation of the goals.

The MDG Advocacy Group will support the UN Secretary General generate the political will and mobilise global action to make the upcoming MDG Summit, to be held in September, a turning point in the collective effort to achieve the Goals by 2015.

As co-chair of the group, President Kagame will be a lead advocate in driving the MDG agenda forward, raising awareness of the most effective strategies to accelerate progress, drawing lessons from Rwanda and other countries on the continent and beyond.

The UN Secretary General and other prominent figures from the development world will attend today's meeting, which will take place at the Mancloa Palace in Madrid.

2. Peace keeping/ Conflict Resolution and Security matters

Burundi's Military on High Alert Following Uganda Attack

VOA

An official with Burundi's army said the military has been put on high alert to protect unarmed civilians, as well as the country's sensitive installations, following Sunday night's deadly twin blasts in Uganda's capital, Kampala.

Colonel Gaspard Baratuza, spokesman for Burundi's army, said the military is encouraging Burundians to report anything suspicious ahead of the upcoming parliamentary election scheduled for July 23.

"We have taken into account to secure key infrastructures and we have re-enforced security measures in order to deal with the attacks that [may come] towards Burundi. Now, we didn't decrease the strength of the measures that we have taken. We have updated day-by-day according to the situation," he said.

The Somali-based hard line Islamic insurgent group al-Shabab claimed responsibility for Sunday's deadly attacks and has also warned Burundi of an imminent attack.

Recently, the insurgent group warned it will attack both Uganda and Burundi soldiers currently serving as peacekeepers forming the bulk of the African Union forces in Somalia (AMISOM) tasked with supporting Somalia's Transitional Federal Government. Last week, Sheikh Muqtar Robow Abu Mansuur, a senior al-Shabab official, issued a threat of retaliation against the peoples of Uganda and Burundi after he accused both countries of committing atrocities against residents of the Somali capital, Mogadishu, a charge a senior official of Uganda's army has denied.

Army spokesman Baratuza said Burundi's military has taken every measure to counter the threat posed by agents of the Somali hard-line insurgent group.

"We think that we should do something which is positive in order to fight against these attacks, which are [being planned] for the country. We have also reinforced [a] measure of control of the movement of the population. This is the role of the police, but we have increased vigilance to see if there is no strange thing which can enter into our country," Baratuza said.

He also encouraged Burundians to report any suspicious activities in order to thwart any planned attacks.

Described by Washington as a terrorist organization with strong links to al-Qaida, the hard-line Islamic insurgent group al-Shabab has refused to recognize the internationally-backed Somali administration.

The group has vowed to overthrow President Sheik Sharif Sheik Ahmed's government to implement the strictest form of the Sharia Law.

Congo-Kinshasa: Media Buzz On Order to Release Lubanga

Lubanga Trial Website (The Hague)

The order issued by judges yesterday for Congolese war crimes accused Thomas Lubanga to be released has received wide coverage online.

Media from all continents have reported the story, as have bloggers, with many dwelling on the causes of the stay of proceedings and resultant order for Mr. Lubanga's release. Others sounded out parties to the trial, and yet some looked at the way forward was likely to be.

Judges on Thursday ruled that Mr. Lubanga - the first person tried at the International Criminal Court (ICC) should be released unconditionally if the prosecution did not appeal the release order within five days. The stay of proceedings which preceded the release order arose from the failure by the Office of The Prosecutor (OTP) to implement an order by judges to reveal the identity of an individual who helped prosecution investigators identify persons who testified against Mr. Lubanga. Here below we bring some of the media buzz on this order:

The French news agency AFP quoted Mr. Lubanga's lead attorney Catherine Mabilie as saying: "We are satisfied with the chamber's decision that the prosecutor cannot hold himself above the judges."

On the other hand, various news agencies quoted OTP spokeswoman Nicola Fletcher as saying they would appeal the stay of proceedings and the release order. A statement issued by the OTP was also quoted widely. In that statement, the OTP regretted the

"disturbance" caused by the release order, but argued that this was a sign that the ICC was a court of justice.

"The victims of Thomas Lubanga's alleged crimes must remain confident that justice will be done in this case," the OTP statement added.

The Associated Press (AP) described Thursday's ruling as the latest setback in what rights activists called a landmark case as this was the first trial to deal exclusively with child soldier allegations. According to AP, "the case has been beset with problems and almost from its start in January 2009, as prosecutors and judges clashed over the admissibility of evidence gathered in confidence from U.N. personnel and non-government volunteers in the battlefield, who believed disclosure of their identities, could jeopardize their lives or work." More on this story:

Similarly, the BBC reported that the trial "has been plagued by legal challenges", pointing out that the first witness at the trial retracted his testimony after first saying he had been recruited by Mr. Lubanga's fighters on his way home from school. The BBC also noted that one of the problems facing the court was that Bunia - the capital of the Ituri region where Mr. Lubanga was a rebel leader - was still considered a conflict zone. This meant the safety of potential witnesses could not be guaranteed

Reuters contended that chances that Lubanga would be released in the short term were considered small because the court had built a number of conditions into its ruling. The agency quoted Jan Wouters, a professor of international law at the Catholic University Leuven in Belgium, as arguing that it nonetheless made sense to ask for Mr. Lubanga's release.

"A fair trial also means a timely trial. In that sense the court has an obligation to set an example," Prof. Wouters said. "In the meantime it appears that the trial is turning into a sparring match between the court and the prosecutor, while no final ruling has been given in the court's eight-year existence."

The prosecution had not appealed the two orders with which it had refused to comply last week - the very orders that sparked the stay of proceedings - and judges had noted that the Prosecution continued to be in non-compliance with its orders. However, the judges had decided to adjourn any action under article 71 of the Statute, dealing with the OTP's misconduct before the Court, until the Appeals Chamber's judgment on this appeal.

On the other hand, CNN - while observing that Mr. Lubanga was not likely to be freed soon - made reference to ICC prosecutor Luis Morno-Ocampo's opening address at the start of the trial, in which he stated: "Lubanga's armed group recruited, trained and used hundreds of young children to kill, pillage and rape. The children still suffer the consequences of Lubanga's crimes. They cannot forget what they saw, what they suffered, what they did." CNN noted that Mr. Lubanga has maintained his innocence.

In its brief report, The New York Times said that while it was unlikely that Mr. Lubanga would go free anytime soon, the order was tantamount to a stern warning to the prosecutors:

Meanwhile, VOA News quoted Lubanga family member Sylvia Dzbo as saying the family hoped this time around Mr. Lubanga would be freed. "Here, we are very happy about the news, but our main concern is that it's not the first time that they have said they will release him. If they say he will be freed and go anywhere he wants, then we can say yes we win this war because we believe he is innocent about everything that they say," Dzbo said.

For its part, The Financial Times of UK noted the ICC had been dogged by controversy and criticism almost since it was founded in 2002. "Luis Moreno-Ocampo, the court's prosecutor, has attracted criticism by going after high-profile indictments but failing thus far to secure any convictions. His most eye-catching target has been Omar al-Bashir, Sudan's president, for whom the court this week issued a new arrest warrant, adding genocide charges to earlier accusations of war crimes and crimes against humanity," the FT said.

Moreover, FT stated that human rights groups had said the long-delayed Lubanga case was perhaps a final chance for the ICC to prove that it could be an efficient forum to try the most serious war crime allegations.

The OTP has indeed stated it will be appealing the order to release Mr. Lubanga. Mr. Moreno-Ocampo said the prosecution had filed the appeal and was confident of winning an order suspending Lubanga's release.

3. Social issues/ Human Rights

Rwanda: Use Film to Tell Region's Story

The New Times

Kigali — The Rwanda Film Industry, commonly known as "Hillywood", has organized a festival, currently taking place, with audiences across the country getting the opportunity to watch our own movies - acted, filmed and produced by Rwandans themselves.

Movies have been produced about Rwanda, however, more often than not, they have misrepresented Rwanda's story.

Hillywood, over the years, has shown there is potential among Rwandans to entertain, inform, and educate through films. It is important to note that from time immemorial, film has been a successful genre of not only telling stories, but preserving history.

The lives of the Rwandan people have improved and the country has registered remarkable progress in the last 16 years. Interestingly, this is only the beginning. Looking at the future plans, there is no doubt that the country is undergoing serious transformation.

However, these success stories are hardly told and yet there are many people, both in Rwanda and outside, who would like to understand Rwanda's extra ordinary story, and how it has managed to grow so fast.

Film makers, should also take on the responsibility of documenting this process. With the advancements in technology, they can use the internet to reach audiences across the world.

Additionally, we must remember that future generations will want to know Rwanda's history and it is through film, that they can be shown the true picture.

And, other countries too, that would want to learn from Rwanda's experience, will have the visuals at hand.

Rwanda: Cultural Values Key for Devt - New Study

The New Times

Kigali — A study commissioned by Unity Club in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion has revealed that, emphasis on cultural values is a major contributor to social harmony and national development.

The preliminary findings of the study were tabled Friday, at a function officiated by the Minister of Gender and Family Promotion, Dr. Jeanne d'Arc Mujawamariya. The Minister said that, cultural values have proved to be a key pillar in the development of the nation.

"National development should be based on the culture of the country; in the course of development, culture dictates how to behave, how to live with others, and how to embrace others' behavior," Mujawamariya said. "We need to leave our children with a cultured country and we can only do so by educating them about the cultural values."

Unity Club commissioned the study under the framework of analyzing the values of the Rwandan culture in order to highlight major values that should always be underlined in the socio-development of the nation. The study aimed at looking at possible ways of restricting cultural education; promote harmonious coexistence among the Rwandans culture and encouraging nationals to be patriotic.

It also aimed at analyzing the root causes of negative attitude among some Rwandans as well as looking at possible ways using culture for sustainable development among others.

The study was conducted by Venacie Mukarugemwa who recommended that; "there is need for a massive social mobilization on cultural values."

Unity Club is a social network that brings together former and current country leaders and their spouses.

Rwanda: Teachers Discuss Genocide Studies

The New Times

Kigali — Educators have been urged to take it upon themselves to courageously teach their students about the Genocide if they are to be agents of change.

The advice was given by the Rector of Kigali Institute of Education (KIE) Prof. George Njoroge, during a workshop on teaching Genocide and community cohesion.

The programme is jointly run by KIE and the Nottingham University of the United Kingdom.

"In education, we are expected to have the power to steer transformation of the society as agents of change and we have to face this problem with courage," he said.

Njoroge added that every educator has the ability to integrate Genocide studies in every subject given that all subjects have a dimensional connection with genocide.

Speaking to The New Times, the organiser of the workshop and the head of Social Sciences at KIE, Jean Leonard Buhigiro, said that the focus of the workshop was to show how Genocide studies can be integrated in other subjects apart from history.

He gave an example how computer science can integrate the genocide aspect in its teaching through electronic sources.

He explained that the programme, which has been running in KIE for the last two years, was a result of a parliamentary report on the rampant Renocide ideology in schools.

"KIE, as a teachers, training institute, started looking for ways we could participate in eliminating this problem in schools. So we partnered with the University of Nottingham which has a long history in Holocaust teachings and came up with the Education for Community Cohesion Project," said Buhigiro.

According to him, the aim of the project is to develop teachers who can employ a range of pedagogies to promote community cohesion in both formal and non-formal educational settings.

It is also expected to enhance peace and citizenship education in both partner countries and, in particular, explore issues concerning Genocide studies.

Presenting a research paper by KIE students, Jean Pierre Nizeyimana noted that Genocide teaching should be based on causes, consequences and prevention of genocide. He further said that teaching of Genocide, if done in a proper manner, can promote community cohesion.

Genocide studies are offered at UNATEK University, KIE and the National University of Rwanda which has a Master's programme.

4. Elections

Rwanda Arrests Second Umurabyo Journalist

VOA

Saidati Mukakibibi is the second journalist from the independent newspaper Umurabyo arrested in the past week.

The Reuters news agency quotes a police spokesman as saying Mukakibibi wrote articles comparing the president with Hitler. He said the articles were accompanied by a photo of Mr. Kagame in front of a Nazi swastika that the publishers had inserted in the picture.

Last week, authorities arrested Umurabyo editor Agnes Uwimana on allegations of civil disobedience.

Rights groups say the arrests are an attempt by the Rwandan government to clamp down on independent media ahead of next month's elections. The government denies the allegations.

Rwanda: EU Chief Clarifies on Election Observer Mission

The New Times

Kigali — The head of delegation of the European Union clarified that the union will not send observers to Rwanda for the presidential elections slated for next month because of limited financial resources.

Michel Arrion was speaking to the media yesterday at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation headquarters where the Chairman of the National Electoral Commission (NEC), Prof Chrysologue Karangwa, was briefing diplomats on the progress of preparations for the polls.

He pointed out that the move was prompted by many countries holding elections this year.

"We fixed the priorities to make sure that there's a balance in Africa and we decided eight priority countries in Africa, and Rwanda did not come on our priority list" Arrion said.

"We communicated to the NEC and the government about our decision. However the EU Commission will send a team of experts to provide assistance to other EU member states' missions and the Rwanda electoral commission could use them to strengthen their capacities to monitor the electoral process. But this is certainly not, technically speaking, an observation"

Over 300 local and foreign observers have confirmed their participation in the forthcoming presidential elections slated August 9.

Presidential campaigns are slated to kick-off on July 20.

Investigation Demanded into Rwandan Party Official's Death

VOA

The chairman of Rwanda's opposition Democratic Green Party has called on President Paul Kagame's government to begin a thorough investigation into the murder of the vice president of his party.

Frank Habineza said, despite repeated appeals to the government, the minister of interior has refused to give the opposition leaders protection after they received several threats ahead of the upcoming presidential election scheduled for August 9.

"It is very sad and shocking that we heard that our vice president was murdered, his head was almost cut off, and he was also kind of stabbed in the chest. We would like now to call upon the Rwandan government and the national police to carry out [a] thorough investigation and let us know who is behind this killing and bring to justice his murderers," he said.

The opposition party reported its vice president, Andre Kagwa Rwisereka, missing a day before he was found dead near his abandoned car.

Rwanda's police said they have launched an investigation into Rwisereka's death despite not fully knowing the motive behind the opposition leader's death, although they said they suspect robbery.

Police spokesman Eric Kayiranga was quoted as saying Rwisereka's "body was found this [Wednesday] morning three kilometers [about two miles] from where his car was found, along with a large knife which may have been used in the killing. It was a kind of machete."

But, opposition leader Habineza said the police have so far given contradictory reports.

“We have been getting conflicting reports so we haven’t gotten a clear message from the police. But, they are still carrying out investigations. There are some people who say it was robbery, but we understand that it was not robbery because yesterday [Tuesday] his car, which was push[ed] into the wetland, the police found out that his house keys were there inside the car,” Habineza said.

He dismissed allegations that Rwisereka was fleeing Rwandan authorities into neighboring Burundi saying the opposition leader’s passport was found in his bedroom. Observers say the opposition leader’s death could heighten tensions ahead of the presidential vote.

Several human rights organizations have accused President Kagame’s government of strongly repressing dissenting views ahead of the upcoming election, a charge the government denies.

Rwandan government officials were not immediately available for comments despite repeated attempts.

Rwanda: Unity Body Roots for Accurate Reporting

The New Times

Kigali — The president of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC), Bishop John Rucyahana, has called on the media to always report accurately, saying that would be a descent contribution towards the country's development.

He was, yesterday, addressing a press conference which was called to emphasize the need to hold peaceful elections.

"It's very critical for you as journalists to always be the light of Rwandans; you need to be professional to achieve this," Rucyahana said. He asked media practitioners to desist from reporting rumors.

The Executive Secretary of NURC, Dr Jean Baptiste Habyarimana, said the country although the country continues to enjoy peace and stability, much more needs to be done.

He called on the media to support NURC in their activities, and to rally citizens to participate in the August 9 presidential elections.

5. Economy and Energy

Rwanda: Advocacy Group to Speed up MDGs

The New Times

Madrid — President Paul Kagame, Yesterday in Madrid, Spain, Co chaired the first public meeting of the UN's Millennium Advocacy Group.

Kagame, one of the lead advocates for the MDGs, has been called upon along with other advocates, to offer practical guidance, build partnerships, as well as mobilize key government actors, civil society and the private sector, in an effort to speed up achievement of the goals.

In his opening remarks, President Kagame highlighted critical elements in achieving the MDGs, pointing out that the solutions to development challenges must be owned and driven locally. He noted the need for developing countries to mobilize their own human and financial resources, and the importance of private sector involvement.

President Kagame further emphasized the need for leadership, accountability and commitment."Ultimately, success in achieving these ambitious goals is about leadership, accountability at every level, and a relentless commitment to delivery It is all possible," Kagame said."The next five years will be critical for the realization of the MDGs and I am confident that, as a team, this group will succeed in revitalizing the world's commitment to the MDGs, and chart a practical way forward."

With only five years left to achieve the set targets, the UN Secretary General's expectations is that the advocacy group will play a central role in generating the support and political will of governments, to scale up action and speed up delivery of the MDGs.

In his address, UN Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon, referred to the MDGs as a "Great global challenge" and urged the advocates to look for "real results for real people." Other advocates, announced by the UN last month, include Nobel laureate, Muhammad Yunus of Bangladesh, former Chilean president, Michelle Bachelet, Microsoft founder, Bill Gates, CNN's founder, Ted Turner and Jeffrey Sachs of The Earth Institute and professor at Columbia University.

The advocates, along with about 150 world leaders are scheduled to meet at the UN Summit in New York, this September, to discuss and assess progress on the MDGs.

Rwanda: Fertilizers Will Boost Farmers' Incomes

The New Times

Kigali — Officials from the Ministry of Agriculture, on Wednesday, announced that a new system where farmers will be able to get fertilizers, at subsidized prices, using their electronic identity cards at agro-sales points near them, has been introduced.

The ministry said that equipment, fitted with the latest technology had been imported and will be installed in each of the sectors across the country. Farmers will use their national IDs to print vouchers that will enable them access the fertilizers from suppliers.

There is no doubt that fertilizers are a key input for successful farming. However, there are some farmers across the country who do not apply them because they are either unaware of the benefits, or do not have the financial ability to buy them at market prices.

The ministry's move, therefore, to avail fertilizers to farmers at subsidized prices is a welcome development.

Most farmers will now afford the fertilizers, and will be assured of increased yields and more profits.

However, it's also important that the ministry offers additional support to the farmers in terms of the identifying the kind of fertilizers that would be appropriate for the crops they have chosen to produce.

Farmers, on their part, should take advantage of the facility to increase food production. There have been reports indicating that some farmers get the fertilizers at subsidized prices and sell them, rather than use them to increase their production. Mechanisms to put an end to this abuse should be put in place.

6. Health

Rwanda: African Youth Discuss Maternal Health

The New Times

Kampala — Youth representatives from 37 African countries have converged in Kampala, Uganda to discuss health and maternal problems that affect the continent, ahead of the African Union (AU) summit.

Addressing the conference, Uganda's President, Yoweri Museveni, urged African youth to adjust their social behaviors if there are to spear head the continent's economic transformation.

"I want to assure you that unless you change your behavior, like engaging in Alcoholism and early sex which can cause AIDS and lead to death, Africa will never develop." Museveni said.

Speaking to The New Times, Urther Mihigo, a delegate from Rwanda, said that the conference has come in right time, when African youth are besieged with many challenges that need to be addressed.

"I'm absolutely sure that we as going to benefit from it (the conference)," Mihigo said.

7. Refuges/ Rebel Groups/ IDPs

20,000 Flee Fighting with Ugandan Rebels in Congo

VOA

The United Nation's estimates 20,000 civilians in eastern Congo have been forced to flee their homes over the past week as violence increases along the volatile border with Uganda.

The latest fighting has scattered people in the Beni region, located in the northernmost part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo's North Kivu province.

This past week, the Congolese Armed forces has been trying to root out the remnants of the Allied Democratic Forces, a Ugandan rebel group that has remained dormant for several years in North Kivu.

The number of displaced is a conservative estimate, warned U.N. spokesman Maurizio Giuliano, adding that actual total may actually be much higher. Giuliano said 14,000 of the displaced have registered with humanitarian organizations responding to the conflict, and at least 2,000 have received official assistance.

Internal displacement is not a new phenomenon in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Nearly two-million people have been displaced inside the country, and at least one-million others were forced out in 2009, according to the United Nations.

Despite the Congo's long history of internal conflict, the U.N.'s Giuliano said the rapid escalation of the situation in Beni has been particularly alarming.

"That is the shocking thing. It has been happening last week. According to some sources it even happened in one single day. This is what is shocking because that particular territory, Beni Territory, hosted 10,000 internally displaced persons, which had been displaced over a couple of years. Therefore to get 20,000 internally displaced persons in one week is considerable," Giuliano said.

The U.N. is preparing for more displaced persons and Guiliano said the organization's rapid response mechanism is ready to handle another influx.

The Allied Democratic Forces have been operating since 1996 out of the border region near the Rwenzori Mountains of eastern Congo. The group was most active in the late 1990s and was designated a terrorist group by the United States after a string of bombings in Uganda.

The recent reemergence of Allied Democratic Forces coincides with accusations made by the Ugandan government that the group played a role in the twin bombings Sunday that killed 76 people in Kampala.

Somali Islamist group al-Shabab has admitted to carrying out the attacks as retaliation for Ugandan peacekeeping forces in Somalia. The founding members of the Ugandan rebel group included fundamentalist Muslims, but experts say the connection is unlikely and Ugandan officials have not provided evidence linking the two.

ICC Orders Former Congolese Militia Leader's Release

VOA

A family member of former Congolese militia leader Thomas Lubanga said the family welcomes the news that Lubanga has been ordered released.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) ruled Thursday that Lubanga should be freed without condition unless prosecutors can appeal the ruling.

The ICC in The Hague July 8 ordered the suspension of Lubanga's trial because prosecutors refused to give his defense lawyers the name of a person connected with the case.

Lubanga family member Sylvia Dzbo said the family hopes that this time around Lubanga would be freed.

"Here, we are very happy about the news, but our main concern is that it's not the first time that they have said they will release him. If they say he will be freed and go anywhere he wants, then we can say yes we win this war because we believe he is innocent about everything that they say," Dzbo said.

The ICC in its ruling Thursday reportedly said Lubanga would remain in jail for at least another five days to give the prosecutor time to file an appeal against the decision to release Lubanga.

The judges have given the prosecution five days to appeal, after which Lubanga could be set free.

Dzbo expressed cautious optimism that this time around Mr. Lubanga will be released. "The last time it was the same scenario. They said he would be freed and in the last minute the prosecutor appealed and then they kept him there. But still that time until now there was no proof. I think now is the real time, and I think now he will be released for good," Dzbo said.

Displaced Congolese children

Lubanga has pleaded not guilty to charges he used child soldiers during fighting in the Democratic Republic of Congo a decade ago.

She said Prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo's refusal to give Lubanga defense lawyers the name of a person connected with the case proves the prosecutor has no evidence against Lubanga.

"This is something we don't understand because he [the prosecutor] should give us his name [the Lubanga intermediary]. What's wrong with that prosecutor? May be there's something he didn't tell us the truth. May be it's personal. But I don't think it can be personal because we don't know him [the prosecutor]," Dzbo said.

Dzbo reiterated the Lubanga family belief that some of the testimony against Lubanga was coerced.

"I invite you personally to come to [Bunia] and see, to ask people who don't know Thomas Lubanga but people who were there when things were bad," Dzbo said.

She said the Lubanga case should serve as example to the ICC prosecutor to not rush to judgment.

"I think before you take someone there [to the ICC], to put his name on the spot to say everyone this guy is a criminal, I think before to do that you have to be careful. You have to check every detail. You have to be 100 percent sure the guy is a bad guy," Dzbo said.

Central African Republic: Protection of Displaced Vital to Peace, Says UN Expert

UN NEWS SERVICE

The protection of 200,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) is an integral element of the peace-building process in the Central African Republic (CAR), a United Nations human rights expert said today following a week-long visit to the country.

"Efforts to build sustainable peace will be weakened as long as entire communities remain displaced and in despair," said Walter Kaelin, the Secretary-General's Representative on the human rights of IDPs, calling for the return and reintegration of the uprooted.

Also required in finding durable solutions for IDPs is the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants, he stressed.

During his visit, Mr. Kaelin visited northern CAR, which has been heavily affected by displacement.

Since his first visit to the country in 2007, he said, the humanitarian situation has stabilized. "However, those who remain displaced still face a humanitarian crisis, and their children have now remained without any access to education for years," he noted.

The expert voiced particular concern over the situation around Ndélé, the scene of clashes between Government security forces and a politico-military movement known as the Convention des patriots pour la justice et la paix (CPJP).

The violence has forced many to flee into the bush, where they are suffering from a shortage of food, water and health services.

"I have also received reliable reports about acts of grave violence committed against civilian populations," he said, calling on the sides to respect international humanitarian law and human rights law.

Mr. Kaelin also expressed alarm over the situation in the CAR's southeast, where several thousand people have been newly uprooted by "ruthless and atrocious" attacks carried out by the notorious northern Ugandan rebel group known as the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).

The lack of humanitarian access to several parts of the country due to insecurity is also a matter of concern, he said, noting that there have been encouraging talks lately on the lifting of military restriction on aid to areas around Ndélé.

Yesterday and today, the Representative took part in a workshop with the Government and others on preliminary steps on possible legislation on internal displacement.

If such a law were to be enacted, he said, the CAR "would set an example for the Great Lakes region and create the legal and institutional framework necessary to address the serious challenges on the ground and take on its responsibilities to protect and assist internally displaced persons."

In May, the Security Council voted to end the UN Mission in the CAR and Chad (MINURCAT) by the end of this year after the Chadian Government requested the move and said it would assume full responsibility for protecting civilians on its territory.

The mission was set up in September 2007 to help protect civilians and facilitate humanitarian aid to thousands of people uprooted due to insecurity in the two countries and the neighbouring Darfur region of Sudan.

The 15-member body ordered that MINURCAT's military component be reduced from its current 3,300 troops to 2,200 military personnel - 1,900 in Chad and 300 in the CAR - by 15 July. Withdrawal of the remaining troops will begin on 15 October, and all military and civilian personnel are to be withdrawn by 31 December.

Uganda Urged to Stop Returning Refugees to Rwanda

VOA

Advocates for refugee rights are criticizing the Ugandan government for forcibly returning hundreds of refugees to Rwanda, calling it a violation of national and international law.

Kampala-based organizations the Refugee Law Project and the International Refugee Rights Initiative have called on the Ugandan government to immediately halt the removal of Rwandan refugees living in southwestern Uganda.

On Wednesday Ugandan Police, along with officials from the Directorate of refugees began loading Rwandans living in the Isingiro and Kyenjonjo districts into trucks in order to return them to their country of origin. According to a release issued by the groups, the asylum seekers were lured by officials with promises of refugee status and food.

The Refugee Law Project and the International Refugee Rights Initiative have accused officials of violating the Ugandan Citizenship and Immigration Act by failing to follow the guidelines for deporting refugees denied requests for asylum. The groups have also pointed to international law such as the Convention on the Right of the Child, which they say the government has violated.

The repatriation efforts of the government were also condemned by the United Nations refugee agency, UNHCR, in a press release on Wednesday.

Uganda's refugee minister has told the French Press Agency (AFP) there were not legitimate reasons for the refugees to be given asylum in Uganda and he said the Ugandan government was following proper procedures.

Rwandan refugees have been resettling in Uganda since the Rwandan Genocide in 1994. Many of those include Hutus who fled the country after Tutsi rebels took power from the Hutu government in the wake of the atrocities.

Under international law refugees may not be returned to their country of origin if they have a reasonable fear of persecution. But Ugandan Officials argue that many of the Rwandans in Uganda are trying to avoid prosecution for their role in the Genocide.

The director of the Refugee Law Project, Chris Dolan, said that many refugees in Uganda fear they will be victimized by the Gacaca Courts, which are used in Rwanda to address crimes committed during the genocide.

"The question is whether justice is being done when people get back to Rwanda," said Dolan. "Many people feel that the Gacaca Court hasn't always been impartial. But in some instances it has been used as a way of dealing with personal grievances, as a way of

preventing particular groups from getting access to their property. There are question marks about whether it has always been as impartial as it should be."

Dolan also pointed out that many Rwandans have entered Uganda well after the 1994 genocide. The director said that over 1,000 refugees have entered since January, suggesting broader problems in Rwanda which may make repatriation impossible.

International organizations such as the New York-based Human Rights Watch have raised similar concerns. Human Rights Watch has accused President Paul Kagame of manipulating the legacy of the genocide to discriminate against Hutus living in the country and shut down political opposition.

But Mr. Kagame has denied these charges, and the Tripartite Commission, the group which oversees Rwandan refugee response in Uganda, agrees that the conditions in Rwanda are appropriate for resettlement.

During a meeting in May the commission, composed of Uganda, Rwanda and the UNHCR, set a tentative date of December 2011 to invoke the cessation clause of the UNHCR Statute. If the clause is invoked, Rwandans arriving in Uganda will no longer be granted refugee status and will be forced to return home.

Rwanda: Over 1800 Refugees Repatriated From Uganda

The New Times

Gatuna — Rwandan refugees estimated between 1,800 and 1,900 Rwandan refugees were on Wednesday night repatriated from Kyaka II and Nakivale refugee camps of western Uganda.

The returnees arrived with their luggage through Gatuna border post and were received by central and local government officials.

They were then transferred to Gicumbi transit camp located near Rukomo trading center, about 30 km along Gatuna-Kigali highway.

Addressing returnees yesterday, the Minister of Disaster Preparedness and Refugee Affairs, Gen. Marcel Gatsinzi, called on them to settle and live in harmony with other residents in their respective districts of origin.

"The government of national unity is committed to repatriating all Rwandan refugees, so that they can also take part in the development of our nation," said Gatsinzi.

He assured the returnees of the full cooperation from his ministry, to ensure that they receive all necessary requirements to enable them settle in their respective localities.

"It is important that you work closely with local leaders in your respective districts, to steer economic development," he added.

Northern Province governor Aime Bosenibamwe called on the returnees to change their mindset by turning a deaf ear on negative elements still bent on dividing Rwandans along ethnic lines.

"Each family will be given food and other domestic necessities enough to last for three months while in their respective districts," said Mark Shakagabo, an official at the transit camp.

Also present to receive the returnees at Gicumbi transit camp was Mayor Bonane Nyangezi and Rwanda Defense Forces area commander Brig. Gen Eric Murokore.

Congo-Kinshasa: Improvements Necessary to Deal with IDPs, U.S. Official Says

ALL AFRICA.COM

INTERVIEW

Tens of thousands of people in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) have been fleeing a government offensive against Ugandan rebels, adding to the nearly 2.5 million people who have already become internally displaced or refugees in neighboring countries. U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Reuben Brigety recently visited camps for the displaced and refugees. He spoke with allAfrica.com's Saratu Abiola and Carine Umuhumuza of what he saw on his last trip and what he thinks the international community should do to improve the situation.

The people you saw in the camps for the internally displaced (IDPs) in the east, where do they come from? Are they mostly from mining towns? Does a town having mining concessions make it more prone to violence?

There are two categories of displaced people. There are refugees and internally displaced people. Refugees are people that are forced to cross international boundaries. Internally displaced people that have had to leave their homes but are still within their own country.

There are about 450,000 Congolese citizens that have been forced to be refugees, and therefore displaced across borders from Congo to the nine surrounding countries and its borders. And there are two million Congolese that are displaced internally inside their own country.

What causes that displacement and is there any linkage to mining concessions?

I personally do not have the analysis of the linkage between the minerals and the fighting, which is not to say that it's not important. There are certainly other groups, advocacy

groups, that note that minerals ... help fuel conflict ... but that is not part of our analysis. The LRA (Lord's Resistance Army) does not appear to exist or to benefit from the trade in minerals.

But activist groups who pushed for anti-LRA legislation that was passed in the U.S. Congress last May seem to think that cutting off the mines will help end the conflict.

What I can say is that the vast majority of the internally displaced are displaced as a result of armed conflict. There are people in various other situations around the world that are displaced because of natural disaster or other sorts of circumstances but the vast majority of the displaced in the Congo are as a result of armed conflict.

What are the sources of the armed conflict? The LRA apparently at one point had something of a political agenda in Uganda but has since has just morphed into a complete predator of the population. We don't know what the political solution for that is, but we are tasked by the president (Barack Obama) to come up with a broader strategy for addressing it.

The FDLR (the Democratic forces for Liberation of Rwanda) is comprised mostly of former genocidaires from Rwanda that fled to the Congo and remain in the bush and continue to clash with the government of Congo. The politics of those political/ military coalitions shift a great deal.

Part of the reason why they have continued to move is that they prey on the civilian population. That is essentially how they continue to get not only their converts [but also] get the resources necessary for their own survival. I completely understand and support [the] view of the importance of focusing on the mineral trade as part of an overall strategy for reducing violence. The question is who exactly is benefiting from that trade and how is that benefit actually contributing to the armed violence? That just requires a level of analysis that I have not seen. The Congolese government is essentially a weaker state and it's hard to regulate the transporting of tantalum and coltan, the pet issues for the activists.

The anti-LRA legislation calls on the Obama administration to lead international efforts to end the threat to civilians posed by the armed group. What more can you tell us?

The legislation that the president signed in developing a counter strategy ... is due by law in early November. We very much hope and expect to develop a strategy which will counter that threat and hopefully that scourge, that God-awful scourge for people in that portion of the Congo and surrounding countries.

Has it been easier getting resources to people that need them in these camps over the past few years, particularly under the recent administration? Have things improved? Are you satisfied with the UN's efforts in the region?

For those populations that we have identified, we know where they are. We have been able as a government to continue to contribute to basic humanitarian infrastructure. We give about U.S.\$45 million a year for our various partners in order to support that, and that's a level that has been consistent for some time. The challenge though is that Congo is a massive country. The road infrastructure is incredibly poor. A lot of this fighting takes place in very rural and very isolated areas and that makes it difficult for us and difficult for humanitarian partners to have a completely detailed, accurate sense of the scale of the humanitarian crisis.

One of the things that's been challenging, certainly with regard to the UN and caring for these two million IDPs, is that there is not a single agency in the UN system that has comprehensive responsibility for providing assistance to IDPs.

UNHCR (UN High Commissioner for Refugees) has very clear responsibility for the treatment of refugees, which is why you see refugee camps. But for internally displaced they actually have responsibility for only a couple of sectors - for shelter, for healthcare. Responsibility for education is UNICEF, responsibility for water and sanitation is UNHCR and the responsibility for food is the WFP (World Food Program).

As a result of that two examples, two IDP camps, that I saw in Goma were two of the worst camps for displaced people I've seen anywhere in the world. The problem is that the UN system as a whole is not cooperating, in my judgment, effectively enough there. And, in fact, while I was there, I sat down with some of our colleagues and said we should not be prepared to accept this. There must be a better way for us to work better as donors and as the whole of the UN humanitarian community to improve our response for these IDPs. That's certainly something that we will continue to work on.

Both Rwanda and Angola have many Congolese refugees and they would prefer for them to return to their home country. There are, however, problems of land tenure. Can these refugees return home and get their land? Is there any mechanism in place to facilitate that movement?

I can speak on Rwanda. I can't speak on Angola with the same level of fidelity since I have not been there yet. There is a tripartite agreement that has been signed between UNHCR, Rwanda and the government of the DRC to help facilitate the return of those 53,000 Congolese refugees. As a result of that UNHCR is working on a plan with local tribal chiefs in Congo to prescreen those people that are in camps inside Rwanda to determine which ones of those are real refugees, which village did they come from, in order for them to return from their host communities with as little local friction as possible.

My understanding is that inside Congo that many of the Tutsis that would return are not 'true Congolese' but indeed are Tutsis that are looking for more land because land is scarce in Rwanda.

This process that UNHCR is beginning to set up ... is meant to be a mechanism by which those claims are adjudicated. It remains to be seen how successful that's going to be. We certainly will do everything we can in order to support that process because, again, returning to your home country is the most important, durable solution for refugee populations.

The question is a very sensitive issue. The refugees want to go home, the Rwandans would like for them to go home, but I have to say Rwanda has been an extraordinary host to these people. Those camps, particularly Nyabiheke camp, is almost a picture perfect model for what a refugee camp ought look like, with the one exception being space, because they don't have an awful lot of space. As refugee standards go, the healthcare is very good; education is good. They have job-training programs in masonry, in carpentry. They have basic literacy classes, particularly for women that are illiterate. The government has been incredibly supportive of those refugees but obviously we want to try to do our best to facilitate everybody going home, in an orderly safe, voluntary manner.

Congo is known as the rape capital of the world. According to research from the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, rape violations by civilians – as opposed to those perpetuated by armed forces – have increased. Do we know if the incidence of rape has actually gone up or are more women coming forward and reporting rapes?

The short answer is we don't know. We don't know if there has actually been an increase because there's been an increase, or if there's been an increase because reporting has been increased. President [Joseph] Kabila has said repeatedly exactly the opposite and that there has been a decrease in incidents of rape, there actually is not much of a problem, which is of profound concern to us as a government. We don't agree with that assessment. The extent to which you view the problem dramatically colors the extent to which you're going to be engaged in solving it.

In a meeting that I had with the governor in North Kivu province, he said that they are ashamed of this reputation for rape that they have. They don't want to be associated with it and that they are going to continue to do their best [against it]. One can obviously contrast that statement with whatever's happening on the ground, but I think what it signifies importantly is that at least in North Kivu the political leadership understands the nature of the problem and is really dedicated to doing something about it. The secretary of state (Hilary Clinton) is personally deeply concerned about that issue. As such, a fair amount of our funding, a little over \$30 million, is going specifically to advance support for gender-based violence programs in DRC.

Reports say the delivery of services for women has improved in those areas where rape is prevalent. Your thoughts?

There are these places called listening houses or maisons d'ecoute. I had the opportunity to visit one of them about an hour north of Goma. They are being supported by the international community: the American Red Cross. My sense is that these maisons

d'ecoute have, according to the local folks there, decreased some of the stigma with regard to rape, in the sense that they have given the women a place where they can actually go and feel protected, where they can get resources and where the word is spread through the community that if this happens to you, you can actually go there and get help. On one hand [this] is important and on the other hand contributes to the epistemological problem. Are we seeing higher reports of rape because we are seeing more infrastructure for safe reporting or is rape happening more? empty body