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BURUNDI :

RWANDA :

RDC CONGO :

UGANDA :

Uganda: Everyone Wants a Piece of DR Congo

By Samuel Olara/The Observer (Kampala)/17 November 2013

analysis

The struggle for peace and stability in DR Congo will always remain a battle against foreign aggression and domination, which dates back to the confrontations between African societies and European invaders at the turn of the 19th century.

By 1900, the entire DRC had lost its independence as a result of European conquest and occupation; and attempts to assert independence and national sovereignty have been doomed to failure; beginning with the betrayal and assassination of its first prime minister, Patrice Lumumba in 1961, under the noses of Belgian and UN forces.

The patterns of external aggressions against the Congo have continued. In the last two decades, the country was invaded by armies from seven African states.

Today as before, the strategic objective has always been and remain the same - the scramble for and exploitation of Congo's vast mineral deposits; no matter the costs in human lives.

According to mineral experts, eastern Congo is estimated to hold Africa's largest mineral deposits; worth trillions of dollars. There is 70 per cent of the world's supply of tantalum, a metal used in mobile phones, computers, laptops, tablets and digital cameras. Besides diamonds, DR Congo is also home to hefty quantities of gold, tin, tungsten, copper, colton and cobalt.

The recent escalation of violence by the M23 rebel movement again with established support base from not only Rwanda but Uganda, demonstrates the vulnerability of the DR Congo as a nation, to external exploits. Uganda and Rwanda's active involvement is rooted both in this history of predation and corruption.

For example, on March 17, 2006, a protégé of the Ugandan government, Thomas Lubanga Dyilo, was the first person to be arrested on an ICC arrest warrant for the use and abuse of children in armed conflict.

Then on May 24, 2008, Jean-Pierre Bemba Gombo, leader of the Mouvement de Libération du Congo (MLC), was arrested by the Belgium government under an ICC arrest warrant. Bemba, a former vice president of the DRC, was charged with two counts of crimes against humanity and four counts of war crimes in connection with MLC's raping, pillaging and looting raids through the Central African Republic (CAR).

Africans must understand the present, concrete reality that the powers behind the looting of Africa's mineral wealth, who present themselves as 'allies' in the development of the continent, are determined to ensure that they dominate and control the destinies of resource- rich African countries like DR Congo, in order to ensure their unobstructed access to cheap strategic natural resources.

The Congolese people need to wake up to the reality of a collective defence of their people against this imperialism or external aggression. The current crop of African leaders have mortgaged the continent to Western powers in exchange for their existence and creation of dynasties.

These leaders, must not be regarded any less unfavourably than the middlemen collaborator chiefs who mortgaged the continent for trinkets and whiskey during the first wave of mercantile colonisation of Africa; or those who sold their subjects to slave traders. The DRC conflict involves armed groups and foreign governments, fighting over lucrative minerals that keep the fashion and

jewellery industries alive and power our computers, laptops and mobile phones.

Yet unlike the robber barons, imperialist ideologues, explorers, rogues and adventurers scrambling for Africa at the beginning of the 19th century, those behind the rapacious war in DR Congo have gone a step further.

Camouflaged as 'African liberators', they have employed extreme violence and deception to achieve their objectives; plundering DR Congo of its natural resources, committing crimes of aggression, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Their strategies have included employing proxy militias, using underage children and deploying them to fight their wars. There can be no denying that DR Congo is one of the most tragic stories in the history of Africa. With its strategic location in the centre of Africa and its enormous natural wealth, it has always been a prime candidate for imperial ambitions and envy of adventurers, mercenaries and looters of all kinds.

No other region on the African continent has known as much political strife, loss of lives, and social dislocation since the second world war as the DR Congo has.

Uganda: Kampala Needs Systematic, Rather Than Quick Fixes

17 November 2013/The Observer (Kampala)

editorial

The long-awaited report of the tribunal investigating charges against Kampala Lord Mayor Erias Lukwago was released this week.

As we had reported earlier, the Bamugemereire tribunal found the mayor guilty, on eight out of 12 particulars presented by his accusers. The release of the report has been followed by plenty of activity, with Lukwago and his supporters calling for the report to be fought.

The anti-Lukwago councillors, meanwhile, went to State House to confer with President Museveni, now a de facto 'patron' of their movement. On their minds is the impending impeachment of Lukwago, a key opposition figure.

The tribunal made various recommendations to solve Kampala Capital City Authority's problems, including delinking management of city affairs from a directly-elected lord mayor. Rather, it proposed, a mayor could be elected from among the five division mayors.

Without going into the merits and demerits of the tribunal's findings, we think the above recommendation falls short of addressing the fundamental problem with the city's administration. As the report itself points out, albeit guardedly, Kampala's problems do not start and stop with Lukwago.

That is why it recommended that the technical team, led by Executive Director Jennifer Musisi, needed to realise the political wing, led by Lukwago, was there to provide checks and balances. These checks and balances ultimately derive their legitimacy in Article 1 of the Constitution, which vests power in the hands of the people of Uganda.

The tribunal agreed with our editorial of November 21, 2012, that the city can only thrive if both sides respect each other. Therefore, the problems at KCCA mirror one of the bigger political

questions facing this country: how should Uganda be governed and where does the power lie?

The country has witnessed incessant struggles, for instance, between the executive arm of government and a parliament trying to provide the kind of "checks and balances" like those referred to in the Bamugemereire report.

One of the most important legacies the present political establishment can bequeath this country's children is a Uganda where institutions are bigger than individuals at their helm, and where working systems produce strong individuals, rather than strong individuals replacing flawed systems. Removing Lukwago may be no more than a quick political fix.

SOUTH AFRICA :

Nelson Mandela remains ill, unable to speak, Winnie tells South Africa newspaper

Sunday, November 17, 2013/The Associated Press

November 17, 2013 (JOHANNESBURG) -- South Africa's former president, Nelson Mandela, remains "quite ill" and unable to speak because of tubes that are keeping his lungs clear of fluid, though he is relaxed, his former wife told a South African newspaper.

"He remains very sensitive to any germs, so he has to be kept literally sterile. The bedroom there (in his suburban Johannesburg home) is like an ICU ward," Winnie Madikizela-Mandela told the Sunday Independent. "He is 95 years old and it is difficult for him, because of all the tubes that are in his mouth to clear the (fluid from his) lungs, and prevent an infection recurring." Because of those tubes, she said, he communicates through his face.

"But the doctors have told us they hope he will be able to recover his voice," she said, adding that he is being treated by 22 doctors at his home.

Mandela's former wife shot down reports that the former anti-apartheid leader and Nobel Peace prize winner was on life support.

"I have heard this nonsense that he is on life support. He is not," she told the newspaper. When asked if he was peaceful, she said, "Very. When he is very relaxed, he is fine," adding that it helps he is at his home, an environment that he recognizes.

Mandela has been in intensive medical care at his Johannesburg home since being discharged on Sept. 1 after nearly three months in a hospital for a recurring lung infection.

Madikizela-Mandela's comments come days before the release of the film based on Mandela's autobiography "Long Walk to Freedom" and which stars British actor Idris Elba. Madikizela-Mandela, 77, published a book of her prison diaries earlier this year entitled "491 Days: Prisoner number 1323/69."

"Of course, I wish he could read the book, but I really wish he could see the film," she said.

Madikizela-Mandela and Mandela divorced in 1996.

Mandela served a single five-year term as president of South Africa and afterward he focused on

charitable causes, including the fight against HIV/AIDS. He withdrew from public life years ago. Mandela's last public appearance was in 2010 at the World Cup soccer tournament, which was hosted by South Africa. At that time, bundled against the cold, he waved but did not speak to the stadium full of fans.

TANZANIA :

Africa's first underwater hotel room at The Manta Resort opens in Zanzibar

November 18, 2013/news.com.au

IMAGINE yourself encapsulated within a turquoise blue bubble, watching shoals of colourful reef fish dart around. Welcome to Africa's first underwater room in Zanzibar at The Manta Resort.

The floating dwelling, designed by Swedish engineers, is made up of three levels - some above water, and some under it.

Although underwater rooms do exist in places such as the Maldives and Stockholm, this is the first one in Africa, and Pemba is renowned for being a great diving spot with a plethora of sealife found in the surroundings waters.

"After many years of planning, we finally opened The Manta Underwater Room to guests on the 1st November 2013. We opened The Manta Resort in August 2008. We have 16 rooms, and now with the underwater room we have 17," Matthew Saus, said.

"Only six guests have had the chance to stay so far, and the reaction is awe.

"Shoals of silver bait engulf the room with predators lurking in the background. Nights are action packed, especially feeding time when the spotlights are on. We have even had an octopus crawl over one of the windows."

Those lucky enough to snag a night or two in the room have the chance to really immerse themselves in the underwater world.

"I guess the right word for it is privilege, as you certainly do feel privileged to be part of this world," Saus said.

And hey, if you don't mind sealife watching you sleep ... or not sleep ... it could just well be the best room in the world.

KENYA :

Australian man Patrick Richer shot dead in Kenya

Date: November 18, 2013/smh.com.au

An Australian man has been shot dead in Kenya by a gang of up to 10 men, including some who were wearing police uniforms when they stormed into his home.

The victim has been named in Kenyan media as Patrick John Richer, 39, who was shot twice in the chest at close range in his home in the upmarket Runda estate in Nairobi in the early hours of Sunday morning.

The former Sydney resident was the creative director of the international advertising agency, Tbwa Flame Tree Advertising, and had worked in Africa for about a decade.

Nairobi police commander Benson Kibue told Kenyan newspaper The Daily Nation that about 10 attackers, including six who were dressed in administration police uniform, raided Mr Richer's home about 1.40am on Sunday.

The gunmen are believed to have cut through the rear fence and tied up a number of guards who were on duty before raiding the house and shooting Mr Richer, according to Kenyan newspaper The Standard.

Mr Richer was taken to Aga Khan Hospital, but was pronounced dead.

His Kenyan wife, Lesili Richer, also was home at the time of the robbery but was not injured.

The thieves escaped with a television, phones and two laptops, according to The Daily Nation.

Mr Kibue said no one had been arrested over the robbery, which occurred in one of the most affluent neighbourhoods in Nairobi.

Police were in the process of establishing whether the suspects who were in police uniform were in fact officers.

Tim Smyth, from Tbwa Flame Tree Advertising, told local media that Mr Richer was a "wonderful person" who had been working for the company for about five years.

"He has travelled across Africa to represent lots of companies and lots of brands and has worked with many, many, many young Kenyans to help them grow their skills and their passion for advertising and creativity," Mr Smyth said.

"He's a great ambassador for our industry. He's certainly going to be sorely missed by many of the young Kenyans that he helped over the past almost decade working in Kenya and across Africa.

"We were about to negotiate some new long-term deals for him to move ahead and continue to work and help us grow our business and industry here. It's craziness."

Mr Richer's death comes almost seven years after he survived a truck crash in Nairobi that killed two other people, including his former colleague.

Mr Richer was one of four passengers in the safari vehicle when it was struck head-on by a truck in December 2006.

Australian man Julian Horton, an advertising creative director, and his wife Fiona were killed in the crash that left Mr Richer with a fractured spine.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has been contacted for comment.

Kenya now shifts ICC battle to Hague talks

By JUDIE KABERIA/capitalfm.co.ke/November 18, 2013

NAIROBI, Kenya, Nov 18 – Kenya is sending a strong delegation to The Hague, Netherlands to attend the 12th session of the Assembly of State Parties (ASP) that kicks off on Wednesday.

The delegation includes top officials from the offices of the Attorney General, the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Foreign Affairs Secretary Amina Mohamed, Attorney General Githu Muigai and the Director of Public Prosecutions Keriako Tobiko are leading teams from their offices to represent Kenya in the ASP that ends on November 28.

Officials from Deputy President William Ruto's office could not confirm if he will attend the ASP since his trial resumes at The Hague this week.

International Criminal Court (ICC) Deputy Prosecutor James Stewart told Capital FM News that this year's ASP is dedicated to the African Union to air issues that have resulted in bad blood between the court and Africa.

The AU has complained that the ICC has been targeting African states and has particularly been opposed to President Uhuru Kenyatta and his deputy William Ruto attending their trials.

According to Stewart, the ASP will be one of the ways the ICC will try to reach out to the African continent which forms majority of members with 34 countries having ratified the Rome Statute.

The President of the ASP, Ambassador Tiina Intelmann is expected to address a press conference on Wednesday afternoon at the World Forum Convention Centre where the ASP will take place.

In the Kenyan case, the ICC has been accused of usurping Kenya's sovereignty by pursuing the case against Kenyatta and Ruto while they are still in office.

The ASP also comes days after the UN Security Council blocked an AU bid for the Kenyan cases to be deferred for a year.

This has angered Kenya which expected the UN Security Council to vote in its favour based on security threats Kenya is facing from terrorists.

The decision too has not augured well with other African countries that were supporting Kenya's bid for a deferral.

The UN Security Council decision is likely to be a subject during the ASP.

Former Juja Member of Parliament, George Thuo is dead

Monday, November 18th 2013/By Cyrus Ombati/standardmedia.co.ke

NAIROBI, KENYA: Former Juja MP George Thuo is dead.

Friends and relatives say Thuo died on Sunday night after he collapsed while having drinks with friends at a club in Thika town at about 10 pm. He was rushed to a nearby hospital where he was

pronounced dead.

The friends who were with him at that time said he was in good health and had not complained of any sickness.

The late legislature collapsed at a club in Thika town while watching Formula one sport. He started to sweat and removed clothes before he went down.

He was rushed to Thika Nursing Home but were unable to resuscitate him, an ambulance was called from Nairobi to take him to Aga Khan Hospital where doctors said he had died.

"The body was later moved to the Lee Funeral Home," Police say.

Thuo was one of the original owners of City Hoppa public service vehicles. He was also once the managing director of the defunct Kenya Bus Service PSVs and later Stagecoach buses.

He was first elected as an MP in the 2007 elections on a Party of National Unity (PNU) ticket to represent Juja Constituency.

He also served as the then Government Chief Whip.

In April 2010 he lost the parliamentary seat after a court nullified the 2007 election results of Juja Constituency citing irregularities.

A by-election was subsequently held on September 20, 2010, but Thuo was left third after William Kabogo (NARC-Kenya) and Alice Wambui of Kenya National Congress.

Many have mourned his death.

Former Prime Minister Raila Odinga said: "My condolences to the family, friends and indeed the people of Juja and Kenya at large following the untimely demise of Hon George Thuo."

Mob roughs up suspect in girl's defilement

Monday, November 18th 2013/standardmedia.co.ke/By Joseph Muchiri

Embu County: A man suspected to have defiled and killed his eight-year-old niece at an estate in Embu town on Friday was yesterday morning beaten up by the public.

The man, aged 26, went missing after the incident, but was cornered by angry residents near Kiritiri Police Station in Mbeere South District.

Officers from the police station, however, rescued him and rushed him to Embu Provincial General Hospital where he was admitted.

Police had been hunting for the suspect since Friday morning when the girl's body was discovered at her parent's house in Majimbo.

The girl was identified as a Standard Two pupil at Kamiu Primary School.

Suspect disappeared

Embu OCPD Gasper Makau said the girl's parents had left her and her two brothers, aged two and five, under the care of the suspect.

Makau said the body was discovered by neighbours, who saw the boys leaving the house alone.

He said man disappeared after the incident and his phone was switched off while that of the girl could not be traced.

"The little boy could not understand what happened and could not give us any useful information," Makau said.

Police later recovered both phones from the suspect.

They said the suspect's condition was serious as he had been hit several times on the head and it was swollen. Makau said police were investigating the incident.

ANGOLA :

AU/AFRICA :

Egypt train and bus crash kills 24 outside Cairo

18 November 2013/bbc.co.uk

At least 24 people have been killed and 28 injured as a train crashed into a minibus and other vehicles south of Egypt's capital Cairo, officials say.

The freight train, travelling from the city of Beni Suef, hit the vehicles at a crossing about 40km (25 miles) from Cairo, they say.

State TV says many of those killed on the bus were members of the extended family returning from a wedding.

Egypt's roads and railways have a notoriously poor safety record.

Crossing gates 'closed'

map

Monday's collision happened near the village of Dahshur, with reports saying the minibus and two other vehicles were involved.

Local security officials told Egypt's media that the crossing gates of the tracks had been closed and the train's driver was surprised to see vehicles still crossing.

"The crossing was closed with chains, there were warning lights," Hussein Zakaria, the head of Egypt's railway authority, told state TV.

Ambulances later arrived at the scene to take the injured to hospitals. There are fears that the death

toll could rise further.

In January, a train carrying army recruits derailed near Cairo, killing 19 people and injuring more than 100.

Last November, 50 children died when a train hit their school bus near Manfalut, some 350km south of Cairo, after a signal operator fell asleep. That disaster forced the resignation of the transport minister.

Egypt's worst train disaster was in 2002, when a train caught fire in Cairo, killing 373 people.

UN/AFRICA :

UN Security Council 'has failed Africa'

2013-11-18/Reuters

New York - An African bid to postpone the International Criminal Court trials of Kenya's president and his deputy failed at the United Nations on Friday, which Kenya called a humiliation for Africa.

The African Union had requested that the UN Security Council defer the cases against Uhuru Kenyatta and his number two, William Ruto, for one year to allow them to deal with the aftermath of an attack by al Qaeda-linked Somali militants.

But the 15-member Security Council was split - seven members, including Russia and China, voted in favour, and eight abstained, including France, the United States and Britain. Resolutions need nine votes and no vetoes to pass. Britain, France, the United States, China and Russia hold veto powers.

Kenya, a key partner in the West's fight against militant Islam in Somalia, said the outcome highlighted the need for reform of the security council to prevent a few powerful nations imposing their will on the world.

Kenyatta and Ruto are accused of fomenting ethnic violence after Kenya's 2007 elections, in which 1 200 people died. Both deny the charges and have tried to have the cases adjourned or halted. Ruto's trial began last month, while Kenyatta's trial is due to start on 5 February after being delayed for a third time.

In a statement, Kenya's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said those who abstained showed "clear cowardice in the face of a critical African matter".

The African Union had made its request to the Security Council with the stability and security of the continent in mind, the ministry said.

"But the Security Council has failed to do this and humiliated the continent and its leadership," it said.

Justice for the victims

At least 67 people were killed in the Nairobi mall attack in September, the worst attack on Kenyan

soil since al Qaeda bombed the US Embassy in 1998.

Rwandan UN Ambassador Eugene Gasana, who led the push for a resolution, said: "Let it be written today in history that the Security Council failed Kenya and Africa on this issue."

The Kenyan cases have stirred an African backlash against the ICC Court and sparked claims that the Security Council does not take Africa seriously enough.

African states put the resolution to a vote knowing it would fail.

"It has been insinuated that not joining the vote that favours the resolution is somehow an expression of ill will towards the African Union," said Guatemalan UN Ambassador Gert Rosenthal. "We find this view frankly offensive."

British UN Ambassador Mark Lyall Grant noted that the United Nations supports over 100 000 peacekeepers in Africa.

Western and Latin American council members believe the African concerns should be dealt with at the ICC and at a meeting this month of the Assembly of States Parties, which is made up of the 122 court members.

An Ipsos Synovate poll of 2 060 Kenyans showed on Thursday that 42% believe the ICC cases should continue, two percent thought they should be deferred, while almost a third wanted the trials dropped completely.

"We believe that justice for the victims of that violence is critical to the country's long-term peace and security. It is incumbent on us all to support accountability for those responsible for crimes against humanity," US Ambassador to the United Nations Samantha Power told the council.

Sad and tragic

Concerns had been raised by some council members that a deferral could lead to impunity. But Ethiopia's U.N. Ambassador Tekeda Alemu said the notion Africa tolerated impunity was the mantra of those who treated Africans as unequals. Ethiopia is currently chair of the African Union.

The Security Council can defer ICC action for one year under Article 16 of the Rome Statute that established The Hague-based court a decade ago.

Seven of the members who abstained are ICC members - France, Britain, Guatemala, Argentina, South Korea, Australia and Luxembourg. The United States is not a member. The seven who voted yes are not court members - China, Russia, Togo, Azerbaijan, Rwanda, Morocco and Pakistan.

Kenyan UN Ambassador Macharia Kamau said after the vote that Africa's engagement at the Security Council had been met with "derision, suspicion, impatience and even irritation" and that Africa now believed that the body was not the destination for solving complex and fluid security and political problems.

"At every turn the boogie man of impunity and dictatorship is dragged out to devastating effect. This is wrong, and it is unfair, as it is sad and tragic," Kamau said.

The UN Security Council turned down a previous deferral request by Kenya in 2011 and rejected a request in May for the cases to be terminated because the council had no such power.

Reuters

US/AFRICA :

CANADA/AFRICA :

AUSTRALIA/AFRICA :

EU/AFRICA :

Nigeria : l'otage français Francis Collomp "s'est libéré"

Le Monde.fr avec AFP et Reuters/17.11.2013

Francis Collomp, enlevé en décembre 2012 au Nigeria, est libre après avoir réussi à s'évader. François Hollande a confirmé dimanche 17 novembre, depuis Israël où il est en visite, que l'otage français "s'était libéré" de l'emprise du groupe islamiste qui le détenait.

Le président français a "exprimé toute sa gratitude aux autorités nigérianes" pour la libération de l'ingénieur, tout en assurant que la France n'avait "cessé de déployer tous ses efforts pour parvenir à ce dénouement heureux". Il a dialogué avec l'ancien otage dimanche par téléphone. Une "conversation sereine et longue", malgré un interlocuteur qui est apparu "fatigué", au cours de laquelle le chef de l'Etat a salué le "courage" de Francis Collomp. M. Hollande s'est ensuite dit "fier" de l'ex-otage, qui a su "saisir l'occasion" d'échapper à ses ravisseurs comme "dans un livre d'aventures".

"J'ai appris cette nouvelle de la bouche du président qui m'a appelé de son avion (...). C'est un immense soulagement", a déclaré Denis Collomp, le frère de l'otage libéré. "Je suis restée bouche bée, je ne réalise pas encore, c'est la joie", s'est réjouie Anne-Marie Collomp, son épouse, qui vit sur l'île de la Réunion.

RÉPONSE À LA POSITION DE LA FRANCE "CONTRE L'ISLAM"

Francis Collomp, un ingénieur de 63 ans, avait été enlevé le 19 décembre 2012 par une trentaine d'hommes armés dans l'Etat de Katsina, dans le nord du Nigeria. Deux gardes du corps et un voisin avaient été tués lors de ce rapt revendiqué par le groupe islamiste Ansaru, qui serait lié à Boko Haram.

Ansaru avait présenté l'enlèvement comme une réponse à "la position du gouvernement français et des Français contre l'islam et les musulmans", évoquant notamment l'intervention militaire en

préparation dans le nord du Mali et la loi de 2011 contre le port du voile musulman intégral en public.

Le groupe islamiste nigérian avait diffusé une vidéo, datant probablement de début septembre, dans laquelle Francis Collomp appelait les gouvernements français et nigérian à ouvrir des négociations avec ses ravisseurs en vue de sa libération.

SEPT OTAGES FRANÇAIS ENCORE DÉTENUS

Sa libération "ne nous fait pas oublier que sept de nos compatriotes sont encore retenus en otage en Syrie, au Mali et au Nigeria", a souligné M. Hollande, en assurant que la France continuerait "inlassablement à travailler pour leur liberté".

L'évasion de Francis Collomp intervient trois jours après l'annonce de l'enlèvement d'un prêtre catholique français au Cameroun, près de la frontière nigériane. Boko Haram a affirmé vendredi détenir le père Georges Vandenbeusch, enlevé "en coordination avec Ansaru", selon une source au sein du groupe. François Hollande a jugé vendredi que le religieux avait "sûrement été emmené vers le Nigeria", estimant que la France payait à nouveau "le prix" de son intervention militaire au Mali.

Après la libération, fin d'octobre, de Thierry Dol, Daniel Larribe, Pierre Legrand et Marc Féret, quatre Français enlevés au Niger par Al-Qaida au Maghreb islamique (AQMI) en 2010, sept otages français sont encore détenus dans le monde : un au Cameroun, donc, mais aussi deux au Mali et quatre autres, des journalistes, en Syrie. Deux journalistes français de Radio France international ont par ailleurs été enlevés et assassinés le 2 novembre à Kidal, dans le nord du Mali.

CHINA/AFRICA :

INDIA/AFRICA :

BRAZIL/AFRICA :

EN BREF, CE 18 Novembre 2013... AGNEWS/DAM, NY, 18/11/2013