(Libya's internationally recognised parliament on Monday voted to reject a UN-backed unity government, lawmakers said, in a major blow to international efforts to end the country's unrest.)

BURUNDI :

Burundi: affrontements dans la commune de Mugamba
Par RFI/le 25-01-2016

Au Burundi, des affrontements ont eu lieu ce lundi 25 janvier matin, à l'aube, dans la commune de Mugamba située à 60 km, au sud de la capitale, Bujumbura. Une opération conjointe de la police et de l'armée a ciblé un groupe rebelle. La police affirme avoir tué deux « criminels » - nom donné par les autorités aux insurgés - et avoir saisi une arme et des munitions. Le RED-Tabara, l'un des groupes armés qui s'oppose au pouvoir de Bujumbura, affirme quant à lui avoir tué cinq soldats et blessé une vingtaine d'autres. En tout cas, la population terrorisée est restée cloîtrée, comme cet habitant qui témoigne sous couvert d'anonymat.

RWANDA :

RDC CONGO :

UGANDA :

Uganda's Museveni accused of spending his way to fifth term

Tue Jan 26, 2016 /reuters.com

By Edith Honan and Elias Biryabarema

MBARARA, Uganda, Jan 26 At an election rally this month, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni awarded city status to the town of Mbarara - a minor distinction on the face of it, but one that promises more public sector jobs for local voters.

As top musicians played for thousands of dancing supporters, critics said it was another example of Museveni spending freely on government patronage in a campaign to extend his three decades in office while teachers go unpaid and clinics run out of drugs.

"For 30 years, it has been the same face, the same system, the economy in the hands of a few people," said 53-year-old Steven, who did not want to give his full name. "He has the state machinery buying the election."

Museveni, whose government denies squandering state cash on campaigning for the Feb. 18 presidential vote, has brought a measure of peace and economic stability since he took control of the country in 1986 after winning a protracted bush war.

His achievements since then pleased Western allies, who value Uganda for sending peacekeeping troops to hotspots like Somalia. But as the 71-year-old seeks a fifth term, Western donors frustrated by his lengthy grip on power are calling more loudly for him and other entrenched African leaders - such as Paul Kagame in neighbouring Rwanda - to relinquish office so a tradition of peaceful transition of power can be established.

Museveni's opponents at home complain that the rebel-turned-statesman treats the treasury as his personal fiefdom in a nation that remains among the poorest in Africa.

Museveni "simply believes that anyone has a price, and he is purchasing people as if they are some chattel in some market", candidate Amama Mbabazi, a former ally who was sacked as prime minister last year, told Reuters.

RIVALS CLAIM HARASSMENT

Mbabazi and Kizza Besigye, a longtime opponent who has lost three previous elections, are Museveni's main election rivals.

They command big crowds and draw cheers when they criticise runaway government spending. Mbabazi promises to cut the budget of the State House, or the presidential office, by 60 percent.

Both candidates say the government uses the security forces to harass them and their supporters, which the police deny. When the pair were detained last year, police said they had broken the law by campaigning before it was allowed.

Government spokesman Shaban Bantariza said the idea that Museveni's party was using taxpayers' money on the campaign was "purely speculative". He said a costly bureaucracy was the "the price of democracy".

But in the budget for 2015/16, the year that covers the election, government spending rose by 71 percent, helping to push the Ugandan shilling to all-time lows.

"His entire governance is based on a system of patronage," said Nicholas Opiyo, a Kampala lawyer, in comments echoed by other observers. "The line is so blurred that you often can't tell which is the state and which is the ruling party. Museveni is the state and the state is Museveni in Uganda."

In September, the government ran out of antiretroviral HIV drugs and activists accused it of diverting funds to its election campaign. Officials denied this and blamed a shortage of foreign currency. Last year, teachers from several regions complained that they had not been paid for months.

DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES

The scale of election spending is hard to establish. Museveni's party, the National Resistance Movement, does not release financial reports.

Portions of the government budget are not publicly allocated or, as with parts of the bill for security, are secret.

The State House covers the president's campaign travel and accommodation costs, but does not say how much it spends.

After the 2011 election, the European Union's observer mission said "the distribution of money and gifts by candidates, especially from the ruling party" was "inconsistent with democratic principles".

Analysts say this presidential vote follows a trend. Each election season, Museveni creates new local government districts, each with upwards of 100 new jobs, says budget analyst Godber Tumushabe.

Museveni himself has more than 100 presidential advisers, Tumushabe said, all with salaries, official cars and money for their running costs.

It was not immediately possible to obtain a list of advisers from the government. But Bantariza said: "If the opposition thinks (such positions) are useless they should have brought a bill to amend the constitution and abolish these provisions."

Opposition bills are usually shot down in a parliament dominated by Museveni's supporters.

Opponents say Museveni's campaign pledges will do little to reassure those who worry about fiscal prudence. They include a promise to give 18 million hoes to farmers, costing the Agriculture Ministry about 28 percent of its budget.

Museveni's long years in office make it difficult for many Ugandans to imagine any other leader. Most people in the young nation cannot remember another president.

"He's not our choice but if he wants to stay, whether we like it or not, he will stay," said Steven in Mbarara. "You know, it's African politics."

SOUTH AFRICA :

TANZANIA :

KENYA :

Kenya gears up to make history with Islamic bond

By Patrick Alushula/standardmedia.co.ke/Tuesday, January 26th 2016

Kenya is working on documentation that would see current banking laws amended to pave way for its first Islamic bond. According to Treasury Cabinet Secretary Henry Rotich, the Islamic bond, also known as a sukuk, would help tap into the country's Muslim population that has limited access to formal Sharia-compliant banking. Mr Rotich said he hopes the process can be completed within a year, adding that it would be too early to disclose the bond's value as it would depend on the needs of the financial year. Greater diversification The sukuk would provide the Government with a cheaper way to raise the funds its needs to meet the country's budgetary needs.
An Islamic bond works by giving investors a share of the returns that are generated by the underlying asset, rather than guaranteeing them interest, which would infringe on Islamic law.
The issuance of the bond would see Kenya join the league of countries outside the Organisation of Islamic Co-operation (OIC) that have issued a sukuk. Other countries where the Islamic bond has made a debut include the Gambia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan and the United Kingdom.
Rotich said that the growing uptake of Islamic financial services across the world signals there is a gap to be filled. "Whereas conventional financial markets have played an important role in mobilising funds and facilitating economic development in the past, the evolving development and financing requirements of our regional economies call for greater diversification of products and scope of our financial markets," he said. Big leap
Estimates, as measured by Sharia-compliant assets, put global Islamic financial services at over $2 trillion (Sh204.8 trillion), representing a big leap from $150 billion (Sh15.4 trillion at current exchange rates) in the mid-1990s.
Speaking Monday during the International Islamic Finance Conference for Africa (IFCA) being held in Nairobi, Rotich said there are two banks in Kenya operating under Islamic procedures, and their asset base has grown significantly. He added that the Treasury has been working with the Capital Markets Authority and insurance firms to introduce more products into the market that are Sharia compliant. However, the CS noted that even though the world was increasingly embracing Islamic banking products, the uptake in Kenya has been lagging due to a lack of sufficient structures. "We need to have a whole review of the laws to allow full Islamic banking arrangements," said Rotich, adding that the conference would give insight into how to improve existing instruments and legislation. If the bond is issued, the Treasury boss said it would help the country gain access to a significant number of prospective consumers of Islamic products, as well as projects that are suited for Sharia-compliant finance streams.

Kenya to lead African growth story in 2016

Sungula Nkabinde/moneyweb.co.za/ 26 January 2016

While growth prospects in SA continue to dwindle, the East African country is a rising star within the continent.

You would expect South Africa, as the continent's most advanced economy, to feature heavily in a discussion on Africa's growth. But it was sparsely mentioned at the 2016 Africa Outlook seminar hosted by Frontier Advisory Deloitte on Thursday. Other than to highlight its flaws and challenges, South Africa was not praised or expected to lead growth on the continent in any way this year. Instead, it was East Africa, and Kenya in particular, that emerged as the protagonists in the Africa growth story. Kenya's openness, and investment in infrastructure and innovation, has made it one of the leading examples of fast-growing resource-poor countries on the continent.

Standard Bank Group's joint chief executive Sim Tshabalala, singled the region out as the continent's innovation leader; Kenya's infrastructure spend has seen it cut railway travel costs by more than 90% and energy costs by 30%. M-Pesa, the mobile phone money transfer, financing and micro-financing service, accounted for around 25% of Kenya's gross national product flows in 2013, according to GDP. Meanwhile, M-KOPA Solar, which offers a pay-as-you-go energy solution for off-grid consumption, has connected more than 280 000 homes in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda to solar power, and is now adding more than 500 new homes each day.

According to the 2015 Africa Progress Report report, electricity consumption in Spain exceeds that of the whole of sub-Saharan Africa, for which half its power generation capacity is located in South Africa.

"Excluding South Africa, consumption averages around 162 kilowatt-hours (kWh) per capita per year. This compares to a global average of 7 000 kWh" – 2015 Africa Progress report.

Said Tshabalala: "Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda now compare favourably with non-African competitors with factors such as transportation and communication costs…they have also made progress with their regional integration and on linking their economies into global value chains, which has increased East Africa's competitiveness as an exporter of manufactured goods.

Sheila M'Mbijjewe, the deputy governor of the Central Bank of Kenya, said she was quite surprised to hear Kenya being spoken of in this light.

"As a country we have put together a vision that we all seem to be working and pushing for. And, obviously, that vision is starting to pay off."

Unlike South Africa and many commodity-driven economies on the continent that, not long ago, were the champions of the Africa and emerging markets growth story, Kenya's growth is driven by 14 sectors. They each contribute 10-12% of GDP, with the exception of agriculture, which contributes 25%.

M'Mbijjewe said the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had revised its forecasts on Kenya's GDP growth upwards, from 3.8 to 4.3%. South Africa's was recently revised down to 0.7% from 1%. She also said recent visits to the country from US president Barack Obama and Pope Francis, as well as Kenya's hosting of the tenth WTO (World Trade Organisation) Ministerial Conference last month, was an indication of how much Kenya's role in the global economy had changed.

But being held in such high esteem is foreign territory for a country struggling with terrorism attacks, widespread poverty and an 8% inflation rate. Konrad Reuss, MD of credit rating agency Standard & Poor's sub-Saharan office, said the country's debt-to-GDP ratio was concerning and motivated the negative outlook S&P has on the economy.

But the IMF's Dr Axel Schimmelpfenning, said it was a good time to spend so that, when countries come out of the cyclical downturn, they can grow quickly. M'Mbijjewe echoed this, saying that in a financial environment of pervasive loose monetary policy, it was the best time to borrow as debt was, and still is, quite cheap.

Said M'Mbijjewe: "With 60% of our population below 30, what we're doing is developing our infrastructure to make sure that, in the future, the opportunities are there for the next generation…I don't think we need to apologise for taking advantage of that opportunity."

Kenya: Treasury Set to Borrow More Locally As Foreign Credit Gets Expensive

26 January 2016/The Nation (Nairobi)

By Otiato Guguyu

Kenya will rely more on local borrowing to finance this year's budget gap as unfavourable conditions have made external credit unattractive, financial experts have said.

Global assets manager PineBridge Investments has predicted that Kenya will have to rely on domestic market because borrowing internationally has become too expensive for African countries.

PineBridge Investment CEO Jonathan Stichbury said the risk from hard currency sovereign borrowing such as the Eurobond, which require foreign exchange support to repay, will push the National Treasury away from the international market.

"We expect to see additional pressures on revenue financing with aggressive tax collection being required and additional taxes being levied in 2016," Mr Stichbury said.

The National Treasury is putting together a supplementary budget set to come out next month. It is expected that the budget will see cuts in spending, consolidation of expenditures and restructuring of the debt ratios.

In the current budget, Kenya expected to raise Sh340 billion from external financing and Sh229 billion from the domestic market to meet the deficit.

"There has been some talk of revised budget plans to be presented soon. That could potentially cut some elements of spending and reshuffle others," Africa Global Research Standard Chartered Chief Economist, Razia Khan wrote to Smart Company on email.

Ms Khan said that traditionally, Kenya has been able to tap the domestic market for its financing needs - hence the depth and liquidity of the Kenyan bond market.

"Should external conditions remain difficult, we will almost certainly see more reliance on the domestic market," she said.

Over time, she said, as the economy continues to grow, the size and depth of the Kenyan bond market will increase. The likelihood that the Treasury will resort to domestic borrowing may spook the local market with investors demanding premium rates to lend to the government at the expense of the economy.

LIQUIDITY IS STRESSED

Ms Khan says that the mention of the external borrowing may have been a way of relieving pressure on the domestic market, at a time when liquidity is already stressed by events in the banking sector, and when the Central Bank of Kenya (CBK) has tightened considerably.

She said liquidity has normalised and with inflation outlook not that grim, the CBK may even start lowering interest rates.

"Any external issuance will likely be deferred to when some calm has been restored to markets. It does not make sense to borrow significantly, especially when trying to lengthen the tenor of borrowing, given the current state of international capital markets," she said.

The National Treasury has hinted at fresh plans to return to the international market to source for more funds, including the option of another Eurobond, to plug deficits in the national budget although analysts say this is unlikely in the short term.

"Whatever deficit we have we will have to finance it by borrowing. Such borrowing will be a mix of local and external borrowing ranging from direct bilateral loans, export credit agencies, new products like Sukuk and Samurai bonds, and all other products in the international market including also going back to the Eurobond. We are not ruling out that," National Treasury Cabinet Secretary Henry Rotich said.

Dimming oil prospects, slower economic growth and scandal over Eurobond proceeds means Kenya will pay a higher premium if it goes back to the international markets.

In 2014 Kenya issued a total of $2 billion with a weighted average interest rate of 6.6 per cent in Europe, Middle East and the US.

According to Bloomberg Markets, the return on the country's $2 billion bond, trading in the Irish stock market, climbed 124 basis points in the just a month to 9.23 per cent in December. While this does not affect the rate at which Kenya services the debt, it means the country cannot issue a new Eurobond at a rate less than 9 per cent at the current market position.

ANGOLA :

Angola: South Africans want to provide services to attract tourists
Tue, 26 Jan 2016/portalangop.co.ao

Luanda - The director of Tourist Promotion Institute (Infotur), Eugenio Clement, said on Monday that South African companies in the tourism sector are qualified and available for the construction of lodges and campsites parks in various parts of the country, aiming to attract more tourists.

According to the director of Infotur, who was speaking at the meeting with South African entrepreneurs, this meeting is part of a campaign that the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism and Infotur have sought to attract and implement practical solutions to the development of tourist stations with attractiveness for the tourism sector.

On the other hand, explained Eugénio Clemente, the fluvial and maritime nautical sector is an openess for business opportunities and emergence of companies capable of developing the sale of services, encouraging the practice of riding or river cruises.

So, he continued, the meeting counted on presence of representatives of Port-elizabeth vessels factories that will also present characteristics of boats and prices. "With the new vessels, it is expected to emerge new businesses for new services in Angola".

"We hope that this business meeting takes effect in the intent of business, judging by the need that the market has, especially in creating more jobs for our youths, because it is also a way to combat unemployment among young people" , he said.

Infortur was established in 1997 with responsibility to play an important role in the national tourism development strategy.

Angola: WHO ensures support to fight yellow fever outbreak

Tue, 26 Jan 2016/portalangop.co.ao

Luanda - The representative of the World Health Organization (WHO) in Angola, Hernando Agudelo on Monday expressed full support to the Angolan authorities in the fight against yellow fever which is ravaging the city of Viana.

The official said so at the end of a meeting on the yellow fever outbreak in Luanda, chaired by the provincial governor, Higino Carneiro.

According to Hernando Agudelo, WHO is ready and has already identified the needs to prepare the response and coordination plan.

He said that it is necessary to have an awareness of preventive vaccination in order avoid contamination in cases of epidemics, as it is happening now.

The health official informed that currently a vaccine against yellow fever can immunize the person for more than ten years.

He reported that soon WHO experts will come to Angola in order to conduct further study of the causes of the appearance of the disease.

It was reported in Viana municipality on December 30, 2015 a record of 99 cases, of which 26 are validated with eight deaths.

AU/AFRICA :

Family planning to take centrestage in AU Summit

By MIRIAM LESENI/the-star.co.ke/Jan. 26, 2016

The 24th African Union Summit is underway in Addis Ababa Ethiopia where stakeholders are urging their respective governments to demonstrate that family planning is a priority.

“This particular Summit is key since it is the first within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) era adopted by the United Nations General Assembly last year,” says Sam Ntelamo, resident representative at the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) Liaison Office to the African Union.

He further said that the Summit presents a “golden opportunity to work towards providing a wider range of sexual and reproductive health services, particularly in increasing access to family planning which is central to gender equality.”

Ntelamo emphasises that the space provided by the Summit will significantly contribute towards advocacy efforts towards ensuring that family planning is flagged as a key development issue.

“The current development agenda on the African continent involves deals on infrastructure, neglecting issues of social development. Sexual and reproductive health services are key to social development and to sustainable development,” he observes.

In the same breath, stakeholders have been vocal in pushing to have family planning programs grounded in human rights.

“Kenya’s unmet need for contraceptives is 25 per cent nationwide but 60 per cent among HIV positive women,” says Dr John Ong’ech, head of reproductive health at Kenyatta National Hospital.

Family planning experts are hopeful that this Summit will deliver for women like Susan Auma who lives in Ruaka slums in Kasarani, Nairobi. She is barely 40 years old and is already a mother of seven children. Her daughters are not that far behind too.

Their life story is as a result of a combination of factors, “the nearest health center is five Kilometers away, and when you get there the queue is too long. You often do not get what you need and told to come another day.”

The story is the same for other women in Utooni village, two Kilometers from Kangundo town in the Eastern part of Kenya. Jacinta Mutio who lives in this village explains that not even those mentally handicapped are spared.

She talks about her neighbour’s daughter, Pauline Nzula who got pregnant only four months after giving birth to her first child at 15 years.

Mutio, also a community health volunteer in this remote and marginalised village, explains that family planning issues are very complex but the primary ones are inadequate stock and distance to the health facility.

“We have the women who do not use any form of contraceptive so multiple births are too common. Those who want to use family planning cannot access it because of the distance to the nearest facility. Others will go to the health facility but when they do not get what they want once or twice, they do not return,” she explains.

According to experts, one of the barriers for women with HIV to access contraception is the health facility staff. They are not trained on contraceptive options for women living with HIV; have misconceptions about contraceptive safety; most only offered male condoms, although women preferred long-acting implants and injections, and many were judgemental about the women’s sex lives.

A significant number of women are also not using safe and effective family planning methods due to lack of support from their partners or communities.

Take Auma's husband who has now married a second wife "after my last pregnancy I decided that it would be the last one. My husband was not happy with me not giving birth any more."

This is the reason why injection is the most popular method because women can use it without telling the husband, Dr Ong'ech explains.

"Unequal gender relationships and weak negotiating power influence contraceptive use," he says.

Lucy Wairimu, who distributes family planning commodities to residents of Mwiki-Kasarani including Auma in a bid to remove the barriers that hinder women from collecting them at health facilities, says that lack of partner support is a major problem.

She says that confronted with the possibility of a co-wife, "many would rather give birth as often as the husband pleases."

Family Planning experts such as Leah Wanaswa say that the plight of these women brings to the fore the great need for governments to invest more in family planning, saying that when women give birth to fewer children, the children will be able to obtain better education, health and well being.

She says that in regard to the supply chain for family planning commodities, the Push or Pull system has not worked effectively and as a result, there are significant discrepancies across health facilities.

"Some facilities have excess contraceptives, while others do not have. The push-pull mechanism is about a facility requesting for what it needs," she observes.

Experts say that family planning distribution systems are composed of a network of facilities including warehouses and hospitals.

Wanaswa explains that the government at both the county and national level must ensure that these systems meet the objective, which is to provide timely and adequate family planning commodities to the women.

Kenya is facing the challenge of moving to a decentralised political system. Wanaswa belabours the need for family planning experts to work with the county governments to ensure that there are no bottlenecks in ensuring that family planning services reach the intended.

According to her, there is a great need to build capacities at the county level to support and implement family planning policies.

In this regard, Leah Mumo, a nominated member of the County Assembly in Nairobi, who has demonstrated a commitment to women and girls empowerment, explains that family planning is not only a human right but is key towards achieving gender equality.

Having gotten pregnant while only in standard five, Mumo knows all too well the challenges that girls face with early pregnancies, including dropping out of school and facing a bleak and an uncertain future.

Mumo is however confident that in spite of the challenges women face in accessing family planning, the government has demonstrated a tangible commitment to improve this.

“Family planning is a priority. We want a country where women can be pregnant if and when they want, space their births in a manner that allows them to be fully functional and productive members of the society,” she says.

Against this backdrop, family planning experts are positive that some of the outcomes of the eight-day Summit will provide practical strategies to create a dedicated budget line for family planning to meet its demand.

That government will also purpose to empower women and girls to make family planning choices and freely exercise their sexual and reproductive rights.

“The theme for the AU Summit is ‘African Year of Human Rights’ and is significantly in favour of the empowerment of women and girls,” Ntelamo expounds, further saying that for Africa to harness its demographic dividends, there will be a need to ensure that youth are empowered and able to access family planning services.

Member States are therefore discussing national and international development frameworks which include the Maputo Plan of Action and SDGs.

Revisiting the Maputo plan is key as it is the continental policy framework and the most comprehensive document addressing universal access to sexual and reproductive health in all countries in Africa.

In 2012, Kenya joined a growing list of countries in making a commitment to fast track its family planning commitments under the Family Planning 2020 (FP2020) which is a global partnership that supports the rights of women and girls to decide freely, and for themselves, whether, when, and how many children they want to have.

FP2020 works with governments, civil society, multi-lateral organisations, donors, the private sector, and the research and development community to enable 120 million more women and girls to use contraceptives by 2020.

Kenya committed to meeting various objectives, which included increasing budgetary allocations to family planning, removing barriers to access family planning, ensuring that a diverse mix of modern day contraceptives are available and accessible to women and girls by investing in functional supply chain, procurement system and health workers.

FP2020 most recent progress report shows that the glaring gap in family planning notwithstanding, Kenya is making significant strides which include an increase in its contraceptive prevalence rate for married women that rose from 46 per cent in 2009 to 58 per cent.

According to the report, this exceeded the government’s own goal of achieving a 56 per cent contraceptive prevalence rate by 2015.

This has largely been attributed to the country’s shift to community based distribution of injectable contraceptives, a nationwide drive led by the ministry of health in conjunction with other partners.

Mumo says that increased access to family planning will have an impact on the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country and also sustainable development.

Libye. Le gouvernement d'union rejeté malgré la pression internationale
le 26/01/2016/ouest-france.fr

Les espoirs d'une sortie de crise en Libye ont été encore douchés avec le rejet du gouvernement d'union nationale formé il y a une semaine sous la pression internationale.

Le Parlement reconnu internationalement a refusé d'accorder sa confiance à ce gouvernement composé de 32 ministres censés représenter les différentes régions du pays plongé dans le chaos depuis la fin de la révolte qui mit fin au régime de Mouammar Kadhafi fin 2011.

« Des 104 députés présents aujourd'hui, 89 ont dit non », a indiqué à l'AFP l'un d'eux, Ali al-Gaydi, à l'issue de la séance à Tobrouk (est). Ils ont « rejeté ce gouvernement à cause du nombre des ministres » jugé trop élevé, a précisé son collègue el-Salhine Abdelnabi.

10 jours pour un nouveau gouvernement

Un revirement du Parlement est envisageable puisqu'il a « accordé 10 jours pour que soit formé un nouveau gouvernement avec moins de ministres », selon Fathi Abdelkarim, un responsable présent à Tobrouk.

Un vote positif est crucial pour qu'entre en fonction ce gouvernement conduit par l'homme d'affaires tripolitain Fayez el-Sarraj. Il doit représenter une étape importante dans l'application de l'accord politique conclu en décembre à Skhirat (Maroc) sous l'égide de l'ONU.

La communauté internationale compte sur ce gouvernement pour lutter plus efficacement contre la menace grandissante du groupe État islamique (EI), implanté dans le nord du pays, et l'afflux de migrants en Europe via la Libye.
Un pouvoir « virtuel »

Il existe aujourd'hui de facto trois autorités en Libye: le gouvernement reconnu par la communauté internationale qui siège à Baïda et contrôle une partie de l'est ; celui de « salut national » qui gère la capitale Tripoli et des régions de l'ouest, avec le soutien de milices dont certaines islamistes.

Le pouvoir du gouvernement d'union nationale est pour le moment « virtuel », en partie basé à Tunis et sans ressources. Mais bien qu'il n'ait pas d'existence légale, son conseil présidentiel scelle ses communiqués par le sceau « État de Libye - Gouvernement d'union nationale » et son Premier ministre Sarraj est reçu à l'étranger, comme à Alger lundi.

De profondes divergences sont apparues au sein des deux gouvernements rivaux sur l'appui à l'accord de Skhirat, conclu après des mois de complexes négociations menées par l'ONU.

Khalifa Haftar, général controversé

Cet accord avait été signé par des membres des deux Parlements rivaux mais n'avait pas été ratifié par aucune des deux chambres législatives. Et les présidents des deux Parlements s'y étaient opposés.

Sans se prononcer sur l'ensemble de l'accord, les députés ont voté en faveur de la suppression d'un article qui stipulait que tous les postes éminents des institutions militaires et sécuritaires soient approuvés par le gouvernement d'union.

Cette disposition risquait de faire perdre son poste au controversé général Khalifa Haftar,

commandant des forces loyales au pouvoir reconnu.
Un accord contesté

« Il y aura une séance mardi un vote sur l'accord » à la condition que la mission de l'ONU pour la Libye, qui a travaillé pendant plus d'un an pour finaliser l'accord, accepte l'annulation de cet article, a indiqué M. al-Gaydi.

L'accord est également contesté au sein du Congrès général national (CGN), qui contrôle Tripoli depuis un an et demi.

Dans une première réaction, l'émissaire de l'ONU pour la Libye Martin Kobler a indiqué qu'il poursuivrait « les consultations avec toutes les parties pour trouver une solution consensuelle » au sujet de l'article controversé.
Un pays riche en pétrole

Il a ajouté dans un communiqué avoir appelé le Conseil présidentiel, qui a nommé les ministres du gouvernement d'union, ainsi que le Parlement appelé à approuver une éventuelle liste modifiée, à « prendre les décisions nécessaires le plus vite possible ».

Les tentatives pour apaiser les rivalités libyennes et stabiliser ce pays riche en pétrole ont jusqu'à présent échoué. L'EI a profité du vide du pouvoir pour prendre le contrôle de Syrte, à 450 km à l'est de Tripoli, et ses environs. Il a lancé la semaine dernière une offensive dans la zone du « Croissant pétrolier » où sont situés les principaux terminaux pétroliers. Il compterait environ 3 000 combattants en Libye selon Paris.

Cette situation préoccupe particulièrement les pays du sud de l'Europe, dont l'Italie, et les voisins de la Libye, comme l'Égypte et la Tunisie.

UN/AFRICA :

Libya parliament rejects UN-backed unity govt
25 January 2016 Monday/worldbulletin.net

Libya's internationally recognised parliament on Monday voted to reject a UN-backed unity government, lawmakers said, in a major blow to international efforts to end the country's unrest.

"We voted against endorsing the government and ask... to be presented with another government," parliamentarian Ali al-Gaydi said.

Of the 104 lawmakers in attendance, 89 rejected the new government, he said.

A national unity government headed by businessman Fayez al-Sarraj and comprising 32 ministers was formed last week under a UN-sponsored accord signed last month.

Parliament member Al-Saliheen Abdelnabbi said the government had been rejected because its cabinet was too large.

US/AFRICA :

CANADA/AFRICA :

AUSTRALIA/AFRICA :

EU/AFRICA :

EU edges closer to suspending passport-free zone over refugee crisis
January 25, 2016/america.aljazeera.com

Officials rethink open borders as refugees from the Middle East and North Africa continue to flow into Europe

The European Union edged closer on Monday to accepting that its Schengen open-borders area may be suspended for up to two years if it fails in the next few weeks to curb the influx of refugees and migrants from the Middle East and Africa.

Shorter-term dispensations for border controls end in May. EU migration ministers meeting in Amsterdam decided they may be extended for two years — an unprecedented extension — because the refugee crisis probably will not be brought under control by then, according to Dutch Migration Minister Klaas Dijkhoff, who chaired the meeting.

Some ministers made clear such a move — theoretically temporary — would cut off Greece, where more than 40,000 people have arrived by sea from Turkey this year, despite a deal with Ankara two months ago to hold back an exodus of Syrian refugees. More than 60 have drowned on the crossing since Jan. 1.

Greek officials noted that closing routes northward, even if physically possible, would not solve the problem. But electoral pressure on governments, including in the EU's leading power, Germany, to stem the flow and resist efforts to spread asylum seekers across the bloc are making free-travel rules untenable.

"We are running out of time," said EU Migration Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos. He urged states to implement agreed-on measures for managing the movement of migrants across the continent — or else face the collapse of the 30-year-old Schengen zone.

But Dijkhoff said time has effectively already run out to preserve the passport-free regime. The system has allowed hundreds of thousands of people to make chaotic treks from Greece and Italy to Germany and Sweden over the past year.

"The 'or else' is already happening," he said. "A year ago, we all warned that if we don't come up with a solution, then Schengen will be under pressure. It already is."

Under pressure from domestic opinion, several governments have already reintroduced controls at their borders with fellow EU states. Those controls should be better coordinated, said Dijkhoff, whose government last year floated the idea of a mini-Schengen, which critics saw as a way for Germany and its northern neighbors to bar the influx from the Mediterranean.

‘Apocalyptic predictions’

But the EU Commission and Germany are bemoaning a nationalistic tide that could put at risk not just Schengen but also the euro and even the foundations of the EU. In that light, some diplomats saw the talks in Amsterdam as another scare tactic from those refusing to close the door to refugees.

"The discussion is full of these apocalyptic predictions," one said. "But things won’t really change in two months." With many EU states, vocally led by the ex-communist East, refusing to take in significant numbers of refugees, the only way to stop chaos in Europe was, he said, to stop arrivals in Greece. Given legal and moral obligations to pluck people from the sea, that leaves the EU reliant on uncertain ally Turkey, which is seeking European cash and other favors.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who opened her country's borders to Syrians fleeing civil war last summer, is under mounting pressure to halt the influx, after more than a million migrants entered Germany last year.

Unless the numbers drop before she meets with fellow EU leaders at a summit in mid-February — and with Germans voting in key regional elections in March — some form of border closing by Germany looks increasingly likely. Such a decision would have a ripple effect across Europe.

The UE Commission is reviewing whether Greece's difficulty in handling the refugee influx constitute "persistent serious deficiencies" on the external EU frontier. Such a finding would justify a historic move to allow states to reimpose controls on those arriving from Greece.

The commission is due to make recommendations next month. Athens would then have three months to respond. Existing measures taken by some states under a different rule expire in mid-May. Dijkhoff made clear that few expect the situation to improve by then, so countries should prepare for a longer-term suspension.

Under Article 26 of the Schengen code, countries may reimpose document controls on border crossings on for six months, renewable three times, or until May 2018. EU officials acknowledged, however, that no one knows what would happen after that if governments are not prepared to return to the precrisis status quo.

Schengen ‘on the brink’

"Everyone understands that the Schengen zone is on the brink," said Austrian Interior Minister Johanna Mikl-Leitner, whose government has warned it will limit entry to refugees. "If we cannot protect the external EU border, the Greek-Turkish border, then the Schengen external border will move toward Central Europe ... Greece must ... accept help."

Her Swedish counterpart, Anders Ygeman, whose government called a halt to taking in refugees after taking the greatest share among EU nations per capita, told Reuters that if Greece and Italy failed to set up "hot spot" centers to separate refugees from suspected militants and economic migrants, then they would face isolation from the Schengen area.

German Interior Minister Thomas de Maiziere, appearing eager to calm a confrontation with Athens — which clashed with Berlin last year over bailout loans to keep Greece in the eurozone — was more reserved, saying, "Blaming people in public doesn't help."

Senior EU officials have warned of the costs to trade that new border checks could impose, although few analysts foresee the return of lines at frontiers around Germany, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg, across which millions of people commute daily to work.

The EU has taken various steps to give cash-strapped Greece financial assistance to deal with the crisis, but many member states believe Athens is not doing so effectively. The EU has now proposed establishing over the coming months a common European border and coast guard to tighten control of the EU frontiers.

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