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BURUNDI :

RWANDA :

### **Rwanda: DRC Directs Fire At Rwanda As M23 Closes in On Goma**

By Sam K Nkurunziza/The New Times/20 November 2012

The Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (FRADC) yesterday directed fire towards Rwandan territory, killing two and injuring several others in Rubavu district.

According to the Rwanda Defence Forces (RDF) spokesperson, Brig Gen Joseph Nzabamwita, the DRC government has admitted to violating Rwanda's sovereignty.

"The central Government of the DRC has admitted, apologised and vowed to punish the soldiers who intentionally killed our people," Nzabamwita said yesterday.

He added that the RDF did not retaliate because it was not presumed to be the best option to solve a military conflict.

"We cannot counter attack our neighbours with firearms because they already have a military conflict going on in their country," the RDF spokesperson said, adding that Rwanda is mostly concerned with evacuating the affected residents and securing the assets of its nationals.

Nzabamwita, however, added: "We consider this as a provocative action because we have lately been falsely accused of supporting rebel groups in their country."

Five of the injured, including one woman and two children were still admitted at Gisenyi Hospital.

According to Rubavu District Mayor, Sheikh Hassan Bahame, Mbugangari village of Gisenyi Sector was hit hardest and by press time bullets were still landing on Rwandan soil near the communication masts at Rubavu hill.

The Mayor warned residents against converging in large numbers to avoid further injuries.

"If you gather in one place, it is very easy for the attackers to direct the bullets towards you," Mayor Bahame said in a statement that was also broadcast on the community radio in Rubavu.

This is the second time in a period of a week that Rwandans are injured by bullets from DRC.

Last Thursday, three were injured and evacuated to Gisenyi Hospital for medical treatment, after being hit by stray bullets when renewed fighting broke out.

In a telephone interview yesterday, M23 spokesperson Jean Marie Vianney Kazarama, said that his force was ready to fight back resiliently as the attacks from the DRC army intensify.

Meanwhile, an unknown number of Rwandan nationals are thought to have been abducted in the Congolese border town of Goma.

Residents and local leaders in Rubavu district say some people who usually go to Goma for business have gone missing for about three days now.

"We have reports that some people have not been able to find their relatives ever since the renewed fighting began and we urge Rwandans to avoid crossing over to Goma," Bahame said.

"It is not possible to estimate the number of people who have not yet returned because some of them use their usual identification cards to cross over and they cannot be tracked in our data base," an Immigration officer at the main border (grand barrier) told The New Times.

He said that the harassment of Rwandans and other Kinyarwanda speaking Congolese has resumed as M23 rebels push towards Goma, the provincial capital of North Kivu.

Sounds of heavy weapons were heard yesterday near the centre of Goma town, suggesting that the rebels were quickly closing in the Town.

Close to 500 displaced people are currently at Nkamira transit centre in Rwanda, where they crossed after fighting resumed a few kilometres from Goma airport.

The M23 rebel group is made up of soldiers from a now-defunct rebel army, the National Congress for the Defense of the People (CNDP), a group made up primarily of former members of FARDC.

This is heaviest fighting since April 2012 when the rebels mutinied from the army, after the Congolese government violated a 2009 peace agreement which saw CNDP disband and their fighters joined the national army of Congo

RDC CONGO :

### Les troubles liés à la rébellion dans l'est du Congo: chronologie

lundi 19 novembre 2012 /Belga

Voici un rappel des troubles dans l'est de la République démocratique du Congo (RDC), région chroniquement instable mais en proie à une nouvelle rébellion depuis fin avril.

La rébellion est essentiellement formée d'anciens membres du Congrès national pour la Défense du Peuple (CNDP, un groupe composé de militaires tutsis), qui, après avoir intégré l'armée dans le cadre d'un accord de paix avec Kinshasa signé le 23 mars 2009, se sont mutinés et combattent depuis l'armée au Kivu, frontalier du Rwanda et de l'Ouganda.

2012:

- 29 avril: début d'affrontements dans le Nord-Kivu entre l'armée loyaliste (Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo, FARDC) et des soldats ex-membres du CNDP, dans le territoire de Masisi.

Début avril, plus d'une dizaine d'officiers supérieurs, ex-membres du CNDP, ont quitté les rangs avec quelques centaines d'hommes dans le Nord et le Sud-Kivu. Ces officiers sont des proches du général Bosco Ntaganda, intégrés comme lui dans l'armée en 2009. Ntaganda est recherché depuis 2006 par la Cour pénale internationale (CPI).

- 6 mai: création du Mouvement du 23 mars (M23), composé des mutins ex-membres du CNDP et dirigé par le colonel Sultani Makenga, ancien numéro 3 du CNDP. Le M23 réclame la mise en oeuvre des accords de mars 2009. Ntaganda et Makenga dirigent la mutinerie, selon Kinshasa.

- 6 juillet: la localité de Bunagana, important poste-frontière avec l'Ouganda, tombe aux mains du M23 après des combats, au cours desquels un Casque bleu indien de la Mission de l'ONU (Monusco) est tué.

- 25 juillet: les FARDC, avec l'aide de blindés et d'hélicoptères d'attaque, reprennent plusieurs villages au nord de Kibumba et Rugari d'où elles avaient été chassées lors d'une offensive du M23 la veille.

- 31 août: le Rwanda annonce retirer environ 280 de ses soldats engagés dans des opérations conjointes de pacification avec l'armée congolaise.

- 19 octobre: le Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU exprime son "soutien sans réserve" aux experts qui accusent le Rwanda et l'Ouganda d'armer le M23 et menace implicitement de prendre des sanctions contre de hauts responsables à Kigali et Kampala.

- 13 novembre: Les Etats-Unis et l'ONU prennent des sanctions contre le chef du M23, Sultani Makenga.

- 15 novembre: les combats entre la rébellion du M23 et l'armée de RDC reprennent près de Goma après une trêve de trois mois, faisant selon Kinshasa 150 morts du côté des rebelles, qui démentent de telles pertes.

- 17 novembre: l'ONU demande l'arrêt de l'avance de la rébellion vers Goma et que "tout soutien extérieur et toute fourniture d'équipement au M23 cessent immédiatement".

- 17-18 novembre: les rebelles mènent une importante offensive jusqu'aux portes de Goma, provoquant la fuite de chefs militaires et civils, ainsi que l'exode de réfugiés d'un camp voisin. Ils arrêtent leur progression à Munigi, à 5 km du centre-ville mais menacent de "prendre" la ville s'ils sont attaqués par l'armée. Des hélicoptères de combat MI-24 ukrainiens de la Monusco qui appuient l'armée gouvernementale tirent des roquettes et obus pour tenter d'endiguer l'avancée rebelle vers l'aéroport de Goma.

- 19 novembre: le M23 annonce qu'il "exige" du gouvernement dans un délai de 24 heures l'annonce de "l'ouverture de négociations politiques directes" et "la démilitarisation totale de la ville et de l'aéroport de Goma". Le gouvernement "ne négociera pas" avec les rebelles, dit son porte-parole.

Belga

## RDC: nouveaux tirs près de Goma, tensions avec le Rwanda

lundi 19 novembre 2012/AFP

Les affrontements se sont poursuivis lundi entre les rebelles du M23 et l'armée congolaise aux portes de Goma, dans l'est de la République démocratique du Congo, tandis que la tension montait avec le Rwanda voisin qui a accusé la RDC de l'avoir "délibérément" bombardé, ce que Kinshasa a aussitôt démenti.

La rébellion congolaise du Mouvement du 23 mars (M23), qui a lancé une offensive depuis jeudi et débordé l'armée congolaise, avait stoppé son avance dimanche à quelques kilomètres du centre de Goma, apparemment sans chercher à prendre la ville.

Lundi les mutins ont lancé un ultimatum au gouvernement congolais, lui demandant d'ici 24 heures de démilitariser la ville et d'ouvrir des négociations. Devant le refus de Kinshasa, la rébellion a repris dans l'après-midi ses tirs d'artillerie.

Selon une source hospitalière, une vingtaine de blessés auraient été admis à l'hôpital Heal Africa, dont l'un est décédé. Aucun autre bilan n'était disponible.

L'ONU a annoncé l'évacuation pour mardi de ses employés "non essentiels", les Casques bleus restant en revanche dans Goma pour assurer leur mission de protection des civils.

Inquiets de voir des militaires et des responsables administratifs fuir la ville durant le week-end, les civils qui en avaient les moyens sont partis vers le sud ou vers la ville rwandaise de Gisenyi, située à moins d'un kilomètre à vol d'oiseau de Goma.

"Il ne se passe rien à Goma, on ne sait rien, mais comme on a vu tout le monde partir, on s'est dit qu'on allait faire pareil", a raconté à l'AFP l'épouse d'un commerçant de Goma.

Le flot des Congolais fuyant vers Gisenyi est resté toutefois limité.

Capitale de la région du Nord-Kivu, Goma compte environ 300.000 habitants, plus de nombreux déplacés. La ville a déjà occupée à deux reprises en 1996 et 1998 par des rebellions.

Le M23 a été créé début mai par des militaires, qui après avoir participé à une précédente rébellion, ont intégré l'armée en 2009, à la suite d'un accord de paix. Ils se sont mutinés en avril, arguant que Kinshasa n'avait pas respecté ses engagements.

Ils réclament notamment le maintien de tous les officiers dans leurs grades et refusent "le brassage" (affectations dans d'autres unités et d'autres régions) que veut leur imposer Kinshasa, ce qui les éloignerait de leur zone d'influence dans l'est.

Mais la région composée des provinces des Nord et Sud-Kivu est aussi le théâtre de conflits quasiment ininterrompus depuis une vingtaine d'années en raison de ses richesses en ressources minières (or, coltan, cassitérite) et agricoles, que se disputent le gouvernement congolais, divers mouvements rebelles et les pays voisins de la RDC, l'Ouganda, le Rwanda et le Burundi.

Kinshasa refuse catégoriquement de négocier avec le M23 qu'il qualifie de "forces fictives mises en place par le Rwanda pour dissimuler ses activités criminelles en RDC", selon le porte-parole du gouvernement, Lambert Mende.

Lundi après-midi les rebelles ont tiré plusieurs obus de mortier vers l'aéroport tenu par la garde républicaine congolaise et le camp militaire de Katindo, selon une source militaire occidentale.

La tension est aussi montée avec le Rwanda, le puissant voisin, qui a accusé l'armée congolaise de l'avoir "délibérément" bombardé avec un tank et des mortiers.

L'armée congolaise a réfuté avoir ordonné de tels tirs, sans exclure la possibilité d'un tir accidentel, annonçant une enquête.

Sur le plan diplomatique, la communauté internationale a vivement réagi à la reprise des combats.

La France devait présenter lundi une résolution au Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU demandant un renforcement des sanctions internationales contre les rebelles congolais. Cette résolution évoquera l'implication éventuelle d'autres pays dans le conflit, a annoncé l'ambassadeur de France à l'ONU, Gérard Araud.

L'ONU, comme la RDC, accuse le Rwanda de soutenir le M23, ce que Kigali a toujours démenti.

Le Conseil de sécurité avait déjà demandé samedi l'interruption "immédiate" de tout soutien extérieur et de toute fourniture d'équipement au M23. Dimanche, le secrétaire général de l'ONU, Ban Ki-moon, avait assuré que les 6.700 Casques bleus basés dans le Nord-Kivu allaient y rester.

AFP

### La RD Congo ne négociera pas avec les rebelles du M23

Eric Vanda/congoplanete.com/20 novembre 2012

Les rebelles du M23 ont annoncé lundi qu'ils se retiraient de la périphérie de la ville de Goma, soi-disant pour donner une « chance aux négociations » avec le gouvernement congolais, après avoir lancé un ultimatum de 24 heures au gouvernement d'accepter leurs exigences. Le gouvernement n'a pas perdu du temps pour leur répondre.

Le gouvernement congolais a annoncé lundi qu'il ne négociera pas avec les rebelles du M23. Bien ! Très bien même ! Bravo !

Le porte-parole du gouvernement, Lambert Mende, a dit à l'AFP que le M23 est un groupe « fictif » et que le vrai coupable c'est le Rwanda, qui a été accusé par un groupe d'experts des Nations Unies, Human Rights Watch, et le gouvernement congolais de fournir des hommes, armes et des munitions au M23.

« Ce sont des forces fictives mises en place par le Rwanda pour dissimuler ses activités criminelles en RDC », a dit M. Mende. « Nous préférons négocier avec le Rwanda, l'agresseur réel au sein de la Conférence internationale sur la région des grands lacs (CIRGL) », a-t-il ajouté.

« On ne négocie pas avec une fiction, la fiction c'est le vide », a lancé M. Mende. « Le gouvernement est occupé à négocier avec l'agresseur réel au sein du CIRGL. Je crois que c'est ça que le peuple congolais souhaite », a-t-il poursuivi.

La « trêve » du M23 n'a pas duré longtemps. Les sinistres rebelles du M23 ont annoncé ce même lundi qu'ils avaient été attaqués par l'armée congolaise et que la trêve était donc rompue. Le gouvernement rwandais a même accusé la RDC d'avoir pilonné la ville de Gisenyi ! Vous

comprenez : l'agresseur devient la victime ! Si seulement le ridicule pouvait tuer !

La ville de Kibumba, à 30 kilomètres de Goma, a été prise samedi après que le M23 aye reçu des renforts de plus de 4000 soldats rwandais. Le pays, notre cher Congo, est en guerre. Tout le monde sait qui est derrière le M23, c'est le Rwanda.

Cher M. Mende, membres du gouvernement, excellences, Raïs, ne continuez pas à vivre dans la « fiction ».

N'a-t-on pas négocié avec le Rwanda depuis la mi-juillet et l'annonce de la fameuse « force neutre » ? Quatre mois qui ont permis au M23 de se réarmer et de mieux s'organiser. Des (nouvelles) négociations jusqu'à quand ?

Pourquoi prétendre qu'il y a encore à « négocier » avec ceux qui vous ont déclaré la guerre ? Est-ce pour négocier la défaite du Rwanda ou celle de la RD Congo ?

Il ne s'agit pas ici d'être belliqueux, loin de là. Cette guerre a été imposée à la RDC. Soit on gagne ou l'on se soumet.

Celui qui gagne la guerre dicte les règles des négociations. Aucun perdant n'a jamais dicté ses conditions au vainqueur ! Depuis le temps d'Adam et Eve, il n'y a pas eu d'exceptions à cette règle. Pas une seule. Je lance un défi à quiconque de m'en donner un seul exemple.

Notre cher pays, la RDC, ne sera libéré que quand l'ennemi sera vaincu.

### **RDC: l'aéroport de Goma sous le contrôle du M23**

AFP/20/11/2012

Les rebelles du M23 ont pris mardi le contrôle de la l'aéroport stratégique de Goma, la capitale régionale du Nord-Kivu, où des tirs de mortiers ont été entendus et des scènes de pillages ont été rapportées, selon des sources sur place.

"L'aéroport est contrôlé par le M23", a déclaré un responsable de l'ONU devant la presse à Goma sans toutefois préciser si les combats avaient fait des victimes.

L'aéroport de Goma, est contigu à la ville adossée au lac Kivu et à la frontière rwandaise au nord. Goma accueille 300.000 habitants et des dizaines de milliers de réfugiés qui se sont rassemblés au sud de la ville.

L'aéroport était défendu jusqu'alors défendu par des membres de la Garde républicaine, une troupe supposée d'élite. Lors de l'avancée des rebelles, plusieurs hélicoptères d'attaque des Nations unies étaient intervenus dimanche matin pour protéger l'aéroport et dissuader les rebelles de s'en emparer.

En outre, des pillages se sont produits dans le quartier Katindo, au sud de Goma près de la route menant à Sake, dernière voie libre vers le reste du pays, selon un photographe de l'AFP.

Des militaires ont, selon plusieurs habitants, emporté ce qu'ils pouvaient avant de quitter la ville.

De nombreux policiers parcouraient mardi matin les rues du centre de Goma, parfois en colonnes.

Près de la frontière avec le Rwanda, de nombreux habitants s'agglutinaient pour tenter de se rendre

de l'autre côté de la frontière.

Le M23 a été créé début mai par des militaires, qui après avoir participé à une précédente rébellion, ont intégré l'armée en 2009, à la suite d'un accord de paix. Ils se sont mutinés en avril, arguant que Kinshasa n'avait pas respecté ses engagements.

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Mais la région composée des provinces des Nord et Sud-Kivu est aussi le théâtre de conflits quasiment ininterrompus depuis une vingtaine d'années en raison de ses richesses en ressources minières (or, coltan, cassitérite) et agricoles, que se disputent le gouvernement congolais, divers mouvements rebelles et les pays voisins de la RDC, l'Ouganda, le Rwanda et le Burundi.

UGANDA :

**Uganda president tells U.N. he appealed to Congo rebels for calm**

Michelle Nichols/ Reuters/November 19, 2012

UNITED NATIONS (Reuters) - Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni told U.N. chief Ban Ki-moon he had spoken to M23 rebels in the Democratic Republic of Congo - a group his government is accused of supporting - and called for calm, a U.N. peacekeeping spokesman said on Monday.

Ban called Museveni on Sunday evening as the rebels advanced to Goma, the provincial capital of North Kivu province. U.N. peacekeeping operations spokesman Kieran Dwyer said that non-essential U.N. staff would start leaving the town on Tuesday.

A confidential report by U.N. experts, seen by Reuters last month, said that Rwanda and Uganda - despite their strong denials - were supporting M23 rebels in their eight-month fight against Congolese government troops in the east of the country.

"President Museveni, in his capacity as Chairperson of the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), indicated (to Ban) that he had spoken to the M23 rebels and called for calm," Dwyer said in a statement.

"The violence in and around Goma is hampering efforts to provide humanitarian relief," he said. "UN staff will be temporarily relocated from Goma. Troops will stay to protect civilians."

Ban spoke to Congo's foreign minister, Raymond Tshibanda, and Rwandan President Paul Kagame on Saturday. Foreign ministers from the Great Lakes regional body were due to meet on the conflict on Tuesday in Kampala, Dwyer said.

In a report to the U.N. Security Council, dated November 14 but released on Monday, Ban said he was disturbed by continued external support for M23 and called on "all those responsible to immediately and permanently end this destabilizing assistance."

"The sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is inviolable and must be fully respected by all neighboring countries," Ban said. "Constructive dialogue and

engagement between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its neighbors, especially Rwanda, is vital."

The U.N. Security Council issued a unanimous statement on Saturday that condemned the M23 attacks, demanded an end to "all outside support and supply of equipment to the M23" called on M23 to halt "any further advances towards the city of Goma."

But French U.N. Ambassador Gerard Araud said on Monday that M23 had shown "total disrespect" for the council and that he would later on Monday circulate a draft resolution among the 15 members proposing further sanctions on M23 leaders and again calling for an end to outside support for rebellion.

"Refugees have fled, the situation is very dire, the M23 has total disrespect for what the Security Council has said," said Araud, adding that he hoped the resolution would be adopted this week.

Oxfam's humanitarian coordinator Tariq Riebl said more than 50,000 people had fled camps and homes in Goma and on the outskirts of the town and were in desperate need of shelter, water and food.

"If fighting intensifies further, there are very few places people can go for safety. With almost 2.5 million people now displaced across eastern Congo, this catastrophe requires a concerted humanitarian and diplomatic response," Riebl said.

(Reporting by Michelle Nichols; Editing by Cynthia Osterman and Jackie Frank)

### Uganda: Comesa Deal to Boost Exports

By David Mugabe/The New Vision/20 November 2012

The private sector has lauded the Government for ratifying the COMESA free trade area, saying it will open huge markets for the country.

The Private Sector Foundation boss Gideon Badagawa described the decision as a good development for trade and investments.

"Now that the Government has pronounced itself, we will go full scale to sensitise our members," said Badagawa over the weekend. Cabinet last week approved a recommendation by the minister of trade for Uganda to join the COMESA free trade area (FTA).

The decision makes Uganda the 15th COMESA FTA member, opening up the opportunity for increased trade competitiveness and increased export earnings.

Badagawa said the FTA opens opportunities for all products and for all sectors, including small-and-medium size enterprises.

He cited Kenya, which has been in EAC and COMESA FTA, benefiting from sourcing cheap intermediate goods.

Other business leaders said they have been lobbying the Government for the last seven years, but that although it was long overdue, the decision is critically important now.

Agro-export products and construction are the immediate beneficiaries especially in the Great Lakes



region because of Uganda's proximity to the neighbouring markets of DR Congo, Rwanda, Burundi and South Sudan.

Uganda had delayed to join the FTA because of revenue considerations like taxes levied on imports, but experts said the benefits from accessing a free trade area under COMESA are bigger.

"Besides, we are now moving towards consolidating domestic taxes," said a senior trade official. The 15 COMESA FTA states are Uganda, Libya, Egypt, Sudan, Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, Mauritius, Comoros, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Djibouti, Madagascar, Mauritius and Malawi.

Trade minister Amelia Kyambadde last week said with the ascension to the 19-member trade bloc FTA, exports were expected to grow by an average of 50% annually.

"In the COMESA region, DRC is Uganda's second largest market after South Sudan at over \$350m larger than Kenya (\$250m) and they are working to join in, which will mean more trade for Uganda)," said Silver Ojakol, a commissioner for external trade in the trade ministry

## SOUTH AFRICA :

### South Africa: Inmates to Build Schools

19 November 2012/South African Government (Pretoria)/allafrica.com

press release

Offender labour will soon be utilised more to build and furnish schools in South Africa.

This was announced today (19 November) by Correctional Services Minister Sibusiso Ndebele at a two-day national colloquium (19 and 20 November), hosted by the Department of Correctional Services in Johannesburg, to discuss overcrowding in correctional centres.

More than 170 representatives, from various organisations including government and civil society, are attending the colloquium to discuss overcrowding, alternative sentencing as well as remand detention management as part of solutions to South Africa's high rate of incarceration and breaking the cycle of crime.

Delivering the opening address, Minister Ndebele said: "The Freedom Charter states that imprisonment shall be only for serious crimes against the people, and shall aim at re-education, not vengeance. It is accepted world-wide that 95% of all inmates, who are our brothers and sisters, our sons and daughters, will ultimately return to their communities at some point. Therefore, conviction and sentencing can no longer be meted in isolation from eventual reintegration.

"We must ensure that rehabilitation programmes impact the hearts, heads and hands of offenders. We are currently in discussions with the Department of Basic Education to utilise offender labour to build, maintain and manufacture furniture for schools. This is in addition to what is already being produced in correctional centres.

"Key to rehabilitation is empowering offenders with skills to function effectively in society upon their release but, equally important, is to ensure that offenders are actively involved in productive activity while they serve their sentences. Therefore, the establishment of a trading entity is being

prioritised which will impact positively on utilisation of offender labour.

Through this trading entity, we can offer our customer base consisting of government, non-governmental organisation (NGO's) and the private sector a wide variety of products and services, ranging from furniture, clothing, steel works, food products, agriculture and many others. In addition, we will continue to donate these products to disadvantaged communities from time to time to help alleviate poverty.

"Overcrowding is, perhaps, the single most pressing concern facing correctional services around the world. The World Prison Brief currently places South Africa in the top ten in terms of our inmate population. South Africa has 51,8 million citizens, and our rate of imprisonment is the highest in Africa. Nigeria, the continent's most densely populated country with 166,3 million people, has 51,560 inmates with 31 inmates for every 100,000 of its people.

The national populations of the top six countries on the list range from 78-million in Iran to 1,3-billion people in China - with a combined total of more than 3 billion people. South Africa sits at number nine worldwide with 310 inmates for every 100,000 of its people. Of this, approximately 70% are sentenced offenders and approximately 30% are remand detainees. The population of offenders serving longer than 15 years (including life sentences) increased by 492% over the past two decades, from 4,995 during 1994/95 to 29,575 during 2010/11.

"In 1984, the driver of overcrowding in our country, (according to the Judicial Inquiry into the structure and functioning of the courts), was the incarceration of prisoners as a result of influx control measures. In 1985, the key driver was the mass detention of political prisoners as a result of the State of Emergency. From 1995 to 2004, the prison population increased from an annual average of 111,090 to an annual average of 186,467 in 2004. In the same period, the bed space gradually increased from 95,002 to 114,097 which translate to occupancy of 163.43% in 2004. On 31 October 2012, the total inmate population was 149,959 and the approved bed space was 118,968 which translates to occupancy of 126,05%.

"Overcrowding can, therefore, be the consequence of lack of adequate correctional facilities' infrastructure, or a result of over use of imprisonment in the penal system. Over use of imprisonment includes indiscriminate, and even uncalculated, use of pre-trial detention. In other words, in order to determine the causes we need to analyse those offenders coming into our correctional facilities, and the reasons therefore, as well how long they stay and barriers to release.

"I am convinced that the deliberations today and tomorrow will bear fruit for future action and improvements in our correctional system. Let's continue this dialogue towards finding solutions to South Africa's high rate of incarceration and breaking the cycle of crime. Working together, we can do more," the Minister said.

On 2 November 2012, the Mangaung Correctional Centre (MCC), situated just outside Bloemfontein, donated 32 refurbished desks to Gonyane Primary School. To date, MCC has revamped 1,528 school desks for primary schools in the greater Motheo district. The inmates of MCC, who received training in various skills, sanded down school desktops and gave it a fresh coat of paint. Those tops that could not be repaired were replaced with new tops. The frames were then spray-painted and the tops fitted. Old Mutual joined G4S Care and Justice Services in this outreach programme and donated funds for the purchasing of the material for the refurbishment process.

On 18 July 2012, Minister Ndebele, together with offenders, gave the underprivileged 46-year -old Tsakane Primary School in Tsakane Township near Brakpan in Gauteng a makeover. Offenders from the Boksburg Correctional Centre repaired desks, installed library shelves and burglar bars,

cleaned the school yard, fixed broken classroom windows, repaired the fence, painted the school and developed a vegetable garden in order to alleviate severe infrastructural challenges at the school.

On 16 July 2012, Minister Ndebele was in Mpumalanga Province where the Ezakheni Combined School received a donation of 2,178 kilograms of five types of fresh vegetables, planted and cultivated by offenders from Piet Retief Correctional Centre, 900 grey trousers manufactured by offenders from Witbank Correctional Centre, 900 white shirts made by offenders from Mogwase Correctional Centre, several pairs of school shoes, and 834 dozen of eggs from Losperfontein Correctional Centre.

TANZANIA :

### **Tanzania: Wildlife Poachers Still Outsmart Authorities**

By Abdulwakil Saiboko/Tanzania Daily News (Dar es Salaam)/20 November 2012

WORLD Bank recent reports that Tanzania is the global leader in tourism attractions in Africa, making it the ideal destination for tourists from around the world, sparked off a heated debate at the ninth meeting of the tenth parliament about contribution of the tourism to the national economy.

But one would ask whether the country is really getting its fair share of tourists that suit its richness in natural resources and attractions.

The answer to this question, according to the Deputy Minister for Natural Resources and Tourism, Mr Lazaro Nyalandu, is NO.

Mr Nyalandu told the National Assembly that the number of tourists visiting the country per annum remains very low at an average of 800,000 per annum. "In the period of five years (2006-2011) Tanzania received 4,498,589 tourists.

Out of these there are some who toured the country more than one time perhaps in different destinations and may have been recorded more than once," he said. The minister says the number is not worthy of being proud of for a country rich in natural resources and tourism attractions like Tanzania.

He said the number of beds available in the country was one hindrance compared to other countries, adding that Tanzania still lagged behind in the area and efforts were been made to address the matter. "In the Kenyan coast of Mombasa and the Island of Lamu there are over 28,000 beds which are more than twice the beds in the whole of Tanzania which has 15,000 beds.

This is a setback and we would like to do something about it," he said. He added that the number of all beds in Tanzania is almost equal to the beds available in the capital of Kenya, Nairobi, alone. In reaction to the information, Mr Zitto Kabwe (Kigoma North- Chadema), said it was through advertisement and improved service that the country would reap its fair share in the sector.

"Sri Lanka which is as small as the Lindi Region in Tanzania receives an average of 800,000 tourists per annum, it is a shame for a country as big as ours to remain behind in this bracket," he said.

The recent move by the government to review the boundaries of Gombe National Park located in his constituency, giving it a bigger land from the previous 33.74 square kilometres to 56 square kilometers, he added, would only make sense if efforts are made to increase the number of tourists.

The National Assembly agreed to expand the Gombe National Park established in 1968 and located in the basin of Lake Tanganyika to include the shoreline said to be favourable place for baboons to relax from where tourists can see the natural beauty. Mr Nyalandu noted that already the government through Tanzania Tourism Board (TTB) was making efforts to sale abroad the tourist attractions available in the country.

He said that studies have it that by 2014 China will be the largest producer of tourists, overtaking the United States of America by far. The prospect has therefore drawn efforts to sell the country's tourism destinations in China.

The deputy minister also noted that the government would improve air transport to ease movement from one place to another to attract tourists, who call in the country to visit as many destinations as possible.

The government has also been challenged in this meeting to take seriously the work of protecting wild animals from poachers, who have been killing animals especially rhinoceros and elephants to benefit from the lucrative illegal trade of tusks.

In this regard, the Minister for Tourism and Natural Resources, Ambassador Ambassador Khamis Kagasheki, said government was committed to ensure that these animals which are in the danger of extinction are protected.

The Shadow Minister for Natural Resources and Tourism, Mr Peter Msigwa (Iringa Urban-Chadema), charged that it was high time the government came up with measures to protect animals against poachers.

Mr Msigwa went ahead to accuse the government of being floppy in dealing with poachers, saying poaching especially that of elephants had reached alarming proportions and suggested that the government should focus more on protection of the mammals instead of seizing poached ivory.

"The recent seizure of ivories in Hong Kong, China believed originated in Tanzania is a shame and this is another indication that we have been outsmarted by poachers," he said. However, Ambassador Kagasheki said: "We are investigating reports that a container full of ivory from Tanzania was seized recently in Hong Kong, China. We'll use DNA tests to establish the origin of the tusks."

He noted that information received so far showed the tusks passed through Tanzania in transit from an unknown origin, adding that investigations would also be carried out to establish identities of custom officers, who were on duty at the Dar es Salaam port on that particular day.

Stakeholders in the sector are worried that the act of naming Tanzania in various incidents of elephant poaching through various ivories being seized locally and abroad, will be the biggest stumbling block to the country's bid to sell its huge ivory stockpile.

International conservation organisations contend that there must be in Tanzania well-coordinated syndicates that have demonstrated great capacity of repeatedly shipping out large quantities of ivory and which should be regarded as a national security issue.

The government announced recently that it has reapplied to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) to sell over 101,005kg of its ivory stockpile valued at over \$55.5million (about Sh88.8billion), saying the money would be used to fund anti-poaching operations.

According to Mr Nyalandu, it has been a critical and tough task to deal with poachers who are engaging automatic machine guns in poaching activities.

"Poachers are being pushed by the high prices of ivory in the world market now standing at between 1000USD and 1100USD per kilo. We would like to call upon good citizens especially those bordering national parks to collaborate with our officers to make the war against poachers a success," he said.

### Tanzania: New Dar es Salaam Port Deal Stalls

20 November 2012/Tanzania Daily News (Dar es Salaam)

THE Tanzania Ports Authority (TPA) is reluctant to renew a stevedoring contract worth billions of shillings that an Italian cargo ship, Ignazio Messina (IM), signed in 2010 to allow giant container ships.

The Italian ship is the only one operating its own terminal at Dar es Salaam Port because its ships need special equipment to load and offload containers. Last year, the TPA management adjusted the rebate paid by the company from 25 to 50 per cent in a deal, which was due for renewal last week.

"We make reference to your letter ref:MK/4/5/01 of 24 November 2011 by means which we gratefully receive your confirmation extending the existing concessional rebate on stevedoring from 25 to 50 per cent, for a period of one year. "With the extended 50 per cent arrangement coming to an end on November 10, 2012, we hereby tender our request for another extension at similar rates," wrote IM Regional Managing Director, Captain Giuseppe Fedele.

Statistics gathered by the 'Daily News' show that the ship called at the Dar es Salaam Port once a week using one of its modern Ro-Ro ships, which bring about 2000 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) per trip. The ship has capacity to carry 3000TEUs.

"Messina may decide to use a normal container ship, but this back-paddle the effort of easing doing business at the port. On the revenue side TPA loses little since the contract excludes stevedoring. Only other port charges are inclusive," the source said. Mr Fedele argued that his company has already secured a similar contract with Kenyan port of Mombasa charging 40 per cent as stevedoring charges.

Pointing out that the queer arrangement which IM requires at Dar es Salaam port needs heavy investment hence suggested to TPA that it would be much better to sign a long term contract in future. "Ignazio Messina would like to have confidence to keep up with such a momentum per se requiring huge capital investment and predictable mid and long term planning," Mr Fedele said in his letter addressed to TPA acting Director General, Madeni Kipande.

When contacted yesterday, Mr Kipande refused to talk to the 'Daily News' even before knowing the subject saying "you (media) are writing rubbish stories regarding TPA that have neither heads nor tails." "Who the hell are you? If you want to talk to me go to the registry and register yourself. Otherwise don't disturb me," the acting DG said furiously before he hung up. He did not end there, he called the 'Daily News' teleoperator and told her not to call him again. On the other hand, sources

at IM said the Italian shipping liner has since started negotiations with Tanzania International Container Terminal Services (TICTS) to get the stevedoring agreement covering the next 12 months.

"The liner is (also) considering to abandon the port altogether and shift its operation to Mombasa Port (in Kenya) -- making Dar the feeder port," the source said, "since it sees no point of bringing a self handler vessel and end up charged for stevedoring." Kenya Ports Authority (KPA) extended its five-year stevedoring contract with IM last July after its board of directors approved the deal which attracts a 40 per cent stevedoring rate.

KENYA :

### **Kenya: Five Killed in Nairobi Matatu Explosion**

By Dominic Wabala/The Star/19 November 2012

Residents load slain bodies of passengers killed during an explosion in a mini-bus (matatu) in the Eastleigh neighbourhood of Kenya's capital Nairobi, pic\reuters

A policeman looks on as residents scatter during a rampage near the wreckage of a passenger mini-bus (matatu) after it was hit by an explosion in the Eastleigh neighbourhood of Kenya's capital Nairobi. pic\reuters

Riots rocked sections of Eastleigh estate yesterday as hundreds of young men took to the streets, attacking people and looting businesses.

The violence erupted after five people were killed when an explosion ripped apart a matatu on Eastleigh's 2nd Avenue yesterday afternoon.

The fierce battle between two groups forced police to call for reinforcements from the General Service Unit, which arrived in several trucks.

Several people were injured and rushed to different hospitals as the angry mob attacked people of Somalia origin, accusing them of being responsible for the the explosion.

A man who is reported to have jumped out of the Isuzu matatu KAY 713F moments before the explosion and attempted to jump into a saloon car was arrested by members of the public and handed over to administration police from a nearby chief's camp.

The matatu's body was extensively damaged with metal parts ripped off and seats yanked from the floor. Human body parts were strewn all over the busy road.

A Nissan matatu and a Toyota station wagon that were near the scene were also damaged by shrapnel from the blast. An eyewitness said one of the passengers' legs were blown off the by the explosion.

He said the blast lifted the matatu off the ground. "It was a horrible sight. I saw five people dead and seven others injured. We assisted them and they were taken by a good Samaritan to hospital. Police came later and cordoned off the scene," the man who declined to identify himself said.

Police and ambulance crew collected body parts and loaded them into a police Landcruiser before taking the dead to the City Mortuary.

The matatu conductor was thrown out of the vehicle and was injured by the door which was blown off in the blast. Juja Road was partly blocked by police to allow emergency vehicles get to the scene as the rioters armed with knives, iron rods and pangas walked from Mathare, Huruma and Kariobangi estates.

The ill-fated matatu was plying Kariobangi estate route number 28. Nairobi PPO Moses Ombati who rushed to the scene accompanied by senior GSU and military police officers, said that investigations into the incident had begun.

Social media was abuzz with news of the incident, with many urging the residents not to attack innocent members of the Somali community.

Vice President Kalonzo Musyoka condoled the bereaved families. "Once again cowardly criminals and extremists have killed innocent Kenyans and maimed others. Their intention is to instil fear and despondency. Our security agencies will continue their vigilance and fight against such enemies of the public until they are silenced," he said.

Kenya has suffered a string of deadly attacks in Nairobi, Mombasa and Garissa over the past year. The attacks have been blamed on Somali militants and their sympathisers in retaliation for Kenya's decision to send troops into Somalia last year to drive out al Qaeda-linked militants which Nairobi has blamed for attacks on its territory.

African Union peacekeepers, led by Kenyan forces, drove al Shabaab militants out of their last major urban stronghold of Kismayu in southern Somalia seven weeks ago. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack.

### **Kenya: Minister Calls on State to Rescue Jetlink**

By Justus Ochieng/The Star/19 November 2012

IMMIGRATION minister Otieno Kajwang' has petitioned President Kibaki to direct the Treasury to release stimulant funds to rescue the just folded airline Jetlink Express.

Operations at the local low-cost airline have been grounded for lack of cash, which it blames on failure to convert into dollars revenue from its ticket sales in South Sudan.

Managing director Captain Elly Aluvale last week said the airline is unable to access more than Sh170 million (\$2 million) banked in Equity and Kenya Commercial banks in Juba.

Subsequently its 350 staff have been sent home pending further communication. The airline heavily depends on foreign exchange to buy fuel, aircraft lease rentals, importation of spare parts and landing fee.

Kajwang' said the cash flow crunch that has hit the company is likely to affect the country's revenue. The minister who was speaking in Kisumu on Saturday pointed out that a swift move by the head of state can save the company.

"Treasury under the directive of the President has offered aid to Kenya Co-operative Creameries, coffee and pyrethrum industries and it will not cost the country much to come to the aid of Jetlink,"

he said.

He said just like Kenya Airways has received state assistance in the past, Sh 1 billion from the Treasury can save the Jetlink. "The Sh1 billion can be given as a loan to the company to enable it continue its operations since when one business venture collapses, Kenyans lose several jobs and families suffer," Kajwang' said.

The airline said with foreign exchange shortage in South Sudan, banks are under instruction from the government to give priority to essential services like food, medicine and fuel imports in their foreign exchange allocation.

The currency shortage arises from the stand-off between Sudan and South Sudan over oil export transit fees forcing the South to stop refining its oil in Khartoum.

Equity Bank Kenya has reportedly been advancing them dollar payments based on Jetlink's deposits in Equity South Sudan pending resumption of normal foreign exchange trade in South Sudan.

Jetlink, which has operated for over four years, operates scheduled domestic flights to Kisumu, Mombasa, and Eldoret and regionally to Juba and Mwanza with a strategic intent to spread its wings to Zanzibar and Dar-es-Salaam (Tanzania), Kigali (Rwanda), Asmara (Eritrea) and Khartoum (Sudan). It has a jet fleet of eight aircrafts including seven CRJ aircrafts (50-seater) and one Fokker-28 aircraft (79-seater).

### Kenya: Become a Voter, All in Under 10 Minutes

By Laban Wanambisi/Capital FM (Nairobi)/19 November 2012

He walked to a desk and in roughly 10 minutes, President Mwai Kibaki emerged as a biometrically registered voter at Nairobi's Kenyatta International Conference Centre.

The Head of State was taken through the motions where he first presented his identity card, the serial number was punched onto a computer and after his data appeared on a screen, he was asked to press his finger tips for reading and later look into a camera mounted on a laptop in front of him.

A few minutes later, the machine deciphered the data collected and lo and behold! he was now a registered voter. He was then presented with a slip confirming he was an eligible voter.

With that, the manual registration process that was cited as one of the catalysts for electoral malpractices that escalated during the botched 2007 polls was confined to history as BVR rolled out countrywide.

Like any other novel venture, the BVR got off to a number of minor glitches with registration clerks coming under criticism for their inability to grasp the new process leading to long delays as Information Technology experts came to their rescue.

President Kibaki advised Kenyans to take the process seriously and keep away from anyone who may seek to disrupt it.

"There is no room for you to pretend you were registered once upon a time. Please, there is no such a thing; even if you were registered once upon a time you must register afresh," he said.

The president said registering as a voter was an important democratic tool that enables Kenyans to



participate in the election of leaders of their choice to determine the fortunes of the country and counties.

"Most importantly, registering to vote gives you the power to determine the future and destiny of Kenya. Honestly there is no point in shouting about the rest, unless you do the real thing," said the president.

He encouraged all eligible voters to spare time early enough to register and avoid the last minute rush.

He re-emphasised that the voter registration exercise will only run for 30 days from Monday without extension since the IEBC is working with very strict timelines as laid out in the Elections Act.

The electoral body also clarified that voters will only be able to cast ballots at the polling centre where they register as voters.

This means for instance, if you want to cast your vote away from Nairobi, you will be required to travel all the way to the constituency where your preferred centre is.

"It is not true you can register anywhere you want and vote at a different polling station of your choice," said a statement from the commission.

Justice and Constitutional Affairs Minister Eugene Wamalwa observed that the commencement of voter registration marks an important milestone in our journey towards the next general elections on March 4 next year.

The IEBC has gazetted 25,000 registration centres across the country. Further, the commission has recruited and trained over 30,000 clerks who will use 15,000 registration kits across 290 constituencies and 1,450 constituency assembly wards to register a minimum of 18 million voters in the next 30 days.

On his part, IEBC chairman Issack Hassan called on the government to speed up the issuance of national IDs to the over four million youths who require them in order to register as voters.

The IEBC chairman further cautioned voters not to attempt to register twice or use fake documents while registering as those found contravening the election rules will be dealt with accordingly.

ANGOLA :

**Angola: Health Minister Highlights Progress in Sector Over Last Decade**

19 November 2012/AngolaPress

Luanda — The Angolan Health minister Monday in Luanda stressed the progress recorded over the last ten years in the political, economic and social development and particularly in the health field, marked by the government's major investment to improve health indicators, in order to ensure sustainable development of Angola.

José Van-Dunem was speaking at the opening of the 62nd Session of the Regional Committee of the

World Health Organization (WHO), opened Monday at the Talatona Convention Centre in Luanda by the Angolan vice-President, Manuel Vicente.

"The main challenge currently is not just to do more and better, but to do it different and differently, with a view to achieve more progress in the health sector," he said.

Among other achievements obtained over the last ten years, the minister mentioned the fact the country to have not reported any case related to polio since July 2011.

He said that this is a result of a strategy to strengthen routine immunization, improving the quality of additional vaccination campaigns and improved monitoring and epidemiological surveillance.

Another indicator of the good progress has to do with the prevalence of 1.9 percent of HIV and AIDS, which remains stable for seven years.

AU/AFRICA :

#### African Markets - Factors to watch on Nov 20

Tue Nov 20, 2012/Reuters

NAIROBI, Nov 20 (Reuters) - The following company announcements, scheduled economic indicators, debt and currency market moves and political events may affect African markets on Tuesday.

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#### EVENTS:

**NIGERIA** - Nigeria's commercial capital Lagos closes book building for its \$507 million bond issue. Also expecting the central bank's interest rate decision.

Analysts expect a hold at 12 percent.

**KENYA** - Kenya's central bank auctions a 20- year Treasury bond meant to go towards budgetary support.

**BOTSWANA** - Bank of Botswana auctions 14-day Treasury bill.

#### GLOBAL MARKETS

Asian shares rose on Tuesday on hopes of a compromise in the U.S. fiscal crisis, while the euro fell after Moody's Investors Service scrapped France's top-notch credit rating, reminding investors of the downside risk from the euro zone debt woes.

#### WORLD OIL PRICES

Brent crude held steady above \$111 a barrel on Tuesday, less than a dollar away from a one-month top hit in the previous session, on hopes a U.S. budget crisis will be averted and on supply worries triggered by tensions in the Middle East.

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## SOUTH AFRICA MARKETS

- \* South Africa's rand firmed in thin trading on Monday due to growing optimism about a deal to tackle the U.S. "fiscal cliff" and hopes that the euro zone might be resolving its debt crisis.
- \* South African stocks rose on Monday as brokerage rating upgrades and higher commodity prices lifted shares of platinum firms Anglo American Platinum and Impala Platinum .

## NIGERIA ECONOMY/MARKETS

- \* Nigeria, Africa's second-biggest economy, grew 6.5 percent in the third quarter from a year earlier, helped by solid growth in the non-oil economy, data showed on Monday.
- \* Nigeria's naira currency firmed against the U.S dollar on the interbank market on Monday, boosted by over \$100 million sold by three energy companies to some lenders, traders said.

## NIGERIA OIL

- \* Total is selling a 20 percent stake in a Nigerian offshore oil field to China's Sinopec in a \$2.5 billion deal which will help the French oil group fund its ambitious exploration plans.
- \* An oil spill at an ExxonMobil facility offshore from the Niger Delta has spread at least 20 miles from its source, coating waters used by fishermen in a film of sludge.

## KENYA MARKETS

The Kenyan shilling was steady on Monday, but traders said it might slip on the back of importers buying dollars to make purchases for Christmas, while stocks dipped after market heavyweights fell.

## KENYA SECURITY

Kenyan police fired tear gas to disperse rioters who attacked ethnic Somalis in the Nairobi district known as "Little Mogadishu" on Monday, hurling rocks and smashing windows after a weekend bomb attack there killed nine people.

## DRCONGO CONFLICT

- \* Rwanda accused U.N.-backed Congolese forces of shelling its territory during a battle with rebels near the border on Monday but said it had no plans to respond militarily to what it called Kinshasa's "provocation". {ID:nL5E8MJGQU}
- \* Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni told U.N. chief Ban Ki-moon he had spoken to M23 rebels in the Democratic Republic of Congo - a group his government is accused of supporting - and called for calm, a U.N. peacekeeping spokesman said on Monday.

## SIERRA LEONE ELECTION

Sierra Leone's elections were generally well conducted, saw a large turnout, and will help consolidate democracy in the West African state if the eventual results are accepted peacefully by the contenders, European and U.S. observers said on Monday.

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### Sierra Leone: Governing party confident of win

CLARENCE ROY-MACAULAY / AP/November 19, 2012

FREETOWN, Sierra Leone — Sierra Leone's governing party said Monday it was confident that incumbent President Ernest Bai Koroma would win the weekend election without the need for a second round.

The announcement came as Sierra Leoneans awaited official results from the country's National Electoral Commission, which legally has 10 days to announce the results from Saturday's vote.

Observers said Monday that the West African nation still recovering from a brutal civil war that ended a decade ago had managed to carry out a largely peaceful and well-conducted election.

Koroma must garner 55 percent of the ballots cast or he will face his main opponent Julius Maada Bio in a second round of voting.

"The electoral laws give NEC 10 days within which to announce the results. We may be lucky that NEC works faster. I do not think there will be surprises," said Victor Bockarie Foh, National Secretary-General of the ruling All Peoples Congress party.

Earlier in the day, chief European Union observer Richard Howitt stressed that it was up to the country's election body to make a decision on when to announce the results.

"Clearly the National Electoral Commission will want to take sufficient time and care to ensure the accurate accounting of the vote but they will want to move as quickly as possible with the announcement of the results before any risks of instability or unrest," Howitt said.

Sierra Leone's chief elections officer Christiana Thorpe said that polling "was reported to be peaceful and orderly in almost all polling stations nationwide."

She, however, noted that polling was disrupted by a swarm of honey bees in ward 135 in the Kambia District.

"The polling station was automatically relocated and polling went on peacefully," she said.

The EU mission noted that there were isolated reports of the governing party distributing cash payments. While the mission was assured that the amount of money involved amounted to a local "handshake," Howitt said in one case there was "a significant amount of money involved."

There also was a report of one polling station where voters who presented ID cards were allowed to vote though they ultimately were not on the voter registry, Howitt said. The ballot boxes in question were under quarantine pending an investigation, he added.

The U.S.-based Carter Center also said Monday that Sierra Leone's vote had been "peaceful, orderly and transparent." Some polled opened late and in some cases there were shortages of election materials, the observers noted.

"These shortfalls were generally addressed by midday and they did not undermine the fundamental integrity of the electoral process," said former Zambian President Rupiah Banda who is with the

Carter Center delegation.

The observer mission from the West African regional bloc ECOWAS also noted a few isolated incidents, including the absence of back-up lighting which required party agents to improvise with cellphones and flashlights to enable counting in the dark.

Sierra Leone's presidential race has hinged on which candidate can best uplift this West African country trying to shed its past after a brutal 1991-2002 civil war.

A decade after the war's end, Sierra Leone remains one of the poorest countries in the world despite its diamonds and other riches. Several recent offshore oil discoveries, though, are raising hopes for economic development.

Most of the country's nearly 6 million people live on less than \$1.25 a day, and it remains among the deadliest places in the world for women to give birth. Earlier this year, the capital was hard-hit by a cholera outbreak.

While Sierra Leone already had held two mostly peaceful votes since the war's end, experts said Saturday's vote would be a crucial test of whether those gains were irreversible.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon praised Sierra Leonean voters for the "peaceful and largely orderly elections.

"The high voter turnout and the remarkable calm displayed by the country's citizens as they cast their votes are a clear manifestation of their desire for peace, democracy and development," said a statement released by his spokesperson.

The incumbent president, Koroma, has pointed to his accomplishments during his first term, pleading with voters in his campaign signs: "I Will Do More."

He faced eight opponents including leading opposition figure Julius Maada Bio, a retired brigadier-general who calls himself the "father of democracy" after his brief three-month tenure at the country's helm in 1996.

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Associated Press writer Krista Larson contributed to this report.

### **East Africa: Piracy Bustles Go Down in Indian Ocean**

By Anthony Tambwe/Tanzania Daily News (Dar es Salaam)/20 November 2012

WITH several military vessels patrolling the Indian Ocean waters to curb piracy activities, the number of attacks has drastically reduced compared to last year.

Speaking to reporters in Dar es Salaam aboard the EU Naval Force ship ITS San Giusto which has docked at the Dar es Salaam port as part of its mission, the Head of the European Union Delegation to Tanzania, Ambassador Filiberto Ceriani Sebregondi, said a total of 176 pirate attacks took place last year compared to only 34 this year.

He added that the EU is concerned with the impact of piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia on international trade and maritime security and on the economic activities and security of countries in the region.

"As a result as part of a comprehensive approach to Somalia, in December 2008 the EU launched the European Union Naval Force Somalia-Operation Atalanta (EU NAVFOR-ATALANTA) within the framework of the European Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and in accordance with relevant UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) and International law," he said.

He said that on the 23rd of March this year, the council of the EU extended the counter-piracy operation until December 2014, saying that at the same time the council also extended operation ATALANTA's area of operation to include Somali coastal territory and internal waters.

He further said that the extension of the areas allowed, for the first time, EU NAVFOR to take disruptive action known as Disruption of Pirate Logistic Dumps (DPLD) against pirate supplies on the Somali coast in order to deny pirates impunity on the shoreline.

On his part, the Force Commander of the EU Naval Force Somalia - Operation Atalanta (EU NAVFOR), Rear Admiral Enrico Credendino, said under UNSC mandate, EU NAVFOR operation ATALANTA conducts the protection of vessels of the World food Programme (WFP) delivering aid to displaced persons in Somalia, and the protection of African Union Mission on Somalia (AMISOM).

He said they also conduct deterrence, prevention and repression of acts of piracy and armed robbery off the Somali coast, the protection of vulnerable shipping in the same area on a case by case basis.

#### AU, others condemn fresh fighting between DR Congo's forces, rebels

Monday, 19 November 2012 /nrguardiannews.com

FRESH fighting reportedly broke out Monday around the key eastern DR Congo city of Goma after the government rejected a rebel ultimatum in the war-weary central African country.

However, the African Union (AU) has joined others in "strongly condemning" the armed offensive by rebel group, asking the group to "immediately and unconditionally" put an end to its offensive.

AU leader, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, decried violence targetted against the civilian population and urged that "every effort be made to ensure unimpeded humanitarian access."

Also, the European Union (EU) foreign ministers also sharply condemned the armed offensive and demanded an immediate cessation of hostilities.

The EU ministers criticised the group's bid to establish a parallel administration in zones it controls and urged "the immediate cessation of violence, including sexual violence, human rights abuses and the recruitment of child soldiers".

Moreso, the United States (U.S.) also raised alarm about events in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where rebels are advancing on the key eastern city of Goma, and called on all sides to hold talks.

"It is an extremely dangerous and worrying situation," State Department spokeswoman, Victoria Nuland, told journalists, adding that top U.S. officials had been in contact with DR Congo and Rwanda leaders over the weekend to "try to encourage a solution to the crisis."

Also, the United Nations (UN) has unveiled plans to move 'non-essential staff' from Goma because

of growing rebel attacks, a UN spokesman said.

UN peacekeeping spokesman, Kieran Dwyer, stressed that UN peacekeepers, who came under “heavy mortar fire” from the rebels near Goma yesterday, would stay in the city.

“Starting tomorrow, non-essential UN staff will be temporarily relocated from Goma. Troops will stay to protect civilians,” Dwyer said.

Meanwhile, Rwanda yesterday accused the DR Congo’s army of firing into its territory amid growing acrimony between the two over the rebellion in eastern DR Congo.

The DR Congo army “has deliberately this evening bombed Rwanda using T55 tanks and mortar bombs,” General Joseph Nzabamwita told AFP, saying the assault had targeted the airport in Gisenyi, a town on the border between the two.

But DR Congo army spokesman, Olivier Hamuli, told AFP that “no order to fire in the direction of Rwanda was given”.

“An investigation is under way. If that was done, it was not under formal orders from the military hierarchy,” said Hamuli, army spokesman for the eastern city of Goma, which has come under threat from the rebels.

But witnesses yesterday reported gunfire in districts to the north and northwest of Goma, the main city in the mineral rich region, causing residents to flee south or towards the Rwanda border just to the east.

The M23 rebels had said they would resume their offensive unless the government opened direct talks within 24 hours and removed troops from the city and the airport, but Kinshasa swiftly rejected the ultimatum as “irrational rantings”.

“These are fictitious forces put in place by Rwanda to hide its criminal activities in DR Congo,” according to government’s spokesman, Lambert Mende.

“We prefer to negotiate with Rwanda, the real aggressor,” he added.

The United Nations has also charged that the M23 rebels are backed by neighbouring Rwanda and Uganda, charges both countries deny.

UN peacekeeping chief, Herve Ladsous, said the United Nations could not confirm whether Rwanda was helping the new rebel offensive but told reporters that M23 “attacking forces are well-equipped and very well-supplied”.

### Israël suspend provisoirement tout projet d'opération terrestre à Gaza

20/11 /SOURCE AFP, REUTERS

Les dirigeants israéliens ont décidé de repousser leur offensive terrestre dans la bande de Gaza pour donner des chances aux efforts égyptiens qui visent à établir une trêve entre le Hamas et l'Etat hébreu. Le Premier ministre israélien Benjamin Netanyahu va rencontrer la secrétaire d'Etat américaine, Hillary Clinton et le le secrétaire général des Nations unies, Ban Ki-moon.

Ce n'est pas encore la trêve mais peut-être, la fin de l'escalade. Les appels des ténors de la

diplomatie, qui se mobilisent de toutes parts pour empêcher que la crise à Gaza ne dégénère en guerre ouverte, semblent avoir enfin été entendus. « Une décision a été prise de suspendre provisoirement tout projet d'offensive terrestre pour donner des chances à un succès des efforts diplomatiques ».

La secrétaire d'Etat américaine, Hillary Clinton qui est en Asie avec Barack Obama, quittera Phnom Penh mardi pour se rendre en Israël, en Egypte et à Ramallah, a indiqué le vice-conseiller à la sécurité nationale de Barack Obama, Ben Rhodes. Elle rencontrera le Premier ministre israélien Benjamin Netanyahu à Jérusalem, et abordera le sujet de la crise avec des responsables égyptiens et palestiniens. Aucune rencontre n'est prévue en revanche avec les dirigeants du mouvement islamiste du Hamas qui contrôle la bande de Gaza, a précisé Mr. Rhodes.

Parallèlement, Ban Ki-moon, le secrétaire général des Nations unies qui doit lui aussi rencontrer le gouvernement israélien ce mardi, a appelé à un cessez-le-feu immédiat. Selon lui, toute opération militaire dans l'enclave palestinienne constituerait une « escalade dangereuse », elle doit donc être évitée. Au Caire, à l'issue d'une réunion avec le chef de la Ligue arabe, Nabil Elaraby, il a lui aussi exhorté les parties à faire un pas vers un cessez-le-feu.

Dans la nuit de lundi à mardi, Israël a examiné une proposition égyptienne de trêve avec le Hamas, selon les médias, quelques heures avant une mission de paix du chef de l'ONU à Jérusalem et après six jours de bombardements israéliens sur Gaza qui ont fait plus de 100 morts palestiniens. De son côté, l'ambassadrice américaine auprès de l'ONU, Susan Rice, a annoncé lundi soir que les Etats-Unis ne donneront pas leur aval à un texte du Conseil de sécurité des Nations unies qui sape, selon eux, les efforts entrepris pour atteindre un cessez-le-feu à Gaza.

Vers un cesser le feu

Le forum des neuf principaux ministres du gouvernement Netanyahu s'est longuement réuni pour étudier l'option d'une trêve ou celle d'une offensive terrestre à Gaza et n'a annoncé aucune décision, selon la radio publique. D'après la radio, Israël souhaite qu'une trêve de 24 à 48 heures soit observée afin que les parties puissent élaborer un cessez-le-feu durable. De même source, Israël pourrait, dans ce cadre, envisager d'alléger son blocus de la bande de Gaza. Selon une chaîne de télévision israélienne, M. Netanyahu serait enclin à approuver le document et un arrêt des hostilités serait en vue dans les 24 heures.

Les médias israéliens ont d'autre part relevé que les tirs de roquettes contre Israël à partir de la bande de Gaza avaient pratiquement cessé durant environ deux heures et demie avant la réunion du cabinet restreint.

L'Iran mis en cause

En soirée lundi, deux tirs de roquettes, qui n'ont pas fait de blessé, ont cependant été signalés contre la région d'Eshkol (sud). Au moins cinq autres roquettes sont ensuite tombées dans le secteur de Beesheva, et les sirènes d'alerte ont retenti dans plusieurs localités du sud d'Israël. A ce propos, le président israélien Shimon Peres a accusé l'Iran d'encourager les Palestiniens à poursuivre leurs tirs de roquettes plutôt qu'à négocier un cessez-le-feu. Les Iraniens « essaient encore d'encourager le Hamas à continuer les tirs, les bombardements, ils essaient de leur envoyer des armes », accuse M. Peres dans un entretien à la télévision CNN.

Au Caire, où il se trouve pour des discussions avec les autorités égyptiennes engagées dans des efforts de médiation, le chef en exil du Hamas, Khaled Mechaal, a évoqué la possibilité d'une trêve avec Israël, tout en insistant sur une levée du blocus de l'enclave. « Nous ne sommes pas contre un apaisement, mais nous tenons à nos demandes, la fin de la brutalité, la fin de l'agression et la levée du blocus », a-t-il déclaré.



SOURCE AFP, REUTERS

### World pressure for Gaza truce intensifies

By Nidal al-Mughrabi and Maayan Lubell/Reuters/Tue Nov 20, 2012

GAZA/JERUSALEM

(Reuters) - The U.N. chief called for an immediate ceasefire in the Gaza Strip on Tuesday and U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton headed to the region with a message that escalation of the week-long conflict was in nobody's interest.

Nevertheless, Palestinian rocket fire and Israeli air strikes continued for a seventh day.

Hamas militants said they fired 16 missiles at the southern Israeli city of Beersheba after Israel's military targeted roughly 100 sites in Gaza overnight, including ammunition stores and the Gaza headquarters of the National Islamic Bank.

Some 110 Palestinians have died in a week of fighting, the majority of them civilians, including 27 children. Three Israelis died last week when a Gaza missile struck their house.

In Cairo, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called for an immediate ceasefire and said an Israeli ground operation in Gaza would be a "dangerous escalation" that must be avoided.

He had held talks in the Egyptian capital with Arab League chief Nabil Elaraby and was due to meet Egypt's Islamist President Mohamed Mursi before travelling to Israel for talks with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Israel's leaders weighed the benefits and risks of sending tanks and infantry into the densely populated coastal enclave two months before an Israeli election, and indicated they would prefer a diplomatic path backed by world powers, including U.S. President Barack Obama, the European Union and Russia.

The White House said Clinton was going to the Middle East for talks in Jerusalem, Ramallah and Cairo to try to calm the conflict. An Israeli sources said she was expected to meet Netanyahu on Wednesday.

Netanyahu and his top ministers debated their next moves in a meeting that lasted into the early hours of Tuesday.

"Before deciding on a ground invasion, the prime minister intends to exhaust the diplomatic move in order to see if a long-term ceasefire can be achieved," a senior Israeli official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said after the meeting.

A delegation of nine Arab ministers, led by the Egyptian foreign minister, were due in Gaza later on Tuesday in a further signal of heightened Arab solidarity with the Palestinians.

Any diplomatic solution may pass through Egypt, Gaza's other neighbor and the biggest Arab nation, where the ousting of U.S. ally Hosni Mubarak and the election of Mursi is part of a dramatic reshaping of the Middle East wrought by Arab uprisings and now affecting the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Mursi, whose Muslim Brotherhood was mentor to the founders of Hamas, took a call from Obama on Monday telling him the group must stop rocket fire into Israel - effectively endorsing Israel's stated aim in launching the offensive last week. Obama, as quoted by the White House, also said he regretted civilian deaths - which have been predominantly among the Palestinians.

"The two leaders discussed ways to de-escalate the situation in Gaza, and President Obama underscored the necessity of Hamas ending rocket fire into Israel," the White House said, adding that the U.S. leader had also called Netanyahu.

"In both calls, President Obama expressed regret for the loss of Israeli and Palestinian civilian lives."

## EGYPT SEES DEAL

Mursi has warned Netanyahu of serious consequences from a ground invasion of the kind that killed more than 1,400 people in Gaza four years ago. But he has been careful not to alienate Israel, with whom Egypt's former military rulers signed a peace treaty in 1979, or Washington, a major aid donor to Egypt.

Egyptian Prime Minister Hisham Kandil told Reuters a ceasefire was possible: "I think we are close, but the nature of this kind of negotiation, (means) it is very difficult to predict."

After Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal laid out demands in Cairo that Israel take the first step in restoring calm, and warned Netanyahu that a ground war in Gaza could wreck his re-election prospects in January, a senior Israeli official denied a Hamas assertion that the prime minister had asked for a truce.

"Whoever started the war must end it," Meshaal said, referring to Israel's assassination from the air on Wednesday of Hamas's Gaza military chief, a move that followed a scaling up of rocket fire onto Israeli towns over several weeks.

An official close to Netanyahu told Reuters: "We would prefer to see a diplomatic solution that would guarantee the peace for Israel's population in the south. If that is possible, then a ground operation would no longer be required."

Fortified by the ascendancy of fellow Islamists in Egypt and elsewhere, and courted by fellow Sunni Arab leaders in the Gulf keen to draw the Palestinian group away from old ties to Shi'ite Iran, Hamas has tested its room for maneuver, as well as longer-range rockets that have reached the Tel Aviv metropolis.

## LOWER INTENSITY

Israeli statistics showed some easing in the ferocity of the exchanges on Monday. Israeli police counted 110 rockets, causing no casualties, of which 42 were shot down by anti-missile batteries. Tuesday's salvo also caused no injuries.

There has been no attack on Tel Aviv since Sunday.

Hamas said four-year-old twin boys had died with their parents when their house in the town of Beit Lahiya was struck from the air during the night. Neighbors said the occupants were not involved with militant groups.

Israel had no immediate comment on that attack. It says it takes extreme care to avoid civilians and accuses Hamas and other militant groups of deliberately placing Gaza's 1.7 million people in harm's way by placing rocket launchers among them.

Nonetheless, fighting Israel, whose right to exist Hamas refuses to recognize, is popular with many Palestinians and has kept the movement competitive with the secular Fatah movement of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, who remains in the West Bank after losing Gaza to Hamas in a civil war five years ago.

"Hamas and the others, they're our sons and our brothers, we're fingers on the same hand," said 55-year-old Faraj al-Sawafir, whose home was blasted by Israeli forces. "They fight for us and are martyred, they take losses and we sacrifice too."

In scenes recalling Israel's 2008-2009 winter invasion of the coastal enclave, tanks, artillery and infantry have massed in field encampments along the sandy, fenced-off border.

Israel has also authorized the call-up of 75,000 military reservists, so far mobilizing around half that number.

Although 84 percent of Israelis support the current Gaza assault, according to a poll by Israel's Haaretz newspaper, only 30 percent want an invasion.

In an echo of frictions over the civil war in Syria, Russia accused the United States on Monday of blocking a bid by the U.N. Security Council to condemn the escalating conflict in the Gaza Strip. Washington has generally stopped the U.N. body from putting what it sees as undue pressure on its Israeli ally.

(Writing by Alastair Macdonald; and Crispian Balmer)

### Efforts diplomatiques pour une trêve entre le Hamas et Israël

20/11/2012/Reuters

GAZA/JERUSALEM (Reuters) - Au septième jour du conflit entre Israël et les islamistes du Hamas dans la bande de Gaza, les efforts de la diplomatie internationale pour faire taire les armes se poursuivaient mardi autour du président égyptien Mohamed Morsi.

Les bombardements israéliens ont tué 108 personnes depuis mercredi dernier dans l'enclave côtière palestinienne, selon les autorités gazaouies. Sur ce total, la moitié sont des civils dont 27 enfants. Côté israélien, trois personnes ont été tuées par les roquettes palestiniennes.

Mardi, les dirigeants israéliens continuaient de soupeser les avantages et les inconvénients d'envoyer les chars sur le terrain dans ce réduit densément peuplé deux mois avant les élections législatives. Ils ont fait savoir qu'ils préféreraient un règlement par la voie diplomatique avec l'appui des grandes puissances, dont les Etats-Unis, la Russie et l'Union européenne.

Le président Mohamed Morsi a reçu un appel de Barack Obama lundi. Le président américain lui a dit que le Hamas devait cesser ses tirs de roquettes sur Israël, reprenant ce faisant à son compte le motif affiché par Israël pour le lancement de l'opération "Pilier de défense" il y a près d'une semaine.

Selon la Maison blanche, Barack Obama a aussi dit regretter les morts de civils, qui ont touché

essentiellement les Palestiniens.

Le président américain a ensuite appelé le Premier ministre israélien Benjamin Netanyahu et fait le point sur la situation à Gaza et en Israël.

Mohamed Morsi a mis en garde Benjamin Netanyahu de conséquences graves en cas d'intervention terrestre du type de "Plomb durci", qui avait fait plus de 1.400 morts dans la bande de Gaza il y a quatre ans.

Le président égyptien ne doit pas pour autant s'aliéner Israël, qui a signé un traité de paix avec l'Egypte en 1979, ni les Etats-Unis, un de ses importants bailleurs de fonds.

Mohamed Morsi doit rencontrer le secrétaire général des Nations unies mardi au Caire. Ban Ki-moon rencontrera aussi le Premier ministre israélien Benjamin Netanyahu à Jérusalem et le président palestinien Mahmoud Abbas à Ramallah, en Cisjordanie, mais n'a pas prévu de se rendre dans la bande de Gaza.

#### UNE CERTAINE ACCALMIE

Le ministre égyptien des Affaires étrangères, Mohamed Amr, est attendu à Gaza mardi avec plusieurs de ses homologues de la Ligue arabe pour "exprimer sa solidarité" au peuple palestinien, a fait savoir son ministère.

Le Premier ministre égyptien Hicham Kandil a déclaré à Reuters qu'une trêve lui semblait "très proche", tout en se montrant très prudent.

Selon la presse israélienne, des responsables israéliens se trouvent également au Caire pour des discussions.

Le chef du bureau politique du Hamas en exil, Khaled Méchaal, a déclaré au Caire qu'Israël devait faire le premier pas pour restaurer le calme.

"Celui qui a commencé la guerre doit la cesser", a-t-il dit lors d'une conférence de presse au Caire.

"Les déclarations du Hamas au sujet d'un cessez-le-feu, affirmant qu'Israël implore d'en avoir un, sont aussi exactes que lorsqu'il affirme avoir abattu un (avion) F-15 ou attaqué la Knesset", a rétorqué dans la foulée un haut responsable israélien.

Un responsable proche de Netanyahu a déclaré à Reuters : "Israël est prêt et a pris des mesures pour une incursion terrestre qui s'occupera durement de la machine militaire du Hamas"

"Nous préférierions voir une solution diplomatique qui garantisse la paix pour la population israélienne dans le sud. Si c'est possible, alors une opération au sol ne serait plus requise", a-t-il ajouté. "Si la diplomatie échoue, il se pourrait bien que nous n'ayons d'autre alternative que d'envoyer l'armée de terre."

Les statistiques israélienne pour lundi montrent une certaine accalmie dans les échanges. La police israélienne a compté 110 roquettes s'abattant sur Israël sans faire de blessés dont 42 ont été abattues par des batteries antimissiles.

Israël dit avoir mené 80 frappes aériennes sur Gaza. Comparé à plus de 1.000 roquettes tirées au total et à 1.350 frappes aériennes, cela indiquait que le niveau des échanges de feu avait baissé.

Les enfants continuent néanmoins à mourir. Lundi, le Hamas a fait état de la mort de jumeaux de quatre ans et de leurs parents dans la localité de Beit Lahiya. Selon les voisins, ils n'avaient pas de lien avec les activistes.

Danielle Rouquié pour le service français

### Gaza truce pressure builds, Cairo in focus

By Nidal al-Mughrabi and Maayan Lubell/Reuters/Tuesday, November 20, 2012

GAZA/JERUSALEM (Reuters) - International pressure for a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip puts Egypt's new Islamist president in the spotlight on Tuesday after a sixth day of Palestinian rocket fire and Israeli air strikes that have killed more than 100 people.

Israel's leaders weighed the benefits and risks of sending tanks and infantry into the densely populated coastal enclave two months before an Israeli election, and indicated they would prefer a diplomatic path backed by world powers, including U.S. President Barack Obama, the European Union and Russia.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his top ministers debated their next moves in a meeting that lasted into the early hours of Tuesday.

"Before deciding on a ground invasion, the prime minister intends to exhaust the diplomatic move in order to see if a long-term ceasefire can be achieved," a senior Israeli official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said after the meeting.

Any diplomatic solution may pass through Egypt, Gaza's other neighbour and the biggest Arab nation, where the ousting of U.S. ally Hosni Mubarak and election of President Mohamed Mursi is part of a dramatic reshaping of the Middle East, wrought by the Arab Spring and now affecting the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Mursi, whose Muslim Brotherhood was mentor to the founders of Hamas, took a call from Obama on Monday telling him the group must stop rocket fire into Israel - effectively endorsing Israel's stated aim in launching the offensive last week. Obama, as quoted by the White House, also said he regretted civilian deaths - which have been predominantly among the Palestinians.

"The two leaders discussed ways to de-escalate the situation in Gaza, and President Obama underscored the necessity of Hamas ending rocket fire into Israel," the White House said.

"President Obama then called Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel and received an update on the situation in Gaza and Israel. In both calls, President Obama expressed regret for the loss of Israeli and Palestinian civilian lives."

Three Israeli civilians and 108 Palestinians have been killed. Gaza officials say more than half of those killed in the enclave were civilians, 27 of them children.

### EGYPT SEES DEAL

Mursi has warned Netanyahu of serious consequences from a ground invasion of the kind that killed more than 1,400 people in Gaza four years ago. But he has been careful not to alienate Israel, with whom Egypt's former military rulers signed a peace treaty in 1979, or Washington, a major aid

donor to Egypt.

A meeting on Tuesday in Cairo between Mursi and Ban Ki-moon, the secretary-general of the United Nations who flew in late on Monday, could shed light on the shape of any truce proposals.

Egyptian Prime Minister Hisham Kandil told Reuters: "I think we are close, but the nature of this kind of negotiation, (means) it is very difficult to predict."

Israeli media have said Israeli officials are also in Cairo to talk. Ban is due to meet Netanyahu in Jerusalem soon.

After Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal laid out demands in Cairo that Israel take the first step in restoring calm, and warned Netanyahu that a ground war in Gaza could wreck his re-election prospects in January, a senior Israeli official denied a Hamas assertion that the prime minister had asked for a truce.

"Whoever started the war must end it," Meshaal said, referring to Israel's assassination from the air on Wednesday of Hamas's Gaza military chief, a move that followed a scaling up of rocket fire onto Israeli towns over several weeks.

An official close to Netanyahu told Reuters: "Israel is prepared and has taken steps and is ready for a ground incursion which will deal severely with the Hamas military machine.

"We would prefer to see a diplomatic solution that would guarantee the peace for Israel's population in the south. If that is possible, then a ground operation would no longer be required," he added. "If diplomacy fails, we may well have no alternative but to send in ground forces."

## CIVILIANS KILLED

Fortified by the ascendancy of fellow Islamists in Egypt and elsewhere, and courted by fellow Sunni Arab leaders in the Gulf keen to draw the Palestinian group away from old ties to Shi'ite Iran, Hamas has tested its room for manoeuvre, as well as longer-range rockets that have reached the Tel Aviv metropolis.

Israeli statistics showed some easing in the ferocity of the exchanges on Monday. Israeli police counted 110 rockets, causing no casualties, of which 42 were shot down by anti-missile batteries. Compared with more than 1,000 rockets fired in total, the indications were that the level of violence had fallen.

Palestinian militants resumed rocket fire into Israel on Tuesday morning, sending Israelis in southern towns running for shelter.

Israel's military said it had conducted 100 air strikes throughout the night. "A financial institution used by Hamas to fuel its terror activity was targeted in the northern Gaza Strip," it said.

Hamas said 4-year-old twin boys had died with their parents when their house in the town of Beit Lahiya was struck from the air. Neighbours said the occupants were not involved with militant groups.

Israel had no immediate comment on that attack. It says it takes extreme care to avoid civilians and accuses Hamas and other militant groups of deliberately placing Gaza's 1.7 million people in harm's way by placing rocket launchers among them.

Nonetheless, fighting Israel, whose right to exist Hamas refuses to recognise, is popular with many Palestinians and has kept the movement competitive with the secular Fatah movement of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, who remains in the West Bank after losing Gaza to Hamas in a civil war five years ago.

"Hamas and the others, they're our sons and our brothers, we're fingers on the same hand," said 55-year-old Faraj al-Sawafir, whose home was blasted by Israeli forces. "They fight for us and are martyred, they take losses and we sacrifice too."

Thousands turned out on Monday to mourn four children and five women who were among 11 people killed in an Israeli air strike that flattened a three-storey home the previous day.

The bodies were wrapped in Palestinian and Hamas flags. Echoes of explosions mixed with cries of grief and defiant chants of "God is greatest!"

### ISRAELI INVESTIGATION

Israel said it was investigating the strike that brought the block crashing down on the al-Dalu family, where the dead spanned four generations. Some Israeli newspapers said the house might have been targeted by mistake.

For the second straight day, Israeli missiles blasted a tower block in the city of Gaza housing international media. Two people were killed there, one of them an Islamic Jihad militant.

In scenes recalling Israel's 2008-2009 winter invasion of the coastal enclave, tanks, artillery and infantry have massed in field encampments along the sandy, fenced-off border.

Israel has also authorised the call-up of 75,000 military reservists, so far mobilising around half that number.

Although 84 percent of Israelis support the current Gaza assault, according to a poll by Israel's Haaretz newspaper, only 30 percent want an invasion.

With the power balances of the Middle East drastically shifted by the Arab Spring during a first Obama term that began two days after Israel ended its last major Gaza offensive, the newly re-elected U.S. president faces testing choices to achieve Washington's hopes for peace and stability across the region.

In an echo of frictions over the civil war in Syria, Russia accused the United States on Monday of blocking a bid by the U.N. Security Council to condemn the escalating conflict in the Gaza Strip. Washington has generally stopped the U.N. body from putting what it sees as undue pressure on its Israeli ally.

(Writing by Alastair Macdonald; Editing by Kevin Liffey and Mohammad Zargham)

**Nord du Mali : les islamistes domptent les rebelles touareg**

Le Point.fr / Publié le 16/11/2012

Des heurts ont éclaté, vendredi, entre les combattants du Mujao et les indépendantistes du MNLA près de la ville de Gao.

Les combats qui ont éclaté vendredi dans le nord-est du Mali entre islamistes du Mouvement pour l'unicité et le jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest (Mujao) et rebelles touareg du Mouvement national de libération de l'Azawad (MNLA) ont pris fin dans la soirée et le MNLA a subi une "lourde défaite", a-t-on appris de sources concordantes. "Les Touareg du MNLA ont subi une lourde défaite face aux islamistes du Mujao. Au cours des combats, le Mujao a tendu une embuscade aux Touareg du MNLA qui ont perdu de nombreux hommes", selon une source sécuritaire malienne, information confirmée de source sécuritaire régionale.

"Les combats sont terminés pour aujourd'hui", a confirmé une source sécuritaire régionale. Les djihadistes "ont mis en déroute le MNLA. Il y a même des soldats du MNLA qui ont trouvé refuge dans des pays voisins", a ajouté cette source en parlant d'"au moins une dizaine de morts côté MNLA, et au moins un mort chez les islamistes". Les combats se sont déroulés près de Ménaka, dans la région de Gao, proche de la frontière avec le Niger. Un élu de la région de Ménaka, proche du MNLA, a déclaré que "le Mujao a utilisé la surprise et de gros moyens pour attaquer le MNLA. Les combats sont terminés".

Plusieurs morts

À Paris, un représentant du MNLA, Moussa Ag Assarid, a affirmé que ces combats entraînent "dans le cadre d'une offensive visant à récupérer la région de Gao", tombée aux mains du Mujao fin juin. Selon une source sécuritaire du Burkina Faso, pays médiateur de l'Afrique de l'Ouest dans la crise malienne, "le Mujao a fait beaucoup de prisonniers et pris deux véhicules, il y a eu des morts". Ibrahim Ag Assaleh, membre d'une délégation du MNLA qui se trouve actuellement à Ouagadougou, a affirmé que le MNLA avait "tué 13 combattants du Mujao" et en "a blessé 17". "Côté MNLA, il y a neuf blessés, dont un grave", a-t-il dit.

Le porte-parole du Mujao, Walid Sahraoui, a de son côté affirmé qu'il y avait eu "plusieurs morts et blessés parmi les soldats du MNLA", sans donner de chiffres. Des véhicules de la rébellion touareg ont également été détruits, selon lui. Depuis deux semaines, un groupe de rebelles du MNLA avait élu domicile dans la région de Ménaka, espérant prendre sa revanche sur le Mujao dans la région de Gao. Le 27 juin, à l'issue de violents combats qui avaient fait au moins 35 morts, le Mujao, appuyé par al-Qaida au Maghreb islamique (Aqmi), avait évincé le MNLA de Gao où la rébellion touareg avait établi son quartier général.

Depuis ces combats de juin, le MNLA ne contrôle plus aucune ville du nord du Mali, immense région entièrement occupée par les groupes islamistes, Aqmi, Ansar Dine (Défenseurs de l'islam) et le Mujao, également impliqué dans des activités criminelles, qui y appliquent la charia (loi islamique) avec une extrême rigueur.

### Le MNLA passe à l'attaque à Gao

16 novembre 2012/afrique.blog.lemonde.fr

Cela faisait de nombreuses semaines, voire plusieurs mois, que le Mouvement national de libération de l'Azawad (MNLA) travaillait sur l'idée, puis l'organisation d'une attaque vers Gao, grande ville du Mali située dans la région frontalière du Niger et du Burkina Faso.

Cette attaque a commencé vendredi, et les affrontements avec le Mujao (Mouvement pour l'unicité et le djihad en Afrique de l'Ouest), qui tient Gao, ont eu lieu à une centaine de kilomètres de la ville, aux alentours d'Ansongo (au Sud de Gao) et de Tagarane Gabout. Les détails sont encore rares, mais voici déjà ce que l'on peut résumer samedi : depuis plusieurs semaines, le préparait une offensive

D'abord, cette offensive fait suite à une réorganisation de l'état-major, et à une réorganisation du



mouvement rebelle, nous expliquait récemment une source au sein du MNLA. Les principaux chefs militaires du mouvement, dont le ministre de la sécurité intérieure, le colonel Hassan Fagaga, font partie de l'opération selon une source au sein du MNLA. Cette opération visait plusieurs objectifs.

D'abord, reprendre le contrôle de Gao, dont les troupes de la rébellion touareg ont été chassées en juin par des groupes islamistes radicaux (essentiellement le Mujao). Depuis la prise de Gao pour les rebelles, leurs différentes obédiences avaient coexisté difficilement, jusqu'aux affrontements de juin. Depuis, le MNLA était marginalisé. Reprendre Gao, ce serait pour la rébellion touareg redevenir un interlocuteur de poids au Mali à un moment clef. Signifiant par là qu'il conviendrait d'associer la formation de Bilal ag Cherif dans de futures négociations politiques dans le Mali d'après-crise, et dans un premier temps dans d'éventuelles opérations militaires pour la "reconquête" du Nord Mali sous l'égide de l'armée malienne appuyée par une force d'intervention africaine dont les détails sont en cours d'élaboration.

Cette "inclusion" du MNLA dans le processus en cours n'a pas la force de l'évidence pour les autres parties de la crise malienne, à commencer par le gouvernement malien, qui, en dépit de ses divisions, ne voit certainement pas d'un bon oeil la collaboration avec des rebelles qui, hier, mettaient à mal l'armée régulière au point d'avoir précipité la crise politique à Bamako et faciliter le coup d'état d'avril, revenir dans la grâce du pouvoir central par une attaque de groupes islamistes radicaux. Bref, en attaquant Gao, le MNLA espérait un retournement de situation.

Car Gao, depuis juin, est sous le contrôle du Mujao, proche d'Al Qaida au Maghreb islamique (Aqmi), qui fait partie des cibles prioritaires de la coalition internationale en voie d'élaboration. Une campagne de recrutement a été menée au cours des derniers mois, pour gonfler les effectifs de ce mouvement composite qui associe des responsables radicaux à des groupes proches du trafic transsaharien de drogue. Le Mujao a suffisamment de fonds à dépenser pour payer ses combattants, au risque de compter des "djihadistes alimentaires" recrutés parmi la jeunesse désœuvrée, en plus des combattants qui rejoignent le mouvement en provenance d'autres pays.

Dans l'autre camp, il y a aux côtés des forces du MNLA, affirment plusieurs sources, des combattants d'Ansar Eddine, l'autre grand mouvement touareg. Les mouvements de va-et-vient entre les deux groupes sont fréquents, et les délimitations parfois artificielles entre les deux formations. Côté touareg, trois colonnes de soixante véhicules seraient impliquées dans cette offensive qui est partie de la région de Ménaka et est entrée au contact des forces du Mujao dans les environs d'Ansongo.

Jeudi, des pick ups avec des combattants du Mujao et, selon certaines sources, d'Aqmi, avaient quitté Gao pour descendre vers le Sud et tendre une embuscade aux rebelles touaregs, qui pourrait compter trois colonnes de 20 pick ups chacune. Les affrontements de vendredi ont été violents, chaque camp donne des bilans contradictoires. mais il semble que dans un premier temps, l'avancée du MNLA ait été stoppée. Et la zone de combat est encore à une bonne centaine de kilomètres de Gao. Le MNLA estime que la bataille n'est pas terminée.

US/AFRICA :

**Clinton headed to Jerusalem, Ramallah and Cairo to seek end to Israel/Gaza fighting**

Published November 20, 2012/Associated Press

President Obama is sending Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton to the Middle East in hopes that she can help mediate an end to bloody conflict in the region.

A deputy White House national security adviser says Clinton will depart Tuesday from Cambodia, where she had accompanied Obama on a visit to Southeast Asia.

Clinton will begin her Mideast diplomacy by meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Jerusalem. She also will meet with Palestinian officials in Ramallah before heading to Cairo to meet with leaders in Egypt.

Israel has been firing rockets into the Gaza Strip in an attempt to end months of rocket fire out of the Hamas-ruled territory.

The U.S. says Israel has a right to defend itself.

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