



(The recent decision by Rwanda’s electorate to allow Paul Kagame to seek a third term in office – and Kagame’s confirmation last Friday that he will do so – underscores a re-emerging trend in Africa that has seen constitutional term limits for presidents come under threat.)

BURUNDI :

Burundi: le chanteur «Lisuba» tué par la police à Musaga
Par RFI/le 04-01-2016

Tout le monde l’appelait Lisuba. Agé de 27 ans, Pascal Trésor Nshimirimana était un féru de la culture burundaise. Chanteur, il jouait aussi de plusieurs instruments traditionnels, dont les fameux tambours du Burundi, et il était le leader d’un groupe culturel assez populaire, qui se produisait lors des fêtes. Il a été tué dimanche matin par la police à Musaga, un quartier contestataire du sud de Bujumbura. Sa famille, des amis et des nombreux témoins assurent qu’il a été arrêté pour avoir manifesté contre le 3e mandat du président Pierre Nkurunziza. La police elle jure que c’était un criminel, terme qui désigne officiellement les insurgés «Sindumuja», terme qui signifie «Je ne suis pas un esclave» et qui désigne ceux qui luttent contre le pouvoir burundais.

Une polémique de plus alors que l’on compte par centaines le nombre de personnes déjà tuées depuis le début de la crise fin avril 2015, dont de nombreux cas d’exécutions extrajudiciaires, malgré les dénégations de Bujumbura.

Les deux versions sont diamétralement opposées comme d’habitude. Selon des témoins, des policiers ont arrêté le jeune artiste burundais vers 7h30. Il aurait été désigné du doigt par un homme en tenue civile.

Une trentaine de minutes plus tard, alors qu’ils l’amenaient en direction du domicile d’un haut responsable de la police qui inspire la terreur dans le quartier, Pascal Trésor aurait tenté de fuir. Un policier lui aurait alors tiré une balle dans le bas du dos, et la balle est ressortie par le ventre. Le

jeune artiste est alors tombé visage contre terre pour ne plus se relever, selon des sources concordantes.

Mais pour la police du Burundi, les choses se sont passées autrement. Des hommes en patrouille seraient tombés sur « un groupe de quatre jeunes gens qui s'apprêtaient à commettre un crime », explique le porte-parole de la police, Pierre Nkurikiye.

Quel crime ? Personne ne sait trop, mais les policiers les auraient alors interpellés. Pascal Trésor Nshimirimana aurait été touché par une balle de fusil d'un policier qu'il tentait de désarmer, selon toujours Pierre Nkurikiye. Le porte-parole de la police ajoute que l'une des trois autres personnes arrêtées serait l'assassin présumé de Jacqueline, une jeune militante du parti au pouvoir au Burundi, tuée après avoir été violée il y a un mois, dans ce quartier contestataire du sud de Bujumbura.

La famille de l'artiste a réagi au quart de tour en dénonçant « un mensonge éhonté de la police » et demande si dans ce cas, le jeune artiste était armé. La police du Burundi assure pour sa part qu'une enquête va être ouverte.

RWANDA :

RDC CONGO :

Des miliciens occupent plusieurs villages dans l'est

Lundi 04 Janvier 2016/lexpressiondz.com

Des milices ont occupés récemment neuf villages dans le territoire de Kalehe, au Sud-Kivu, dans l'est de la République démocratique du Congo (RDC), selon des sources militaires (FARDC) citées samedi soir par l'agence Chine Nouvelle. Les FARDC ont indiqué que différentes milices occupent ces villages et y commettent des exactions contre la population civile, notamment des pillages et des arrestations arbitraires. Selon d'autres sources, appartenant à la société civile locale, les chefs de ces milices sont la plupart des «Raïa Mutomboki» (Citoyens en colère) et cinq d'entre eux ont installé leurs états-majors à Mushenge et Ekingi, toujours dans l'état de Kalehe, au sud-Kivu. Les informations ayant trait à l'occupation des villages ont été confirmées par les autorités territoriales, qui ont également indiqué que des opérations militaires étaient en cours pour «chasser les assaillants». Huit personnes avaient été tuées dans cette région au cours des affrontements entre les militaires congolais et des groupes armés la nuit du 31 décembre. Plusieurs factions de miliciens sont actives dans les deux provinces du Kivu, dans l'est du pays, plus particulièrement les factions des Raïa-mutomboki. «Raïa-mutomboki», est le nom que s'est donnée une milice créée au début du siècle dans le Sud-Kivu, dans le but proclamé de «défendre les habitants de la région».

UGANDA :

SOUTH AFRICA :

South Africa establishes breast milk bank

January 4, 2016/ngrguardiannews.com

BREAST milk bank has taken off in South Africa which cares for poor infants that have no opportunity of receiving breast milk from their mothers. One of the beneficiaries is Patrick, a premature baby weighing a minuscule 1.2 kilos (2.65 pounds), who was “saved” by a breast milk bank in South Africa, where child mortality is high despite being the continent’s most developed economy.

AFP quoted his mother saying, “It was a question of life and death because of the fact he could not go on formula,” said his 39-year-old mother Annerleigh Bartlett. “There was no way. He was too little.” Bartlett, from Cape Town, was not producing her own milk yet, and the formula can damage premature babies’ intestines. So, for the first two weeks of his life, Patrick relied for his survival on breast milk donated by anonymous women.

The principle of milk banks is simple: mothers donate milk, which is tested, pasteurised, then delivered to babies in need. “Every drop counts,” said a poster at the headquarters of the South African Breastmilk Reserve (SABR), a network of milk banks which supply 87 hospitals and feed over 2,800 children this year.

“Human milk banks should be promoted and supported as an effective approach to reduce... mortality for babies who cannot be breastfed,” said South Africa’s Ministry of Health in a recent report. “South Africa has a much higher nutrition problem than countries at comparable income levels.” South Africa’s infant mortality rate was 32.8 deaths per 1,000 births in 2013 — far higher than countries such as Egypt, Algeria or Indonesia.

Children who are exclusively breastfed are 14 times more likely to survive in the first six months of life than formula-fed children, according to the United Nations Children’s Fund, UNICEF. But South Africa has very low breastfeeding rates at just 7.4 percent, partly as a result of prevalent poverty and effective marketing by baby formula companies.

Soon after having their babies, many poor mothers need to get working again. “Many of these moms are not employed in the formal sector. They don’t get maternity benefits,” said Chantell Witten, researcher at the North West University Center of Excellence for Nutrition in South Africa. “It means that moms are not with their baby, so they start formula feed. “These babies don’t get the right formula because moms can’t afford to feed adequately and appropriately.”

There is also a pervasive belief in South Africa that formula milk is better for the baby. “A lot of poor people think that rich people formula-feed. They aspire for the best for their children,” said Stasha Jordan, SABR’s director, describing some of the marketing for formula as “aggressive”.

Until 2011, formula was distributed for free to prevent transmission of HIV from mother to child, another factor leading towards a bias to using formula over milk. But experts say attitudes towards breast milk are changing.

Baby formula advertisements have been banned in magazines and billboards since 2012 and South Africa now encourages HIV-positive mothers to breastfeed as long as they are taking antiretrovirals.

“First we were very uncomfortable, knowing that it is a fluid from someone else,” said Pradesh

Mewalala, whose twins Anya and Ariana were born prematurely. Mewalala eventually agreed to use the milk, a decision that saved his daughters.

The milk undergoes strict microbiological screening and donors must take AIDS and Hepatitis B tests. Patrick is now a vibrant six-month-old baby. Eventually, his mother was able to breastfeed. It is now her turn to be a donor at the Milk Matters bank in Cape Town. “I needed to pay back the institution that helped me and our child kind of survive,” said Bartlett. “I managed to provide three litres of milk... to assist with feeding 20 babies for a period of 24 hours.”

TANZANIA :

Tanzania Public Officers Signal Integrity Doc

westfieldtimes.com/04/01/2016

Tanzania President John Magufuli's newly appointed permanent secretaries have signed a “beefed up” integrity commitment document as part of a move to ensure seriousness towards rooting out graft and injecting accountability among public sector workers, according to government spokesman Assah Mwambene.

Mwambene said the newly appointed officials were then made to read the signed document one after another at the state house in the commercial capital, Dar es Salaam. President Magufuli was on hand to supervise the signing.

“If there is anyone who feels he cannot work under the integrity commitment, he should dismiss himself and vacate the State House premises right now... It is possible that there are some of you who frown at the integrity declaration. Therefore, just stand aside so that we may establish those who do not agree with the declaration,” said President Magufuli during the signing in ceremony.

This is the first time that newly appointed government officials have signed this document in public.

Newly appointed government officials traditionally sign an integrity document which is then submitted to the Ethics Commission. But, this time, President Magufuli insisted on enhancing the document to include strong measures to curb corruption, according to Mwambene.

“This is a manifestation in terms of ensuring that every public official to the level of permanent secretaries must have unquestionable personal integrity,” said Mwambene. “This time around, the document has been beefed up with a very serious corruption element, the issue of personal integrity itself, transparency and to ensuring that when you are in power, you will really work within the law, but also observe ethical standards and make sure that at any time you are not suspected to be involved in malpractices.”

Opposition groups say the ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) party is to blame for the corruption and the abuse of office in the public sector since the party has been in power. They vowed to hold the government accountable to the people irrespective of the recent actions of President Magufuli to curb graft.

KENYA :

ANGOLA :

Angolan fuel prices rise as government lowers subsidy

2016-01-04/- Nampa-Reuters

LUANDA - Angola's retail fuel prices increased sharply on Friday, according to a statement from state-owned company Sonangol, as the government of Africa's second biggest oil exporter cut subsidies to consumers.

The price of petrol rose 39% to 160 kwanza (US\$1,19) per litre and diesel by 80% to 135 kwanza.

Angola's Ministry of Finance said in a statement fuel prices were increased to ease the burden of subsidies, the Angolan news agency Angop reported.

A sharp decline in global crude prices has weighed on the local kwanza currency, which has fallen by more than 30% against the dollar in 2015, and put Angola's public spending under pressure

AU/AFRICA :

African leaders roll back presidential term limits

irishtimes.com/04/01/2016

Rwanda's Paul Kagame is latest president to alter constitution in order to stay in power

The recent decision by Rwanda's electorate to allow Paul Kagame to seek a third term in office – and Kagame's confirmation last Friday that he will do so – underscores a re-emerging trend in Africa that has seen constitutional term limits for presidents come under threat.

The December 17th referendum saw Rwandans vote by a majority of 98 per cent in favour of amending the constitution so the former rebel leader can potentially remain president until 2034 – nearly 3½ decades after he officially came to power.

The amendment cut the presidential term from seven years to five and maintained the two-term limit. But it also stipulated that the new rules will not come into effect until 2024 and that Kagame can run for a third seven-year term in 2017 and then stand for two further five-year terms in accordance with the amended constitution.

“You requested me to lead the country again after 2017. Given the importance and consideration you attach to this, I can only accept,” Kagame said in a New Year televised address to the nation.

The original two-term limit for presidents was enshrined in the constitution Rwanda adopted in 2003, when Kagame was three years into his first stint as president.

Since the Rwandan genocide in 1994 that left an estimated 800,000 Tutsi and Hutu moderates dead,

the country has made remarkable progress in developing its economy and rebuilding the nation.

Price of progress

But critics of Kagame's regime say the price of this progress has been high: the ruling Rwandan Patriotic Front does not tolerate opposition to his rule, and the government brutally oppresses those who oppose him.

Kagame joins a growing list of African leaders who have sought to stay in power by rewriting their constitution's rules, although most of these do not have the support of the electorate to do so.

The introduction of term limits for presidents in Africa began in the early 1990s as a response to the continent's first wave of post-independence leaders who decided to cling to power. Yet in many cases those who oversaw the legislative amendments tried to have them changed years later.

It was one of Idi Amin's successors as president of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni, who set the precedent for the current crop of rulers to undermine the two-term rule.

In 1986, not long after taking power, he wrote that the problem in Africa was that leaders wanted to overstay their welcome. But in 2005 he altered the country's constitution to allow himself a third term. Aged 71, he is now serving a fourth.

Last year saw Kagame's counterparts in neighbouring Burundi and Congo change their constitutions to stay in power, while it is unclear if leaders in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Benin will step down this year when their two terms are up.

Burundi's president Pierre Nkurunziza's insistence on taking up a third term has prompted the United Nations to warn that the country is on the verge of a new civil war. His decision to do so, opposition parties and civil society groups say, violated the constitution's two-term limit, as well as the 2005 Arusha accord that ended the country's last internal conflict.

Since Burundi's presidential poll last July, which was boycotted by the opposition, hundreds of Burundians have been killed in ongoing unrest and thousands more displaced. Last month the African Union proposed sending a peacekeeping mission to the country to stabilise the situation but it was rejected by the government as an "invasion force".

"Burundi is clear on the matter: it is not ready to accept an AU force on its territory," the country's deputy presidential spokesman Jean-Claude Karerwa said on December 20th.

In April 2015 president of Congo-Brazzaville Denis Sassou N'Guesso – in power for over three decades – also announced he wanted to alter the constitution. He held a referendum in October in which he won approval to change electoral rules so he could stand for a third term.

Will of the people

This year in the Democratic Republic of Congo president Joseph Kabila's second term in office comes to an end and he is constitutionally disqualified from seeking another term.

Last January, however, his tentative attempts to overturn the term limit were met with riots. International observers have urged Kabila to commit to standing down this year. He has yet to publicly do so.

But the will of the people is not always defeated in Africa. In October 2014 President Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso was ousted in a popular uprising after trying to extend his 27 years in office by removing the two-term limit inserted in the constitution in 2000.

Two years earlier, in 2012, Senegal's 85-year-old president Abdoulaye Wade, who brought in two-term limits, argued that they did not apply to him as his first term occurred before the law was adopted. The constitutional council allowed him to stand for a further term, which prompted thousands of citizens to take to the streets to oppose the move.

Undeterred, Wade contested the poll but was defeated and relinquished power.

Notwithstanding this third-term trend, many African countries have witnessed peaceful and democratic leadership transitions in recent years.

Nigeria's president Goodluck Jonathan handed over power in March last year after he was defeated at the ballot box – the first time in the country's history a sitting president had lost an election. In Mozambique Armando Guebuza also stood down following the October 2014 elections.

Ex-Bozize PM takes early lead in C.Africa presidential race

AFP/04/01/2016

Bangui (Central African Republic) (AFP) - Former prime minister Faustin Archange Touadera took a commanding lead in the Central African Republic's presidential race on Sunday, garnering more than 23 percent of the vote with a quarter of the ballots counted, electoral officials said.

Touadera, a 58-year-old former maths professor who was prime minister under longtime leader Francois Bozize from 2008 to 2013, was considered an outsider in the field of 30 candidates vying in an election seeking to turn the page on years of unrest.

Running as an independent, he has scored more than 120,000 votes, while his closest rival for the top job, Anicet Georges Dologuele, also a former prime minister, has scored just over 68,500 votes, the elections authority's rapporteur Julius Ngouade Baba said.

The results confirm early indications of Touadera's lead in the closely watched vote, which took place last Wednesday after repeated delays. A likely second round is set for January 31.

Desire Kolingba, son of a former president, was in third place with under 40,000 votes.

Fourth-placed Jean-Serge Bokassa, the 43-year-old son of the self-proclaimed emperor Jean-Bedel Bokassa, who ruled CAR from 1966 to 1979, had nearly 34,000.

Ex-premier Martin Ziguele, who had been considered a frontrunner and the favourite of former colonial power France, was trailing in fifth place with under 28,000 votes.

One of the world's poorest countries, with a history of coups and rebellions, Central African Republic was plunged into fierce sectarian violence in 2013 after Bozize was ousted by a mainly Muslim rebel alliance, bringing Michel Djotodia to power -- the country's first Muslim president.

Thousands of people were killed and around one in 10 fled their homes in attacks by rogue rebels on remote villages and brutal reprisals by Christian vigilante groups against Muslim communities.

UN and French peacekeepers helped restore a degree of calm in January 2014, when Djotodia quit under international pressure and a transitional government took over, but large parts of the country remain lawless.

Nearly two million people in the country of around five million were eligible to vote in the elections, which also saw more than 1,800 candidates standing for a place in the 105-seat National Assembly.

Despite security concerns after a deadly attack on a Muslim district in Bangui during a mid-December constitutional referendum, the elections went off without major incident after initial delays caused by logistical glitches.

The head of the UN peacekeeping mission MINUSCA, Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, hailed the polls as a success.

The country's three last presidents were barred from standing again: former Bangui mayor Catherine Samba-Panza, who has overseen a political transition, as well as Bozize and Djotodia, who are both in exile and under UN and US sanctions linked to the violence.

UN/AFRICA :

US/AFRICA :

CANADA/AFRICA :

AUSTRALIA/AFRICA :

EU/AFRICA :

CHINA/AFRICA :

INDIA/AFRICA :

BRAZIL/AFRICA :

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