

[In the early `90s when South Africa's Themba Lethu clinic could only treat HIV/AIDS patients for opportunistic diseases, many would come in on wheelchairs and keep coming to the health center until they died. Two decades later the clinic is the biggest anti-retroviral, or ARV, treatment center in the country and sees between 600 to 800 patients a day from all over southern Africa. Those who are brought in on wheelchairs, sometimes on the brink of death, get the crucial drugs and often become healthy and are walking within weeks.]

BURUNDI :

RWANDA :

Rwanda: FDLR Attack Shows They're a Spent Force

By Jean-Christophe Nsanzimana/Rwanda Focus (Kigali)/3 December 2012

It was in Busasamana, Bugeshi and Cyanzarwe sectors of the Rubavu district (Western province), that heavily armed FDLR (Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda) rebels attacked the Rwanda Defense Forces (RDF) in the morning of Tuesday, in a fight lasting for about 10 hours.

On the Rwandan side, the attack killed one civilian, and three others were taken hostage, while 4 civilians and 4 RDF soldiers were injured. On the rebels' side, according to the RDF spokesperson Brig Gen Joseph Nzabamwita, over 10 were killed, with 5 dead bodies found on Rwandan soil. "We estimate that over 10 rebels were shot dead because we were told by some of the citizens who were taken hostage and then released, that the rebels carried 7 dead bodies, adding to the 5 we found," Nzabamwita said.

Captain Justin Ndamutsa, an RDF officer leading one of the RDF's positions which were attacked explained that, "It was in standby hours (4pm-4h45pm), and our soldiers who were on the listening posts saw the rebels approaching."

Cpt Ndamutsa's soldiers are settled on Muti hill, Runshungu cell of the Cyanzarwe sector, near the Kibumba valley separating Rwanda and DRC. On the other side of the valley is Nyamuragira volcano and a forest where the rebels are suspected to have come from. "Some were already on the hill, and others were coming from the valley. In my assessment, there were between 60 and 100. I deployed two platoons, shot at the rebels, and then after withdrew," Ndamutsa stated, adding that the rebels were heavily armed with RPG shells and other heavy arms. "We captured some RPGs, identification documents and uniforms."

During the fire exchange, two rebels were captured, one of them called Martin Girukwayo. "We attacked as one company, a total of 250 soldiers," he told assembled journalists. "I was injured while we were trying to attack Muti hill (Cyanzarwe sector) and failed to flee. That's when RDF captured me. There were 60 of us."

He confirmed that the rebels attacked from Nyamuragira. "We were commanded by Major Ruhinda, and were told that we were supposed to conquer Muti hill-Runshungu village of Cyanzarwe sector (Rubavu district). Our commanders had told us that defeat was not an option; we had to conquer the hill and were then supposed to advance to other parts of the country," said Girukwayo, who joined

the FDLR in 1998 at Masisi (North Kivu).

As for the civilians, they had fled to the nearest areas, but later returned to their village. "When we heard the shooting, we were afraid and fled to the nearest sectors. After the fighting, the army told us that it was safe to return to our homes," recounted Monique Mutuyimana.

Mutuyimana's cow, which she had received from the Girinka program, was killed by rebels. "My cow was shot by rebels on their way to the hill," affirmed the widow.

According to RDF spokesperson, the animal will be replaced soon. "She was identified as vulnerable and has no other means. The cow was of great importance to her; we have reported the issue to the authorities, and she will receive another cow soon," Nzabamwita said.

Pierre Claver Bagaragaza, a 32-year-old from Runshungu village, who was initially abducted by the rebels, said he had to carry their items. "They included kitchen items, food and other packaged things."

He was taken across the border but was later released, though he couldn't explain the reason why.

FARDC support

Considering that the FDLR rebels were using new heavy arms, had very expensive equipments, and some of them were wearing FARDC uniforms, RDF officers have concluded that they have a supporting force behind them, probably the Congolese army (FARDC).

"A rebel group cannot have such ammunitions without being supported," said the RDF spokesman who accused the FARDC of being behind it. "We have found that most of the rebels were wearing FARDC uniforms, and had IDs delivered by DRC's authorities, they are supported by FARDC, or some FARDC officers," he said, although he cautioned that he wasn't sure the this support was still going on.

Recently, General Gabriel Amisi who was the commander of Congolese ground forces was suspended due to accusations that he runs a huge arms smuggling network supplying weapons and ammunition to criminal groups and rebels, including Congolese rebels. A United Nations report accusing him of selling weapons to criminal and rebel groups read that "Amisi oversees a network distributing hunting ammunition for poachers and armed groups," including the Mai Mai, Raia Mutomboki, Nyatura (an FDLR Unit) and Raia Mutomboki, which operate in the country's East and are accused of widespread atrocities.

JVM investigation

The International Conference on Great Lakes Region (ICGLR)'s Joint Verification Mechanism (JVM) which controls and patrols the border has delegated a team to investigate the issue. The team is composed of two colonels (A Burundian and a Rwandan) and two Majors (Ugandan, Tanzanian). "We are analyzing the issue and we'll make recommendations to the ICGLR so that such incidents cause by the FDLR can be stopped and the rebels themselves prevented from harming the region's security," Burundian Colonel Gabriel Ntirandekura, who heads the JVM team on ground in Rubavu.

"We have been fighting the rebels (FDLR) alone, sometimes helped by DRC's army, but now the 11 state members of the ICGLR will be helping us fight them," said Brig Gen Nzabamwita.

Rwanda: Kagame Rallies Religious Leaders

By Frank Kanyesigye/The New Times/3 December 2012

PRESIDENT Paul Kagame has urged religious leaders to continue participating in the building of the country irrespective of their spiritual beliefs.

Kagame made the call at the closing ceremony of the Pentecostal Church of Rwanda (ADEPR) leaders retreat at Petit Stade in Kigali yesterday.

The ceremony brought together over 2,500 members of ADEPR, religious leaders and several government officials. A total of 370 ADEPR members convened for one week at Nkumba, Burera District to share and discuss their challenges and forge the way forward for the church development. They also discussed matters of national importance.

The Head of State said challenges should not make Rwandans and churches weaker but stronger and more determined to work hard for a better future.

Despite differences in religious beliefs, Kagame said, they all share one country -Rwanda - whose wellbeing benefits all Rwandans irrespective of their faith, beliefs or clans.

The President advised churches to uphold the truth, value themselves, God and the country.

The Head of State commended the work done by ADEPR towards the development of the country and encouraged them to stay focused on their good work.

Kagame thanked ADPR for resolving the internal conflicts that had almost torn the church apart.

Pentecostal faithfuls in the past few months witnessed internal wrangles and an inquiry was commissioned to probe possible genocide ideologies amongst its leaders that threatened to split the church.

In the Rwandan culture, Kagame reminded them, those who betray Rwanda have a chance to repent their sins and be part of the society again.

The President warned those who base on religious differences, clans and ethnicities to discriminate people, stressing that all people belong to God and nobody had the right to discriminate others.

He observed that while there are various ways to get to God, the destination remains one.

The Head of State called on all Rwandans to leave their differences behind and focus on more constructive issues, adding that if they closely work together, the challenges Rwandans go through will come to pass as has previously been the case.

According to Pastor Jean Sibomana, Head of ADEPR, the retreat was an opportunity to reflect on their role in the development of the church and the country.

"We are committed to the development of our country, for instance we are targeting to build 296 houses specifically for the survivors of the Genocide against the Tutsi across the country," he said.

ADEPR also pledged over Rwf63 million to the Agaciro Development Fund.

The Pentecostal Church, with over one million followers across the country, started in Rwanda in

1940.

The Church has contributed to the country's development in the areas of health, education, social development and unity and reconciliation, among others.

In August, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) awarded ADEPR with the King Sejong Literacy Prize for promotion of literacy programmes in Rwanda.

According to the church officials, over the last 10 years, about 413,766 people in the country have benefited from ADEPR literacy programmes.

The Pentecostal church currently has 70 nursery schools, 160 primary schools, 45 secondary schools and 36 technical schools.

The event also attracted representatives of Pentecostal churches from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi.

RDC CONGO :

Congo: un camp de déplacés attaqué près de Goma
le lundi 3 décembre 2012/rtb.be

Les policiers poursuivaient leur déploiement dimanche dans Goma, 24 heures après le repli des rebelles du M23 de la ville stratégique dans l'est de la République démocratique du Congo, mais l'attaque d'un camp proche de déplacés a très vite rappelé l'insécurité persistante dans laquelle vivent les civils .

En fin d'après-midi, l'armée, dont le retour avait été annoncé pour dimanche, n'était pas arrivée dans la capitale du Nord-Kivu, et n'était désormais plus attendue avant lundi après-midi.

Signe de la situation sécuritaire précaire qui régnait encore dans la zone quelques heures après le retrait des rebelles, un camp de déplacés situé à une dizaine de km de Goma, dans le village de Mugunga, s'est fait attaquer dans la nuit de samedi à dimanche.

Le Haut commissariat des Nations unies pour les réfugiés (HCR) n'a signalé aucun mort, mais des cas de viols et de pillages lors de l'attaque par des hommes armés non identifiés.

Les rebelles du M23, des mutins qui combattent l'armée régulière de RDC depuis environ huit mois dans la riche province minière du Nord-Kivu, ont accepté de se retirer de Goma et de ses environs après une forte mobilisation internationale, notamment des pays voisins des Grands Lacs, et en échange d'une promesse de dialogue -- délicat-- avec Kinshasa.

Ils se sont engagés à se retirer vers les positions qu'ils occupaient avant leur récente offensive sur Goma, plus au nord, dans le territoire du Rutshuru.

Depuis leur départ, des centaines de policiers de RDC ont repris du service dans les rues de Goma, avec mission de "sécuriser" la ville. En fin d'après-midi, l'armée n'avait cependant toujours pas opéré son retour, et n'était désormais plus attendue que lundi après-midi.

Geoffrey Muheesi, un membre ougandais d'un mécanisme de vérification régional, chargé notamment d'observer le retrait de la rébellion, a expliqué ce retard en raison du long trajet à parcourir par route par l'armée.

En attendant, dans les rues de Goma, les bâtiments désertés de l'armée servaient encore surtout dimanche de terrain de jeu à des enfants. Au QG déserté d'un régiment d'infanterie, un groupe de jeunes garçons traînait dimanche au milieu d'un amas de documents déchirés, de paquets de préservatifs et de balles.

Radio Okapi brouillée

Dans le camp attaqué dans la nuit, les déplacés attendaient nerveusement une distribution de nourriture.

"Ceux qui ont été pillés, surtout, sont énervés, ils ne veulent pas nous parler," a glissé Egide Sumusaza, un membre de l'ONG Caritas, en charge de la distribution de nourriture.

Selon le responsable du camp, Eraston Ngulu Ndibito, les hommes armés qui ont attaqué le camp portaient "des mitraillettes et des lance-roquettes". Lui-même a parlé de "six cas de viols".

Des vivres -- une distribution de nourriture venait d'avoir lieu --, des téléphones, de l'argent et des habits ont aussi été volés, a-t-il ajouté, affirmant que des adolescents avaient été emmenés pour porter le butin.

"J'ai porté de la farine et une valise," a témoigné un jeune homme de 15 ans, revenu au camp après avoir été réquisitionné pour transporter les marchandises. "Si on ne marchait pas bien, ils nous frappaient," raconte-t-il. Il dit aussi que certains, "qui ne voulaient pas obéir", ne sont pas rentrés.

Le M23 avait pris Goma le 20 novembre, et d'autres localités des environs dans la foulée.

Le mouvement est composé d'ex-rebelles essentiellement tutsi congolais, qui avaient été intégrés à l'armée de RDC en 2009 à l'issue d'un accord de paix avec Kinshasa. Ils se sont mutinés en avril, estimant que le gouvernement n'avait jamais pleinement respecté ses engagements.

Dimanche, le porte-parole du gouvernement de RDC, Laurent Mende, a assuré que le président Joseph Kabila allait désormais écouter leurs "griefs (...) incessamment".

Les pourparlers s'annoncent cependant délicats pour le pouvoir. Longtemps, le gouvernement a catégoriquement exclu toute négociation avec les rebelles et rechigne encore à employer le terme même de négociation.

Signe de la tension qui règne à Kinshasa, la diffusion de Radio Okapi, une radio nationale parrainée par l'ONU, a été brouillée dans la capitale, un fait inédit depuis le lancement de la station il y a dix ans.

Le Conseil supérieur de l'audiovisuel et de la Communication congolais a justifié sa décision par le refus d'Okapi de lui "remettre son cahier des charges dans le cadre du passage à la télévision numérique terrestre".

AFP

UGANDA :

Uganda Should Be On the Gay Side of History

By Peter C. Schiefke/The Observer (Kampala)/2 December 2012

opinion

I am a Canadian who loves Uganda and its people.

I love the culture, the landscape, have had the privilege and honour of working in Uganda for many years as a volunteer, and as director of a charitable organization in Gulu district. Over the last seven years, I have made countless friends in Uganda, witnessed significant economic growth, increased domestic security, and a tangible increase in the quality of life for millions.

This can be attributed to the strength and will of the Ugandan people, and to the tireless work of a government that envisions a better, more prosperous Uganda for generations to come. In this pursuit, Uganda has made new allies, opened up new markets, attracted investment, tourism, and signed new trade agreements. Progress has been felt on many fronts to the benefit of millions of Ugandans of all walks of life.

I am, however, writing to express my shock and disappointment at the 'Kill the Gays' bill that has been supported by the Honourable Speaker of Parliament, Rebecca Kadaga, and many of her colleagues. Firstly, I am not gay but I believe strongly that this bill is a great step backwards for Uganda and her people. As a Canadian and a citizen of the world that cares for the rights of all people, I write this in support of my many friends and even family members who are indeed gay.

They are teachers, lawyers, doctors, mothers, fathers, and yes, where certain denominations allow for it, even priests. They are decent, kind, intelligent, and contribute to working families, strong militaries, vibrant cultures, and strong economies worldwide, including those of Canada and Uganda.

My aversion to the bill does not simply stem from the fact that it will deny rights to a minority group of the Ugandan population, but also the reasoning used to support it. Hon Kadaga's assertion that she and her colleagues are passing the bill because, in her words "most Ugandans are demanding it" does not make it a just law; nor does this reasoning give credence to any law that denies one citizen of rights that are available to others.

Great leaders, past and present, have time and again risen above the will or desires of the populace in order to protect and safeguard the imperative tenets of freedom and liberty. Had the will of the majority been used as the deciding factor in whether or not to sign the Emancipation Proclamation, essentially ending the long-standing tradition of slavery in America, countless further generations may have lived through the brutal practice. Americans in large numbers supported the status quo at the time.

Nonetheless, President [Abraham] Lincoln went against the will of the many and his legacy will be one of a man who did not do what was popular, but what was right. President Lincoln was on the right side of history. Had this argument applied in South Africa in the 1990s, President Nelson Mandela would have created legislation based on feelings of vengeance held by most South Africans against those who supported apartheid. Instead, he preached peace and reconciliation. He too will be remembered for choosing to do what was right, not what was popular amongst his

electorate.

He was on the right side of history. In America, President Barack Obama repealed the 'Don't ask, don't tell' law that discriminated against gays in the military. When President Obama took office in January 2009, the majority of Americans did not support allowing gays to serve openly in the US military. Even so, President Obama made the right choice. He was on the right side of history.

Ugandans need Parliament not to simply follow, but lead. As has been demonstrated by some of the greatest leaders that have come before us, and even those of our time, leadership sometimes requires disagreement with the populace, no matter how difficult or costly.

This proposed law does not do justice to those who fought for and sometimes died for all of the advancements in human rights that Ugandans now enjoy. Honour their legacy by ensuring that human rights are applied to all Ugandans, allowing them to

live in peace without the threat of persecution due to age, gender, creed, and yes, sexual preference.

The author is director of former American Vice President Al Gore's Climate Reality Organization in Canada and is an award-winning environmentalist and human rights campaigner.

Uganda: Aids - 20 Ugandans Who Made a Difference

By Shifa Mwesigye/The Observer (Kampala)/2 December 2012

In 1982, Prof Nelson Ssewankambo was a young researcher studying a strange disease at Kasensero fishing village, Rakai.

Together with Prof David Serwadda and other scientists, they later confirmed the cause of the ailment to be HIV, the virus that causes Aids. On Saturday, as Uganda joined the rest of the world to mark Aids day, Shifa Mwesigye was reflecting on some of the people who have made a dignified contribution to the fight against HIV/Aids in Uganda.

These are people who have fought a good fight, although there is now concern that Uganda is losing the momentum, with new infections outpacing people getting on life-prolonging therapy.

Prof Nelson Ssewankambo

His impressive profile is plastered on walls of international organisations. He's a leading contributor to the fight against the Aids scourge. He was a co-founder and principal investigator at the Rakai Health Sciences Research programme and a co-investigator in the circumcision study.

He was instrumental in establishing the Mulago-based Infectious Diseases Institute which now treats over 14,000 Aids patients free of charge and runs short courses for doctors from all over Africa on how to treat the disease.

Prof David Serwadda

The former dean of Makerere University School of Public Health was one of the two doctors who researched the first cases of Aids (Siliimu) in Rakai in 1985. He was also part of the project that proved that Nevirapine (zidovudine) could significantly reduce HIV transmission from mother to child, a critical development in the fight against Aids.

Milly Katana

She is an activist living with HIV. She cried before US President George Bush Snr in Washington, as she appealed for help for poor countries. The result was the US President's Emergency Plan for Aids Relief (PEPFAR) programme, which now covers various interventions in all the major thematic areas of prevention, treatment, care and support.

Doctor Noerine Kaleeba

When she lost her husband to Aids, Dr Kaleeba mobilised her colleagues who were affected and infected by HIV/Aids for community action, to form The Aids Support Organisation (TASO) in 1987. It proved to be the first community response to Aids in Africa, and is now recognised as a successful model of care and support for people living and affected by HIV/Aids. TASO is also responsible for the concept "Positive living", now adopted in many countries.

Dr Alex Coutinho

He is the executive director of the Infectious Diseases Institute, having previously held the same position at TASO. He established holistic prevention and care services including voluntary counselling and testing (VCT), management of opportunistic infections, a tuberculosis clinic, an Aids clinic, a peer education programme as well as hospital management and palliative care for terminally ill patients.

Doctors Philippa Musoke, Clementia Nakabiito and Prof Francis Miiro of Makerere University Medical School's department of Paediatrics demonstrated that a single dose of Nevirapine, significantly prevents mother-to-child HIV transmission. This laid the foundation for the present PMCT initiatives.

Dr Stephen Watiti

He is a senior paediatrician at Mildmay hospital in Lweza, which handles people living with HIV. He is HIV positive and has a personal experience of the need to live positively. He believes in working through faith-based organisations to help them conduct advocacy work on HIV and mainstream HIV work into their core activities.

Dr Sam Okware

His research, carried out in the 1980s, showed that the main mode of catching the HIV virus was through heterosexual relations. He has been one of the lead investigators in the HIV fight, and helped create awareness and bring down HIV rates during time at the ministry of Health as the commissioner for Health Services, and as director of Uganda Aids Control programme.

President Yoweri Museveni

At a time when many distanced themselves from the HIV scourge, President Museveni took the lead. This put the country on the map, attracting researchers and donors. Although he has since continued to lead the fight against HIV, he has contributed to the dismantling of the ABC (Abstinence, Being Faithful and Condom use) strategy.

In latter years, Museveni has often preached an anti-condom and anti-circumcision gospel, while trying to encourage young people to abstain. Critics say the president sounds like the First Lady, a devout born-again Christian. The trouble with this is that it makes a moral diagnosis of a public

health problem, while discounting non-moral solutions.

Cathy Watson

She founded Straight Talk, an organisation that has given a voice to adolescents on HIV/Aids and sexuality issues. In 1993, she saw the need to address adolescents about safe living or safe sex. Her idea was based on the notion that silence on sensitive topics only frustrates interventions against HIV/Aids.

Rev Gideon Byamugisha

He was the first religious leader in Africa to publicly declare he was HIV-positive and push for condom use as a means of HIV prevention. He is a leader in the field of faith-based approaches to the HIV/Aids fight.

Professor Peter Mugenyi

Under his leadership, the Joint Clinical Research Centre (JCRC) was the first institution to start distributing ARVs. When they were too costly, the award-winning Mugenyi fought to bring the prices down by importing generic ARVs. Mugenyi has been the JCRC director since 1992.

Dr Pontiano Kaleebu

He is one of Uganda's leading investigators into finding an HIV vaccine since he joined the Uganda Virus Research Institute in 1988. His major areas of interest include understanding the protective immune responses against HIV to contribute to the design of an HIV vaccine. Other interests are HIV vaccine trials and resistance to anti-retroviral drugs. He has served on many national and international committees including WHO HIV vaccine advisory committee and the Global HIV Vaccine Enterprise Scientific committee.

Beatrice Were

When she lost her husband to Aids in 1991, Ms Were turned her personal struggle into a new brand of activism, aimed at supporting communities affected by HIV/Aids especially women, children and the youth. Her activism centres on supporting the rights of Aids widows and orphans, access to treatment for those infected and prevention of those who are not yet infected. She founded the National Community of Women Living with HIV/Aids (NACWOLA) which operates in 25 districts in Uganda, with over 40,000 members.

Major Rubaramira Ruranga

Major Ruranga has been honoured for openly declaring his HIV status, and leading the fight against the pandemic in the armed forces in 1989. Ruranga was told he had only three years to live but resolved to fight the ailment. He now heads the National Guidance and Empowerment Network of People Living with HIV/Aids, to fight stigma.

Ruth Simms

She is a co-founder of Mildmay hospital, the Hospice for Aids patients centre at Lweza. Simms also established Jajja's home, which offers day-care for children living with HIV/Aids. Since 1998, 55,000 Aids patients have gone through Mildmay centre, while 1,000 of them are currently receiving anti-retroviral medication. She has co-authored the first book to be published on Palliative

Care for People with Aids and written a book on the Christian response to HIV/Aids titled A Time to Care.

Philly Bongoley Lutaaya

He was the first major celebrity to announce that he was HIV-positive, at the peak of stigma and discrimination against HIV, on April 13, 1989 and was later acclaimed worldwide. In music and video, he led an awareness campaign against Aids, preaching against promiscuous behaviour in churches and schools.

Prof Elly Katabira,

He is a co - founder of TASO and was their first doctor. In 1990, he was recognized as an international scholar by the World Aids Foundation. In 2010, he was elected as the President of International Aids Society, a leading independent association for HIV professionals that envisions a global movement of people working together to end the HIV pandemic.

Uganda: When Will MTN Sell Shares to Ugandans?

By Kavuma-Kaggwa/The Independent (Kampala)/1 December 2012

opinion

MTN makes huge amounts of revenue from Uganda annually and almost the whole of it goes to South Africa

The giant telecom MTN of South Africa recently marked 14 years of operation in Uganda. In a congratulatory message on the occasion, the MTN Board Chairman, Charles Mbire, said he was "proud to be associated with a company and brand that has brought employment to thousands of Ugandans and has and remains the biggest tax payer in the country, making it a top corporate citizen that has continuously been selected as the most respected company in Uganda by the Price-Waterhouse East Africa survey".

According to a New Vision Oct.29 article, he thanked the government and the people of Uganda for their continued support. He said - "We shall endeavor to continue bringing better communication services to the country to contribute to the development of Uganda".

All that is good; paying taxes, offering employment and bringing better communication services to the country. But there is one extremely important factor to the ordinary people of Uganda which MTN has all along completely ignored and does not seem to care about for all these 14 years they have operated in Uganda.

MTN has refused to sell shares to the people of Uganda as it is in Tanzania and South Africa where MTN is quoted on the Dar es Salaam stock exchange, and Johannesburg stock exchange respectively.

The people of Uganda are asking one very important question - when will the telecom giant MTN sell shares to the people of Uganda? Why is it that they have not done so in the last 14 years of their operations in Uganda? Why is it that President Yoweri Museveni, the government and the Uganda Capital Market Authority have not forced them to sell shares to the people of Uganda? We need a clear answer from Mr. Mbiire to these questions, if possible before the end of the year.

Some of our Members of Parliament who understand the economic importance of stocks and shares should bring up this matter for a serious debate in Parliament instead of being complacent all the time.

MTN is a South African Telecommunication company which has been operating in Uganda for 14 years and makes huge amounts of revenue from Uganda annually and almost the whole of it goes to South Africa. If we get it listed on the Uganda Stock Exchange then Ugandans will earn dividends every year. The Initial Public Offer (IPO) should be between 20 to 50 shillings per share so that the ordinary people buy very many shares.

I remember in 2009 MTN wanted a big amount of money - US\$100 million- to enable it "expand its operations in Uganda" and MTN acquired that money from a number of banks in form of a loan instead of raising that money through floating shares on the stock exchange.

My major interest here is for the people in the villages to know the importance of buying or owning shares in a big company.

Buying shares on an IPO (Initial Public Offer) or on secondary market, the buyer becomes a part owner of that company so that he or she has that attachment to the company unlike other means of raising capital by the company, in form of bonds or loan facilities.

Those who give you money through bonds and loans are creditors to the company and their interest to the company is as far as the credit they have given to the company and no more.

If MTN provided an IPO to the public there will be that bond and a win-win situation to the company and the public who buy a stake in the company through the IPO.

The Government of Uganda, as well as the Uganda Investment Authority and Capital Markets Authority, when negotiating with these investors at the initial stages, should incorporate a clause in the Agreement, for long term public interests. (In case of MTN and all foreign telecom companies, listing on the local bourse was part of the deal -editor).

The investors should know it right from the beginning that at one time, after operating for two or three years, that company will have to open an IPO so that the people buy shares in that company.

Recently President Museveni announced that within the next 50 years Uganda will be among "the first world countries". Uganda cannot be a "first world country" if the citizens are not given the opportunity to buy shares in big companies like MTN.

Kavuma-Kaggwa is an elder from Kyaggwe

SOUTH AFRICA :

Power struggle paralyzes South Africa's ruling ANC party

By Robyn Dixon, Los Angeles Times/robyn.dixon@latimes.com/December 2, 2012

South African President Jacob Zuma is under attack within and outside his party. An ANC vote this month will decide his future.

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — Political analyst Mark Gevisser described South African President Jacob Zuma's term in one word: "Disastrous."

He's "the worst leader the ANC has ever had. He's a lost cause. He merely fights to save his own skin and to stay out of jail," another analyst, Justice Malala, wrote in October.

The South African president is under such vitriolic attack within and without his African National Congress party that the Communist Party in his home province called for a law to protect his "dignity" and restrain his critics.

The ANC, a century-old party that defeated apartheid, transformed South Africa and gave the world Nelson Mandela, is paralyzed by a to-the-death leadership fight that will decide Zuma's future at a party vote this month.

The ANC once held itself above other African freedom fighters who metamorphosed from liberators to exploiters. But Zuma's critics say the party has begun to resemble them. Dogged by corruption scandals, it has become a web of patronage for powerful insiders who cheat on government contracts and use law enforcement agencies to taint their political enemies, according to analysts.

Zuma's scandalous \$30-million, government-paid renovations to his sprawling private residence in Nkandla (a controversy known locally as Nkandlagate) have so damaged him in the ANC leadership contest that one loyal minister said critics of the expenditures didn't understand African values and lifestyles. The president's spokesman, Mac Maharaj, said the opposition's references to the walled presidential residence as a compound were racist.

"Racism? Is this what the ANC has been reduced to?" wrote analyst Malala in response. "When looting takes place in front of our eyes, the only argument the presidential spokesman can make is that this is racism?"

The government said the renovations were done to upgrade security, citing an apartheid-era law classifying Zuma's private home as a "national key point" covered by security legislation and, as a result, not subject to public scrutiny.

Zuma is also under attack for his current defiance of a Supreme Court order that his lawyers hand over secret intelligence tapes that led prosecutors to drop about 700 corruption and fraud charges against him just weeks before 2009 elections.

Unease over his leadership within the ANC and among the public has deepened since strikes that resulted in 34 protesting miners being killed by police in August.

Zuma also came under criticism when authorities failed to distribute textbooks in Limpopo province until well past the midway mark of the school year. Education activists had to go to court to force the government to distribute the books.

Zuma has always been a controversial leader. He was accused of rape in 2005 by the daughter of a senior ANC colleague; he was acquitted in 2006. Corruption charges, dropped in 2009, continue to hover in the background, with the possibility that if his enemies succeed in ousting him in December — or sometime in the future — he could be put back on trial.

Zuma has compared the ANC to Jesus, and he once told supporters at a rally that in his youth, he would have knocked down any gay men he met.

The illiterate son of a poor Durban housemaid, Zuma rose through the party ranks to join its military wing during the armed struggle against apartheid. He was arrested on conspiracy charges and jailed for 10 years in 1963. He served his term with leaders such as Mandela on Robben Island, where he learned to read.

During his rise to party leader in 2007, his trademark song was "Bring Me My Machine Gun." As president, he reads prepared texts woodenly but projects more warmth and charisma than his aloof and cool predecessor, Thabo Mbeki.

Yet Zuma hasn't been able to translate that warmer personality into mass popularity: Antigovernment protests in South Africa over lack of services or evictions occur almost daily.

Presidents here aren't elected by the people, but by the members of Parliament who belong to the majority party. In the ANC, the presidency is decided by about 4,500 branch party delegates who gather every five years to elect a leader, who is then rubber-stamped as president by ANC lawmakers.

Economic analyst Azar Jammine says seven more years of Zuma as president would damage South Africa's economy, already rattled by the miner strikes, which cut gold and platinum production and growth. South Africa's debt and currency ratings were recently downgraded by Standard & Poor's and Moody's, with both agencies citing poor leadership.

Another Zuma term "would imply another five years of suboptimal performance, muddling along," Jammine said. "He is unable to choose which way to go. He'd rather keep the peace than decide what to do."

"He's been a disastrous president because he has not exhibited either the managerial or the political capacity to govern decisively," Gevisser, an Open Society fellow based in Paris, said during a recent visit to South Africa.

He said the ANC's leadership wrangling, under both Mbeki and Zuma, had paralyzed the party for months.

Zuma's opponents in the ANC have coalesced around Kgalema Motlanthe, Zuma's deputy who served as president for several months after the party toppled Mbeki as president in 2008.

Motlanthe hasn't said whether he will run against Zuma. But opposition factions — one is dubbed the Anyone but Zuma group by South African media — are engaged in a furious, last-minute struggle over this leadership vote.

Gevisser said Zuma came to power with the support of a coalition of diffuse ANC interests united only by their hatred of Mbeki. That alliance fractured as soon as Zuma took over.

"So his priority has been to keep the party together instead of governing," Gevisser said, adding that political instability and labor unrest are "a major disincentive for investment."

"I think he's demonstrated he's not up to the job," he said.

The current leadership battle has been dirtier and more brutal than the 2007 conference that ousted Mbeki as party leader. There are accusations of blatant fraud and ghost members in ANC branches, with Zuma's stronghold of KwaZulu-Natal province gaining about 100,000 members in the space of 30 days, according to a party audit.

Branch meetings to nominate leadership candidates have seen chairs and punches thrown, guns pulled, people shot and branches threatening to take party leaders to court.

Meanwhile, analyst William Gumede said, even some of the president's supporters have realized that if Zuma hangs on, it will probably damage the ANC's chances in 2014 national elections.

According to Gumede, sections of the pro-Zuma faction have sought a compromise deal that would see him stay on as party president, stepping aside for Motlanthe or another senior figure, such as businessman Cyril Ramaphosa, who would become the country's president after the 2014 elections. Secret negotiations for a deal have been reported in South African media.

"What the Zuma camp has understood is that Zuma may be an electoral liability going forward," Gumede said. "He may control the inner structures of the ANC, but they fear the ANC may drop heavily in the 2014 election."

Zuma's bottom line, Gumede said, is protecting himself, ensuring that the corruption charges, over a 1999 weapons deal, aren't reinstated and guarding his family's sprawling business empire, which has rapidly expanded since he took office.

Critics outside the ANC often grumble that the 4,500 ANC delegates who in effect vote in the country's leader aren't democratically representative of all South Africans. But according to Gumede, the branch delegates, who tend to be mayors, council members or powerful local businessmen dependent on government contracts for their wealth, aren't even representative of ordinary branch members, many of whom are poor or unemployed.

"Instinctively the [national conference] delegates will tend to vote for the incumbent, fearing that if they vote for the anti-Zuma candidate, they may not get reelected as local councilor or they may not get local business. If you are an ordinary branch member and you're unhappy with Zuma, it's very hard, through this branch system, to change the leader," he said, adding that the ANC's internal democratic failings would eventually impact its popular vote.

Despite that, analysts predict the ANC will continue to command a majority for years to come.

Most analysts are predicting that Zuma will retain the leadership at the ANC conference. But some observers question whether Motlanthe would turn things around should he run for the leadership and manage to become South Africa's president.

The Limpopo textbooks crisis, for instance, became a media symbol for government failure after Zuma and his government did nothing for months. Yet Motlanthe implied that the public had to take a share of the blame because it didn't make enough of a fuss.

In an August speech, he said the textbook crisis was "indicative of a passive citizenry whose silence is complicit in the commission of such a tragic folly."

Analyst Malala said in a newspaper column that Motlanthe appeared "as much of a failure" as Zuma.

"We are led by men who are in office, but not in power, men who are interested in enjoying the fruits of being in office, but ... do not know how to become agents of change," he wrote.

"They are nothing men. They have achieved nothing and will achieve nothing. Our children are the

victims of these men's failure to be agents of change."

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South Africa makes progress in HIV, AIDS fight; AIDS-related deaths drop by 32 percent

December 2, 2012/By CARLEY PETESCH/Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG — In the early '90s when South Africa's Themba Lethu clinic could only treat HIV/AIDS patients for opportunistic diseases, many would come in on wheelchairs and keep coming to the health center until they died.

Two decades later the clinic is the biggest anti-retroviral, or ARV, treatment center in the country and sees between 600 to 800 patients a day from all over southern Africa. Those who are brought in on wheelchairs, sometimes on the brink of death, get the crucial drugs and often become healthy and are walking within weeks.

"The ARVs are called the 'Lazarus drug' because people rise up and walk," said Sue Roberts who has been a nurse at the clinic, run by Right to Care in Johannesburg's Helen Joseph Hospital, since it opened its doors in 1992. She said they recently treated a woman who was pushed in a wheelchair for 3 kilometers (1.8 miles) to avoid a taxi fare and who was so sick it was touch and go. Two weeks later, the woman walked to the clinic, Roberts said.

Such stories of hope and progress are readily available on World AIDS Day 2012 in sub-Saharan Africa where deaths from AIDS-related causes have declined by 32 percent from 1.8 million in 2005 to 1.2 million in 2011, according to the latest UNAIDS report.

As people around the world celebrate a reduction in the rate of HIV infections, the growth of the clinic, which was one of only a few to open its doors 20 years ago, reflects how changes in treatment and attitude toward HIV and AIDS have moved South Africa forward. The nation, which has the most people living with HIV in the world at 5.6 million, still faces stigma and high rates of infection.

"You have no idea what a beautiful time we're living in right now," said one of the doctors at the clinic, Dr. Kay Mahomed, over the chatter of a crowd of patients outside her door.

President Jacob Zuma's government decided to give the best care, including TB screening and care at the clinic, and not to look at the cost, she said. South Africa has increased the numbers treated for HIV by 75 percent in the last two years, UNAIDS said, and new HIV infections have fallen by more than 50,000 in those two years. South Africa has also increased its domestic expenditure on AIDS to \$1.6 billion, the highest by any low-and middle-income country, the group said.

Themba Lethu clinic, with funding from the government, the United States Agency for International Development and the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, is now among some 2,500 anti-retroviral therapy facilities in the country that treat approximately 1.9 million people.

"Now, you can't not get better. It's just one of these win-win situations. You test, you treat and you get better, end of story," Mahomed said.

But it hasn't always been that way.

In the 1990s South Africa's problem was compounded by years of misinformation by President Thabo Mbeki, who questioned the link between HIV and AIDS, and his health minister, Manto Tshabalala-Msimang, who promoted a "treatment" of beets and garlic.

Christinah Motsoahae first found out she was HIV positive in 1996, and said she felt nothing could be done about it.

"I didn't understand it at that time because I was only 24, and I said, 'What the hell is that?'" she said.

Sixteen years after her first diagnosis, she is now on anti-retroviral drugs and her life has turned around. She says the clinic has been instrumental. To handle the flow of patients, they're electronically checked in at reception, several nursing stations with partitions are set up to check vital signs and a new machine even helps dispense medicine to the pharmacists.

"My status has changed my life, I have learned to accept people the way they are. I have learned not to be judgmental. And I have learned that it is God's purpose that I have this," the 40-year-old said.

She works with a support group of "positive ladies" in her hometown near Krugersdorp. She travels to the clinic as often as needed and her optimism shines through her gold eye shadow and wide smile. "I love the way I'm living now."

Motsoahae credits Nelson Mandela's family for inspiring her to face up to her status. The anti-apartheid icon galvanized the AIDS community in 2005 when he publicly acknowledged his son died of AIDS.

Motsoahae is among about a hundred people waiting in a room to see one of about 10 doctors or to collect medications. A woman there rises up, slings her baby behind her back in a green fleece blanket, and tries to leave by zigzagging through the intercrossing legs of those seated.

None of Motsoahae's children was born with HIV. The number of children newly infected with HIV has declined significantly. In six countries in sub-Saharan Africa — South Africa, Burundi, Kenya, Namibia, Togo and Zambia —the number of children with HIV declined by 40 to 59 percent between 2009 and 2011, the UNAIDS report said.

But the situation remains dire for those over the age of 15, who make up the 5.3 million of those infected in South Africa. Fear and denial lend to the high prevalence of HIV for that age group in South Africa, said the clinic's Kay Mahomed.

About 3.5 million South Africans still are not getting therapy, and many wait too long to come in to clinics or don't stay on the drugs, said Dr. Dave Spencer, who works at the clinic .

"People are still afraid of a stigma related to HIV," he said, adding that education and communication are key to controlling the disease.

Themba Lethu clinic reaches out to the younger generation with a teen program.

Tshepo Hoato, 21, who helps run the program found out he was HIV positive after his mother died in 2000. He said he has been helped by the program in which teens meet one day a month.

"What I've seen is a lot people around our ages, some commit suicide as soon as they find out they are HIV. That's a very hard stage for them so we came up with this program to help one another," he

said. "We tell them our stories so they can understand and progress and see that no, man, it's not the end of the world."

Bharti eyeing South Africa again; seeks to acquire local operators: report

Press Trust of India/hprofit.ndtv.com / December 03, 2012

Johannesburg: Bharti Airtel is trying to get a South African partner again, three years after its failed bid to link up with local giant MTN, a media report has said.

The weekly Sunday Times, citing an unnamed source close to Bharti Airtel Africa, said the company is still seeking expansion on the African continent after it gained a presence in 15 north, west and east African countries following its acquisition of Zain Telecom's business on the continent soon after the MTN deal fell through.

Industry speculation has been that Bharti Airtel wants to make a bid for either Cell C, the third largest mobile company in South Africa, or latest entrant 8ta, an offshoot of former state monopoly Telkom, the report said.

With 8ta battling to gain a foothold, analysts felt that any bid by Bharti would be for Cell C instead, it added. The report said Cell C and Bharti Airtel did not comment on the latest speculation, while Telkom said there had been no approach made to it.

There has also been speculation in recent weeks about a merger between Cell C and 8ta after Cell C Chief Executive Officer Alan Knot-Craig hinted that a consolidation within the industry in South Africa was inevitable for it to be viable.

Analyst Chris Gilmour told the weekly that although Cell C would be a likelier acquisition for Bharti Airtel than 8ta, it would probably be more expensive as it had a well-established infrastructure and customer base. 8ta's main attraction to Bharti Airtel would be the access it currently has to a lot of 2.3GHz spectrum, which was a legacy from Telkom.

But the industry regulator was unlikely to approve 8ta selling off this spectrum to anyone buying the company, especially since it was awarded to Telkom and not 8ta directly after hot contestation and protests by the other operators in the industry, according to analyst Arthur Goldstuck of Worlwideworx, who advised Bharti Airtel to look at other ventures in South Africa instead.

South Africa: Zuma Saddened By Former Chief Justice, Chaskalson Death

2 December 2012/SAnews.gov.za (Tshwane)

Pretoria — President Jacob Zuma has learned with great sadness of the passing away of former President of the Constitutional Court and former Chief Justice, Arthur Chaskalson.

The first President of the Constitutional Court after the dawn of democracy passed away on Saturday.

"On behalf of all South Africans, we reach out to his wife and family as we salute a life inseparable from South Africa's march to freedom

"We wish the Chaskalson family strength during this difficult time. Our thoughts are with them," he said.

President Zuma said Chaskalson's life embraced a courageous role in the fight against apartheid, in the negotiated transition and the shaping of the constitutional democracy as well as in the building of the post-apartheid society based on reconciliation, reconstruction and a South African nationhood.

As the first President of the Constitutional Court, he leaves a special imprint on the building of a united, non-racial, non-sexist constitutional democracy.

Former President Nelson Mandela appointed him in 1994 as the first President of the Constitutional Court and between 2001 and 2005 he served as South Africa's Chief Justice.

Chaskalson was part of Mandela's defence team from the Rivonia Trial for sabotage in which he and seven others were sentenced to life imprisonment.

He and his colleagues persuaded Advocate Bram Fischer to lead the defence and together they grappled with the possibility that the accused might be sentenced to death.

Throughout his life, Chaskalson worked on the legal defence of opponents of apartheid and in 1978 helped to establish the Legal Resources Centre of which Mandela once said: "this remarkable institution perhaps did more than any other in the 1970's and 1980's to challenge executive abuses, and to be a legal voice for the voiceless."

TANZANIA :

Tanzania: Despite Gains, Aids War Must Continue

3 December 2012/Tanzania Daily News (Dar es Salaam)

Editorial

THE government has announced highly ambitious anti-AIDS plans that are tailored to eliminate new infections by the year 2015 and bring to a halt all deaths that are caused by opportunistic ailments.

Indeed, this is a heartfelt state undertaking. The initiative envisages greater access to medical treatment for people living with HIV and AIDS and a more impassioned call on every individual to behave responsibly and steer clear of the possibility of contracting the formidable disease.

The nation has signed an agreement with the Global Fund that will see 486bn/- being channelled into the Mother to Child HIV transmission programme, which is tailored to whittle down the infection rate from six to four per cent. But this is not the end of the story.

The campaign also seeks offering anti-retroviral drugs to everyone who needs them. Testing kits and other paraphernalia will be made available in all major health centres. It is accolades for the government, but it should not rest on its laurels.

The terrain will remain rugged and tough for a long time to come. When speaking to the nation on World AIDS Day, President Jakaya Kikwete emphasized that everyone should behave responsibly.

He exhorted parents to enlighten their children, especially older children, on the impact of AIDS on families, communities and the nation. He also asked religious leaders to keep reminding their congregations of the need to remain healthy.

The AIDS pandemic has been around for 26 years so far. This being the case, it is rational to assume that every adult Tanzanian knows about this dangerous and highly offensive disease. It is a disease that packs a killer punch and one that shames its victims.

This dreadful spectacle notwithstanding, some people still indulge in unprotected sex dare-devil style. This nation still has prostitutes, who work the nights charging a greater fee for unprotected sex and a much greater one for anal sex.

This is a cardinal sin that smells to High Heaven. This nation will never bring HIV infections to zero by the year 2015 if some of us behave like unwitting morons. It is high time the state fought these so-called commercial sex workers and their patrons more vigorously.

Even seemingly upright men and women in this country sometimes behave irresponsibly. Some men visit brothels that are mushrooming in smelly, dank alleys in urban centres and buy what they perceive to be social services from whores risking their lives in the process.

Some so-called guest houses are notorious for hosting men and women who fornicate even during working hours, imperiling their lives. This too is a cardinal sin that should be fought really hard by the state. With this kind of irrational behaviour prevailing in society AIDS infections will never be shot down.

It is imperative, however, to mention here that Tanzania has succeeded in scaling down HIV infections so far. A recent United Nations report shows that Tanzania reduced AIDS-related deaths by 48,000 annually between 2005 and last year. This is encouraging news. The trend must be sustained if the quest to bring the infections down to zero by 2015 is to bear fruit.

Tanzania: 'Road Transport Needs Heavy Investment'

By Ludovick Kazoka/Tanzania Daily News (Dar es Salaam)/3 December 2012

HEAVY investment is needed to enable the Tanzania Zambia Railway Authority (Tazara) compete with road transporters as the latter enjoys the lion's share of 85 per cent of the services between the two countries.

Tazara Managing Director, Mr Akashambatwa Mbikusita-Lewanika, made the call in Dar es Salaam recently, saying if Tazara's infrastructure would be improved the jointly owned railway line would grab the market because roads are prone to insecurity.

"Tazara boast of having security system to ensure safety of cargo while on transit. Trained and armed police personnel escort traffic at all times," said the Tazara boss while presenting a paper on Tazara operations to a team of investors willing to invest in Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania (SAGCOT).

According to SAGCOT Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Mr Geoffrey Kirenga, a team of investors was in the country to observe opportunities to invest in the SAGCOT and that the corridor is useful for rice and sugar cane agriculture.

"The area guarantees an investor with enough rainfalls with river which do not dry throughout a

year hence to be useful for the sugar cane and rice agriculture," he said. Mr Raymond Mbilinyi, who is the acting Executive Director of Tanzania Investment Centre, said the investors were impressed to invest in sugar cane growing at Gwata area in Kisarawe District, Coast Region.

"The investment will be a win-win situation whereby the public will be involved in the investment and no one will be evicted from the land," he said. Tazara General Manager, Eng. Abdallah Shekimweri, said the investment would provide Tazara with opportunity to expand its incomes because it will provide transport between the areas of investment to Dar es Salaam.

A team of 140 Chinese experts has already embarked on investigation on a study to establish the problems that are afflicting Tazara. The study is aimed at recommending improvements to the jointly owned railway line. The team will submit its report in June next year.

Tanzania: HIV/Aids - East Africa Vaccine and Fake Drugs Challenges

By Nick K'oyoo/Tanzania Daily News (Dar es Salaam)/1 December 2012

column

It is a day dedicated to the remembrance of the millions of people infected, afflicted & affected by the scourge of HIV Aids. This year's World Aids Day comes at an opportune time for East Africa albeit in an ironic way.

While statistics in the region show falling infection rates which is positive a development, the reports that an Arusha-based manufacturer may have been involved in the manufacture of fake life prolonging HIV drugs, are part of the worrying trend worldwide, where drug manufacturers are cashing in on the desperation of the afflicted, to find quick-working but effective solutions to the HIV AIDS menace.

In East Africa today the threat goes far beyond a single manufacturer. It is no hidden secret that East Africa has been for a while now, the dumping ground of fake, dangerous drugs that masquerade for cheaper alternatives to the more expensive but effective drugs in the market.

The drug market in East Africa is dominated by briefcase companies and individuals with next to none knowledge of what should be an expert's field. They take advantage of the poor or absent drugs procurement policies and policing the latter, which is affected by lack of capacity.

They take advantage of a huge lack of technical capacity with Tanzania having less than 800 pharmacists for a population of 44m while Kenya has 2,000 pharmacists for a population of 41m. The lucrative drugs trade does not just involve individuals out to make quick money.

It is suspected that some of the licensing officials in East Africa's Medical Stores Departments (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda all have these entities) and the bureau in charge of quality i.e. UBS in Uganda, KBS in Kenya and TBS in Tanzania are involved in this sick trade.

The lack of capacity plus unscrupulous business men has led to a deadly combination where drugs with no known treatment efficacy have found their way into the East Africa market allegedly from manufacturers in India, China among other East and Far Eastern countries where cottage industries produce drugs with abandon. The easier root is to blame the manufacturer of fake drugs.

However, the reality is much more complex than that. Where a supply chain mechanism has been created for a ready & willing market, the complicity calls for a much more serious approach to

ensure lives are not lost through the usage of fake, non effective drugs which cause drug resistance and thus make treatment a much more complicated and expensive affair.

These deterrence measures must include effective legislation, upgrade and integration of the East African Standards Bureau into one entity with similar standards of verification. They must include the enlistment into Bureau of Standards of Pharmacists and drug specialists and the investment of more funds into research and development so as to produce more effective drugs inexpensively.

KENYA :

Kenya: Uhuru, Ruto On the Ballot Boosts Raila's Chances for Top Job

By Sospeter Otieno/The Star/1 December 2012

The technical move by the plaintiffs in the integrity case that would have blocked URP and TNA leaders Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto from being on the ballot should at last serve as a relief to ODM.

This is because this is the duo that though seems formidable, gives ODM a narrative that's easiest to help it build a broad-based coalition that can bring together the largest part of the nation.

Without them in the ballot, they could have thrown their weight behind say Musalia Mudavadi, and if Uhuru could deliver the Kibaki 2007 Central and Upper Eastern voting blocks, then add Western votes, they would just need 40 percent in other provinces to romp home to victory against Raila's ODM.

My experience in leadership has showed me that it helps to give the people you lead an enemy against which they can unite.

That is what George Bush did against Al-Gore with the images of the 911 attacks, and certainly Raila can benefit from such a strategy.

It is also the reason why Drill Sergeants at military academies want to be the bad guy- so that the entire platoon can be united against them.

That is why ODM has to fast find an enemy issue around which a large swathe of the nation can rally around. I don't see any other unifying factor than the sanctions narrative.

That is why The Uhuru- Ruto duo greatly influences the 2013 election message. The fact that any article enumerating the consequences of sanctions from Caroline Mutoko to Rashid Wanjala has gone viral is testament to the potency of making sanctions a horse in 2013.

Uhuru and Ruto pairing up, effectively makes sanctions a horse whereby Raila can position himself as the horse that can insulate Kenyans against sanctions, and the Uhuru- Ruto ticket could be de-marketed as the hell-bound ticket to sanctions.

The good thing about this is that sanctions have no tribe. It is therefore my opinion that the Uhuru- Ruto ticket makes it less about the duo's tribes and more about the consequences and the moral angle of their presidencies.

That's a good thing for Kenya. It moves the national debate to the next level. It makes it a test-case of whether elections in Kenya can be really won based on stark choices between prosperity and stagnation.

ODM's challenge then becomes restricting the Uhuru- Ruto's support to North Rift and Central Kenya while winning the rest of Kenya into its 2013 column. That becomes easier with two polarising figures like Uhuru and Ruto on the same ticket.

The Uhuru-Ruto pair is very a polarising ticket which is akin to having Lady Gaga and Sarah Palin on the same ticket. It is an antagonistic ticket which brings their bases, Central Kenya and Rift Valley together in an immiscible solution, but doesn't make them gel as evidenced by the so called chants of Achicha, while also driving away a large swathe of the nation. Growing it beyond the duo's political bases becomes very tough.

Raila, if he can bring on board Kalonzo, it can be a synergistic ticket, meaning the sum total of the two is larger than the two of them in isolation.

This is because even though Kalonzo's support seems little, it's because of his 2007 ODM walkout and the eventual katikati affair, and if he can be Raila's running mate his otherwise nationwide support scattered among the numerous candidates could begin to view him differently.

Without scandals in his name, he deals the Raila reform message less damage. For the Uhuru-Ruto ticket, you have the Achicha rebellion in Rift Valley which takes away some votes from the duo.

It is easy to see why the sum total of the two might even be smaller than the sum of Uhuru and Ruto support bases in isolation, because again you have the G7 fall out over positions.

It is easier to see why TNA strategists were initially cagey about a Ruto running mate idea. And with Uhuru's surrogates controlling key powerful dockets like Finance, Justice, Defence, Internal Security, and Foreign Affairs and makes it easy to associate Uhuru with the failures in the economic and security fronts.

Add to this Ruto's deep KANU roots and you have an alliance of an effectively past/status quo alliance ticket that can be marketed as such.

That is why the duo's ticket is an alliance that grants Kenyans the R. Kelly's wish of "if I could turn back the hands of time" to the KANU era (read Ruto) and also removes the battery from Kenya's clock of progress (read status quo).

Uhuru's game seems to be crystallizing, now let's hang on and wait to see if Raila's would be a knock out counter-punch.

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Kenyans Urged to Know Their HIV/Aids Status

By Judie Kaberia/Capital FM (Nairobi)/1 December 2012

"The only solution to effectively respond to HIV/AIDS is to know your status," this the message National AIDS and STD Control Programme (NASCO) Head Dr Maina Kahindo sent to Kenyans a day before the globe marked the World AIDS Day.

Under the theme of 'getting to zero' Kenya will be focusing on zero new infections, zero discrimination and zero HIV/AIDS related deaths.

"By zero numbers we mean HIV infections can be stopped. We ensure the virus is not transmitted to a HIV negative person. But the only way to do this is if people know their HIV status," Kahindo explained during an interview with Capital FM News.

"Can we have all Kenyans knowing their HIV status so that those who will test positive and require treatment can start early? We need to know how many are positive so that we can ensure their immunity is sustained," he appealed.

Although Kenya has made tremendous progress in the fight against HIV, the biggest impediment that continues to frustrate these efforts is the unwillingness and ignorance to undergo a HIV test.

According to Kahindo, only 40 percent of Kenyans know their status.

"Every year we screen about 6 million people, out of these people, 60 percent of them are coming for a retest, only 40 percent are coming for the first time. We are seeing the same people trying to confirm their status but not increasing the number of people who want to know their status," he said.

"Six out of 10 Kenyans cannot tell you their status."

He insisted that with people knowing their status Kenya can embark on interventions that can prevent, re-infections and new infections and at the same time provide early treatment for those already infected.

The main intervention is to ensure that people engage in safe sexual practices.

Other measures include prevention of transmitting the virus from a mother to child during pregnancy, birth and breastfeeding.

"We have a group of people between 12 and 18 years who are HIV positive but had never engaged in sex, where did they get it from? It was acquired from their mothers when they were born. Some are living innocently knowing they are negative. They start their sexual lives when they don't know their status," he regretted.

Kahindo further advised people to engage in protected sex by using condoms or abstain from sex.

"If someone is HIV positive they have to realise that is their status and they need to contribute to the fight against HIV to ensure they do not transmit it to somebody else," he advised.

According to Kahindo, those who test positive require to be put on early anti-retroviral treatment to boost their immunity levels, protect them from opportunistic infections and also reduce chances of transmitting the disease should they engage in unprotected sex.

He expressed concerns that key populations such as commercial sex workers and same sex partners have a high HIV prevalence and also an increasing number of new infections.

In marking the day, the Public Health and Sanitation Ministry plans a grand event at the Afraha Stadium in Nakuru.

Dr Kahindo said that HIV testing will also be free in all government health centres across the country with an aim of encouraging Kenyans to know their status.

Kenya: Raila's Coalition Will Carry the Day

By Sam Omwenga/The Star/ 1 December 2012

Opinion

All eyes are on Prime Minister Raila to see if he can once again put together a winning coalition.

Although Kenya has been independent since 1964, the year 1992 marks the first time one can say Kenyans had a real say in who their president would be through the ballot but even then barely so.

Prior to that year's elections, both Moi and Kenyatta before him were elected and reelected to office in an exercise that is more aptly describable as coerced ratification than people having a real choice as to who they preferred to lead them.

The irony here is--and misleadingly so--these two men, Moi and Kenyatta were at one time or another very popular during their respective tenures even as they presided over the worsening of the country's economic and living conditions.

To be sure, Kenyans were ready to get rid of Moi in 1992 yet he won the presidency with only 37% because he effectively used state machinery to silence the opposition while otherwise rendering it impotent.

Some of the tactics Moi used relying on state instruments and machinery included heavily restricting and monitoring political rallies; deliberately failing to issue identity cards to millions of eligible voters thereby effectively disenfranchising them as they could not be registered to vote without the cards; making sure the state owned radio and TV broadcast disseminated only good news about KANU and its candidates while the few independently owned media houses were scared to death in publishing anything other than the same good news; using public funds to the tune of more than 60 million shillings then to bribe and buy votes and masterminding government sponsored pre-electoral ethnic cleansing and violence during elections in targeted areas that suppressed the vote sufficiently to allow Moi the less than majority victory.

Equally if not more significant in Moi remaining in office in 1992 despite an overwhelming sense of desire by the public to boot him out of office across the country was the splintered opposition that ensured Moi's less than majority victory besides rigging and heavy use of state machinery.

These same tactics and more were again employed in 1997 to ensure Moi remained in office despite the majority people's wishes to the contrary.

It was only in 2002 that the opposition in Kenya got it together and finally managed to defeat Moi and his Uhuru project with Raila key in that outcome with his Kibaki tosha declaration.

However, looking back, Moi did not survive the onslaught of multi-partysim against his regime and widespread dissatisfaction with his repressive rule merely by using state instruments and machinery to crush the opposition.

Rather, Moi in equal measure survived politically as long as he did by utilizing basic political survival skills such as first, ensuring his primary coalition of key supporters in key constituencies

remained intact and secondly, upping the ante in the use of propaganda and other tactics to destroy opponents he could not otherwise arrest and throw in jail.

In 1992, for example, KANU experienced a high profile defection of a number of its ministers and personalities to the opposition, primarily to the Democratic Party, except for a few who joined Jaramogi's Ford Kenya.

Among these were then Health Minister, and now President Mwai Kibaki, then Education Minister Peter Oloo Aringo, then Tourism Minister George Muhoho and Njenga Karume, Mwangi Gachui, Mwangi Thuo, George Mwicigi, Kuria Kinyanjui who were all assistant ministers.

Rather than panic after suffering these high profile defections, Moi instead hunkered down and engineered a counter strategy to minimize or altogether blunt any impact from these defections.

As it turned out, Moi's strategy was two-fold but very simple: smear those who defected while propping up their opponents in their respective constituencies of course maximizing the use of state resources to this end.

The strategy worked for with the exception of Kibaki, all these high profile defectors lost their parliamentary seats to newcomers making the case it's not the defections that matter; rather, what matters is what the leader of the affected party does in response in ensuring his or core mission of winning remains intact.

Raila and ODM more than any other party find themselves in the unenviable albeit peculiar position where KANU was in 1992 and subsequent years in that ODM's members are the target of other parties, especially TNA seeking their defection to them and almost limitless money is being spent for this purpose.

Although there has been a couple or so of major defection and a number of low profile defections from ODM, Raila and ODM have however thus far demonstrated like Moi before, they have the requisite skills--but unfortunately not matching resources--to weather the storm.

With the deadlines for these inter-party defections to legally occur fast approaching on December 4, 2012, one can but conclude barring the extremely unusual, the worst of these defections has already occurred, which means Raila and ODM must now focus on both solidifying their base support while never giving up on prying away key members and personalities from the other parties.

All eyes are on Raila to see if he can once again put together a winning coalition the supreme coalition-building strategist he is as he has proven he can over and over.

When the opposition splintered in 1992 and 1997, Raila became instrumental in putting together a coalition of support that won in 2002 and made Kibaki president; when Kibaki reneged on the MOU leading up to the Kibaki tosha declaration, Raila put together a different coalition that defeated the Kibaki camp in the 2005 referendum that included none other than Uhuru Kenyatta himself; when Raila faced off with Kibaki in the 2007 general elections, he once again put together another formidable coalition that arguably won the presidency in 2007; and finally when a peaceful resolution was reached following PEV, Raila formed a coalition government with Kibaki and once again became instrumental in putting together a coalition that passed the new constitution in 2010.

In all these cases, Raila did not depend just on his own political backyard: rather it was his ability to create a national coalition of interests around his agenda of the time; and having done it so often before, he can do it again.

As such, these lesser players the likes of Uhuru, Ruto, Mudavadi, e.t.c. can scheme all they want, but in the end, it is the coalition that Raila will ultimately craft which will win the day - his success rate is four out of four; and not one of his coalitions has ever failed to carry the day.

The good thing about this is if Kenyans give him the nod as he believes they did in 2007, Raila has promised to summon all of his political and people's skills to fully implement the constitution and put the country on track to an unprecedented future of peace and prosperity.

As he has said, all he needs is one term to do all of that and that certainly isn't too much to ask from a man who has unquestionably already sacrificed and done so much for our beloved country.

Samuel Omwenga is an investment consultant and blogger in the US

Kenya: ICC Case Has Grave Implications On Uhuru

By Mugambi Kiai/The Star/ 1 December 2012

opinion

I am again constrained to address you directly because I fear that you and those close to you are deliberately and actively refusing to allow for an open, robust and candid debate about the implications of a win in the forthcoming general elections of your combined presidential campaign ticket with William Samoei Ruto.

Just the other day, you were hasty to label none other than the venerable Kofi Annan a 'tourist' while warning 'foreigners' to keep off Kenya's internal democratic affairs.

Kofi Annan's sin was to issue a statement to the effect that, "Everybody needs to ponder. Particularly when we are dealing with the leadership of a country and leadership that involves other countries outside Africa...there are implications."

Your reaction to this fact-of-the-matter assertion by Annan was not a curiosity. It is clearly part of your strategy to paralyse the much-needed debate around the implications of your presidential ticket in the forthcoming elections.

By labeling Kofi Annan a 'tourist' you effectively branded him a political busybody, non-entity and irrelevant. Nothing can be further from the truth.

Kofi Annan remains engaged in Kenya as the principal mediator of the 2008 Kenya National Dialogue and Mediation agreement; whose major political planks are still very much and actively in play.

His role did not end after the signing of the accord; with no implementation or dispute resolution mechanisms embedded in that accord it is critical that there is constant mediation between the two parties to the accord whenever disagreement occurs.

Moreover, Annan is a powerful voice within and amongst the international community. The labeling of him as a 'tourist' also sought to create the impression that he has no knowledge of the political and governance situation in Kenya, completely undermining his international platform and voice.

Again, there would be little wonderment why you would do so. This is because while you have

personally been very clear and concise that you will continue to cooperate and attend the hearings of your case at the International Criminal Court irrespective of a win in the presidential ballot at the forthcoming elections, there has been a quiet messaging from your supporters that your victory and ascendancy to the top political job in Kenya would beat off and nullify the charges at the ICC against you. Was it not your close political ally and confidant Njeru Githae, the Finance minister, who recently told his supporters that a vote for you would lead to all charges at The Hague being dropped?

Nothing can be further from the truth in this regard. The ICC has been crystal clear about this issue. Moreover, please recall that the majority of Kenya's friends in the international community were clearly unsupportive of the ill-advised, ineffectual and resource-gobbling shuttle diplomatic effort conducted by Vice President Kalonzo Musyoka earlier this year as he sought to get the cases related to Kenya at the ICC deferred.

There clearly will be implications for a presidential win of your presidential ticket in the forthcoming general elections. Whether this is said by Kofi Annan, the ICC, the US government, the UK government, the European Union, the African Union, the East African Community or ordinary watu (people) will not change this fact.

Moreover, this does not make those who are pointing this out to be part of an "imperial" conspiracy to deny you the opportunity of running for the office of the President of Kenya.

It is simply an honest, candid and brutal correlation of the current political governance situation in Kenya with the current trends within the international community with regard to political governance accountability.

The international community, of which Kenya is part, espouses certain value-credentials to guide its political interactions.

We are beholden to properly decipher these if we are to keep our proper place among the comity of nations. Of course, this is not to state that we are naïve enough not to understand how these values have been constantly and consistently undermined by the big international political powers.

Rather, it is to re-new our international roots from the platform of common political values that transcend our shared humanity; as part of the grounding and take-off on a trajectory to proper democratic governance in Kenya.

So what are these implications? Rasna Warah, in a recent press article, boldly listed a number of them. These include that Kenya could be labeled a pariah state by the international community (meaning a withdrawal of their financial and technical support - severely crippling Vision 2030); that Western nations may impose a trade embargo on Kenya (again totally puncturing the economy which as you know hinges heavily on foreign trade); the United Nations may pull out of Kenya and set up base in a neighboring country (the cost to the local economy would be exorbitant); like Zimbabweans under Robert Mugabe, Kenyans would start seeking refuge and jobs in neighbouring countries (sparking even more brain drain than Kenya can afford); the likelihood that your non-appearance and or non-cooperation would lead to severely restricted travel and inability to adequately represent Kenya at international forums which are critical to attract more investment in the country; the likelihood that your attendance at the trials in The Hague would mean absentee political governance with its attendant myriad of adverse outcomes; and the possibility in the event of conviction and sentencing, of forcing on Kenyans another costly and polarising presidential election.

There are other implications which, at this moment, I will not venture into due to lack of space. As you can see my dearly beloved King, we are not saying some of these things to be spiteful or to advance a certain undemocratic 'imperial' agenda.

Why would, for instance, our concern for the attainment in good time of Vision 2030 be part of an imperial plot to undermine you yet we know it is at the heart of the legacy of our current muthamaki Emilio Mwai Kibaki?

Mugambi Kiai is the Kenya Program Manager at the Open Society Initiative for Eastern Africa (OSIEA). The views expressed in this article are entirely his own and do not reflect the views of OSIEA

Kenya: UK Backs Polls Body On Diaspora Listing

By Wambui Ndonga/Capital FM (Nairobi)/2 December 2012

The British government now says that the Cabinet should not determine whether or not Kenyans in the Diaspora can vote in the forthcoming elections.

British High Commissioner Christian Turner told Capital FM News that the decision should be left to the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) saying it is the body mandated to facilitate the polls.

Justice Minister Eugene Wamalwa had earlier in the week made the controversial statement saying Kenyans living outside the country would not cast their vote due to logistical and time constraints.

"I would applaud the leadership of the IEBC Chairman because he has made it very clear that that is their decision because they are independent. Cabinet has made its views clear; the Constitution requests that Kenyans overseas are allowed to vote," he said.

"And I respect the Chairman's decision to choose what is practical and what is feasible and I will support him," he stressed.

Wamalwa made the announcement in Parliament on Tuesday saying that the Cabinet had arrived at the said conclusion after reviewing the tight electoral timelines set by the law.

He argued that the IEBC would not be able to register the large number of voters in the country in addition to those outside the country.

"Kenyans in the Diaspora will not vote in the 2013 elections. It is not practical to have them take part now. I am appealing to those who can come home to register to do so," said Wamalwa.

The IEBC however countered the Cabinet's decision accusing it of undermining its authority.

Chairman Issack Hassan said his commission would look at the situation and analyse the challenges on the ground before delivering the verdict.

Some Kenyans living in the United States are also planning to go to Court to revoke the decision.

"We have not yet given a date when we can start this exercise. We would like to finish our consultation with the government and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs so that we can categorically give actual dates and where we can start the exercise so that we realise this vote," he said.

Hassan also requested for the government's support saying it would help deliver the crucial vote.

"We cannot pull it off alone; we require the government and the embassies. So we will look at the Cabinet's decision, talk to our own staff and see whether we can make it," he said on Wednesday.

Turner also reminded Kenyans on the need for ensuring that the elections were peaceful saying the country could not afford to go back to where it was in 2007/2008.

He added that the British government was keenly following the events on the ground to ensure that peace was upheld.

"The post election violence was very damaging for the country. GDP growth dropped by over five percent so we in the United Kingdom are doing everything we can to work with the IEBC and the leaders of Kenya to get safe elections," he said.

"It is my strong belief that that is what the Kenyan people wish," he maintained.

Kenya: Officials Held As Nurses Strike Looms

By Margaret Wahito/Capital FM (Nairobi)/2 December 2012

There was drama at the Kenyatta National Hospital on Sunday after two nurses were held hostage in a room for over seven hours for allegedly inciting their colleagues to join the planned nurse's strike on Monday.

Wilson Ochieng, the National Nurses Association of Kenya (NNAK) chair at KNH and the association's Secretary General at KNH Purity Kagwira claim the hospital's management had ordered for their arrest which was against their constitutional rights.

NNAK National chairman Jeremiah Maina insists that the strike is still on for all the nurses including those at KNH despite what he termed as 'intimidation' by hospital's management.

"This morning I was called by my officials that they have been held hostage. The security of Kenyatta has taken the law in their hands to lock even our national officials. Its either two things, they change the constitution or register our nurses Union," Maina said.

They blamed the hospital's CEO Richard Lesiyampe for giving orders of the arrest adding that he did not have powers to so.

Police officers from the Kenyatta National Hospital police post had been involved in the matter to arrest the two after they were told that they were organizing an 'illegal meeting' at the hospital.

"Article 41 of the Constitution, Sub Article 2 (d) is extremely clear, that workers have a right to go on strike and not union. There is no single director of this hospital who has ever arrested a leader of any association in this country," said agitated Seth Panyako, Secretary General, Kenya National Union of Nurses.

However acting Deputy Director Administration Shitakha Ludmila immediately denied the claims of intimidation adding that the two had to be questioned in closed doors because it was against the rules of the hospital for them to spread inciting leaflets to their colleagues.

She said the management had to involve police officers and even lawyers for them to write a statement that was legal and that it was not an arrest.

"Our security personnel received reports that somebody is circulating leaflets in the hospital inciting the staff to strike. They requested those involved to come to administration to make a statement. So, no one was arrested and no one has, from our staff, as they claim," she defended.

However there is still uncertainty of whether the strike will materialize as intended with some of the nurses associations having different opinion concerning the strike.

So far the Kenya National Union of Nurses and the National Nurses Association of Kenya have confirmed to their members that the strike will be on from Monday until the government allows the nurses to have a registered trade union. The Kenya Progressive Nurses Association (KPNA) however is not supporting the strike.

The Union of Kenya Civil Servants (UKCS) and the Kenya Union of Domestic, Hotels, Educational Institutions, Hospitals and Allied Workers (KUDHEIHA) have on their part condemned the planned nurses' strike terming it illegal.

The unions say the associations do not have the mandate to lead a strike since they are not registered trade unions.

On Saturday Medical Services Minister Anyang Nyong'o appealed to the nurses not to go on strike as their grievances were being addressed.

But the nurses say the minister has nothing to do with it adding that they are demanding for a nurses' trade union which can only be addressed by the labour Ministry.

ANGOLA :

AU/AFRICA :

Egypt's top court shuts down, blames Islamist protesters

By Tamim Elyan and Tom Perry/Reuters/Sun Dec 2, 2012

CAIRO |

(Reuters) - Protests by Islamists allied to President Mohamed Mursi forced Egypt's highest court to adjourn its work indefinitely on Sunday, intensifying a conflict between some of the country's top judges and the head of state.

The Supreme Constitutional Court said it would not convene until its judges could operate without "psychological and material pressure", saying protesters had stopped the judges from reaching the building.

Several hundred Mursi supporters had protested outside the court through the night ahead of a

session expected to examine the legality of parliament's upper house and the assembly that drafted a new constitution, both of them Islamist-controlled.

The cases have cast a legal shadow over Mursi's efforts to chart a way out of a crisis ignited by a November 22 decree that temporarily expanded his powers and led to nationwide protests against him and his Muslim Brotherhood group.

The court's decision to suspend its activities appeared unlikely to have any immediate impact on Mursi's drive to get the new constitution passed in a national referendum on December 15.

Judges supervise voting in Egypt, and Mursi will need them to oversee the referendum.

But in a blow to the president, an influential body representing judges decided on Sunday not to oversee the vote, the state news agency reported. The Judges' Club's decisions are not binding on members, however.

Vice President Mahmoud Mekky said on Sunday he was confident the judges would perform that role, despite calls by Mursi's critics in the judiciary for a boycott.

Three people have been killed and hundreds wounded in protests and counter-demonstrations over Mursi's decree.

At least 200,000 of Mursi's supporters attended a rally at Cairo University on Saturday. His opponents are staging an open-ended sit-in in Cairo's Tahrir Square, the cradle of the uprising that toppled Hosni Mubarak in February 2011.

The National Salvation Front, an alliance of liberal, leftist and socialist opposition groups, called for protests in Tahrir Square on Tuesday against Mursi holding the referendum on what it branded an "illegitimate constitution".

Mursi and the Muslim Brotherhood, which propelled him to power in a June election, hope to end the crisis by pushing through the new constitution hastily adopted by the drafting assembly on Friday. The next day the assembly handed the text to Mursi, who called the referendum and urged Egyptians to vote.

"The Muslim Brotherhood is determined to go ahead with its own plans regardless of everybody else. There is no compromise on the horizon," said Hassan Nafaa, a professor of political science at Cairo University.

DEEP SUSPICION

Outside the Supreme Constitutional Court, Muslim Brotherhood supporters rallied behind the referendum date. "Yes to the constitution," said a banner held aloft by one protester. Chants demanded the "purging of the judiciary".

The interior minister told the head of the court that the building was accessible and that the protests were peaceful, according a statement from the ministry.

The protest reflected the deep suspicion harbored by Egypt's Islamists towards a court they see as a vestige of the Mubarak era. The same court ruled in June to dissolve the Muslim Brotherhood-led lower house of parliament.

Since then, several legal cases have challenged the legitimacy of the upper house of parliament and the 100-member constituent assembly that wrote the constitution.

Those against the upper house have focused on the legality of the law by which it was elected, while the constitutional assembly has faced a raft of court cases alleging that the way it was picked was illegal.

Mursi believes securing approval for the new constitution in a popular referendum will bury all arguments on the legality of the constituent assembly, as well as controversy over the text it worked through the night to finish on Friday.

It will also override the November 22 decree that drew concern from Western governments and a rebellion by sections of the judiciary. The decree shielded Mursi from judicial oversight.

While the Islamists' critics, including representatives of the Christian minority, have accused the Brotherhood of trying to hijack the constitution, investors appear to have seen Mursi's moves as a harbinger of stability. They were also relieved that Saturday's mass Islamist protest went off calmly.

The main stock market index, which lost a tenth of its value in response to Mursi's November 22 decree, rallied more than 2 percent when the market opened on Sunday.

"The events that took place through the weekend, from the approval of the final draft of the constitution and the president calling a referendum, gave some confidence to investors that political stability is on track," said Mohamed Radwan of Pharos Securities, an Egyptian brokerage.

OPPOSITION INFURIATED

But opposition parties have been infuriated by what they see as the Brotherhood's attempt to ram through a constitution that does not enjoy national consensus. Mursi's opponents warn of deeper polarization ahead.

Liberal figures, including former Arab League chief Amr Moussa, pulled out of the constituent assembly last month, as did Christian representatives.

The draft constitution contains Islamist-flavored language which opponents say could be used to whittle away human rights and stifle criticism. It forbids blasphemy and "insults to any person", does not explicitly uphold women's rights and demands respect for "religion, traditions and family values".

New York-based Human Rights Watch said the draft constitution protected some rights while undermining others.

The text limits presidents to two four-year terms, requires parliamentary approval for their choice of prime minister, and introduces some civilian oversight of the military - although not enough for critics. Mubarak ruled for three decades.

Mursi described it as a constitution that fulfilled the goals of the revolution that ended Mubarak's rule. "Let everyone -- those who agree and those who disagree -- go to the referendum to have their say," he said.

The Islamists are gambling that they will be able to secure a "Yes" vote by mobilizing their core support base.

(Writing by Tom Perry; Editing by Alistair Lyon and Roger Atwood)

L'Egypte sur un volcan

03-12-2012/metrofrance.com

La grève de la Cour constitutionnelle, composée de 19 juges et chargée d'examiner la constitutionnalité des lois, fait monter la pression sur le chef de l'Etat, Mohamed Morsi. A quinze jours du referendum sur la Constitution, l'Egypte est toujours coupée en deux.

L'Egypte est divisée en deux. De nouvelles manifestations ont embrasé le Caire samedi. Réunis sous les drapeaux noirs, salafistes et Frères musulmans, soutiens du président Mohamed Morsi, ont réussi à empêcher la Haute cour constitutionnelle d'examiner la légalité de la commission qui a adopté le projet de Constitution. Validé dans la nuit de jeudi à vendredi, le texte est au cœur de la fracture politique qui enflamme le peuple Egyptien.

Ce projet de constitution fait en effet des "principes de la charia" la "source principale de la législation". "Un coup d'Etat contre la démocratie", juge l'opposant Mohamed El Baradei, qui y voit une atteinte aux "libertés fondamentales". Surtout, il vient couronner l'important renforcement des pouvoirs que s'est déjà octroyé le président Morsi : après le législatif en août dernier, le président islamiste s'est placé au dessus de la justice par décret le 22 novembre, en interdisant tout recours contre ses propres décisions.

"La lutte continue"

La Haute cour constitutionnelle pourrait contester la légalité de la commission à l'origine du texte, dominée par des islamistes. Bloqués par les manifestants samedi, les juges ont qualifié les événements de "jour noir dans l'histoire de la justice égyptienne". Mais ils entendent bien maintenir la pression. L'audience aura bel et bien lieu, à une date ultérieure. Les juges égyptiens ont également fait savoir dimanche qu'ils ne superviseront pas le référendum sur le projet de Constitution prévu le 15 décembre. Dans le même temps, la Haute cour constitutionnelle égyptienne a lancé une grève illimitée pour protester contre les "pressions" des partisans du chef de l'Etat.

En attendant le référendum, "la lutte continue", a lancé hier l'opposant Mohamed El Baradei. Son parti, le Front de sauvegarde nationale (FSN), ainsi que d'autres groupes d'opposition, ont appelé le peuple à "utiliser tout moyen pacifique pour protester, dont la grève générale et la désobéissance civile". Un rassemblement est prévu mardi devant le palais présidentiel. Un "dernier avertissement".

Nigeria: des islamistes présumés attaquent chrétiens et églises dans le Nord

le 02-12-2012/AFP

KANO (Nigeria) (AFP) - Des attaques menées par des islamistes présumés du groupe nigérian Boko Haram ont une nouvelle fois violemment visé samedi et dimanche des chrétiens et des églises dans le nord du Nigeria, selon des témoins et des responsables locaux.

Dix personnes ont été égorgées par des islamistes présumés qui sont passés de maison en maison samedi soir dans le quartier chrétien de la ville de Chibok, dans le nord du pays, a-t-on appris dimanche auprès de responsables locaux.

"Les assaillants sont arrivés vers 21h en scandant +Alahu Akbar+ (Dieu est grand) (...) ils se sont

rendus dans des maisons qu'ils avaient identifiées dans un quartier à dominante chrétienne de la ville pour massacrer 10 personnes comme des moutons", a déclaré à l'AFP un responsable local qui a requis l'anonymat.

"Qui d'autre que des membres du (groupe islamiste) Boko Haram pourrait entrer dans les maisons et trancher la gorge de dix personnes", a déclaré un autre responsable local,

Chibok se trouve à 170 km de Maiduguri, le fief de Boko Haram.

"Les hommes sont arrivés en grand nombre et ils sont entrés dans des maisons qui avaient été choisies avec précision et ils ont massacré 10 personnes en criant +Allahu Akbar+", a rapporté Ezekiel Damina, un habitant du quartier de Myan, en périphérie de Chibok.

Dans le nord-est, au moins deux policiers ont été tués dimanche dans une attaque lancée par des islamistes présumés qui ont incendié trois églises et des postes-frontières dans la localité de Gamboru Ngala, selon des témoins.

"Des hommes armés, on pense qu'ils sont de Boko Haram, sont arrivés à cinquante en voiture et en moto, vers 8h30, et ils ont attaqué et brûlé des postes de sécurité à la frontière" avec le Cameroun, a déclaré à l'AFP, Modugana Ibrahim, un habitant.

"J'ai vu le cadavre de deux policiers en sortant de la ville, près du commissariat" incendié, a ajouté M. Ibrahim. L'information a été confirmée par un autre habitant, Sani Kani, qui a précisé qu'un des corps gisait sur le bas-côté de la route alors que l'autre était assis dans un fourgon de police.

Parmi les postes de sécurité brûlés, il y avait un commissariat, des locaux de l'immigration, des douanes et de la police secrète (SSS), ainsi qu'un poste de quarantaine, selon les habitants.

Les hommes armés "scandaient +Allahu Akbar+ (Dieu est grand), ils ont brûlé le poste de police et trois églises", a déclaré Hamidu Ahmad, un autre habitant, à l'AFP.

Selon les habitants, des échanges de tirs ont eu lieu à la mi-journée entre les assaillants et des renforts de police arrivés de Maiduguri, le fief de Boko Haram, à 140 km de là.

Les tirs ont cessé dans l'après-midi, mais la police avait quadrillé les rues de la ville, déserte. Les habitants étaient enfermés chez eux et beaucoup d'hommes avaient quitté la ville vers des villages voisins ou en direction du Cameroun, de peur de représailles des forces armées contre les civils.

Il y a deux semaines, des habitants disent avoir vu circuler des tracts islamistes, qui imposaient aux femmes de porter le hijab (voile islamique) et interdisaient la vente de cigarettes et l'ouverture de lieux de rencontre comme des cafés.

Boko Haram - dont le nom en langue Haoussa signifie "l'éducation occidentale est un péché" - a revendiqué de nombreuses attaques, notamment dans des lieux de culte chrétiens au moment du service du dimanche, dans le nord et le centre du Nigeria.

Les locaux et les effectifs de la police et de l'armée sont aussi souvent visés par le groupe islamiste.

Dimanche dernier, un double attentat suicide a fait onze morts et une trentaine de blessés dans une église protestante située dans l'enceinte d'une caserne dans la ville de Jaji (Etat de Kaduna), dans le nord.

Les violences attribuées à la secte et leur répression sanglante par les forces de l'ordre ont fait, selon les estimations, plus de 3.000 morts depuis 2009.

Le Nigeria, pays le plus peuplé d'Afrique, avec 160 millions d'habitants, et premier producteur de pétrole du continent, est divisé entre un Nord, majoritairement musulman, et un Sud à dominante chrétienne.

Égypte : les juges refusent de superviser le référendum

Le Point.fr / le 03/12/2012

Le pouvoir judiciaire s'est engagé dans un bras de fer avec le président islamiste Mohamed Morsi.

Les juges égyptiens ont fait savoir dimanche qu'ils ne superviseront pas le référendum sur le projet de Constitution prévu le 15 décembre, dans un contexte de fortes tensions entre le président Mohamed Morsi et le pouvoir judiciaire. Dans le même temps, la Haute Cour constitutionnelle égyptienne a lancé une grève illimitée pour protester contre les "pressions" des partisans du chef de l'État, qui ont encerclé ses locaux alors qu'elle entendait examiner la validité de la commission constituante.

"Tous les juges d'Égypte et les Clubs des juges hors de la capitale se sont accordés pour ne pas superviser un référendum sur un projet de Constitution et pour le boycotter", a annoncé le président du Club des juges, Ahmed al-Zind, dans un communiqué cité par l'agence de presse officielle Mena. Le Club des juges d'Égypte, qui représente des juges de l'ensemble de ce pays où les élections sont traditionnellement supervisées par ces magistrats, avait déjà appelé il y a une semaine à une grève illimitée dans tous les tribunaux jusqu'à ce que le président islamiste renonce au décret du 22 novembre par lequel il a considérablement renforcé ses prérogatives, mettant en particulier ses décisions à l'abri d'un recours en justice.

De son côté, peu avant de se mettre en grève dimanche, la Haute Cour constitutionnelle avait décidé de reporter une audience qui devait être consacrée, malgré un décret présidentiel annulant ces recours, à l'examen de la légalité de la Commission constituante et de la chambre haute du Parlement, toutes deux dominées par les islamistes, a dit une source judiciaire. Des centaines d'islamistes, partisans de Mohamed Morsi, ont manifesté devant le tribunal pour empêcher les juges de pénétrer dans le bâtiment, a déclaré l'un d'eux. Un journaliste a constaté qu'ils avaient bloqué les accès au bâtiment et la route principale y menant le long du Nil. Un responsable du ministère de l'Intérieur a démenti que les juges avaient été empêchés de pénétrer dans le bâtiment, affirmant que certains responsables avaient pu y entrer avec l'aide des forces de sécurité.

"Dernier avertissement"

"La volonté du peuple est plus forte que la volonté de quelques juges", a assuré un manifestant, Ismaïl Ahmed, 39 ans, en allusion au fait que de nombreux juges actuellement en place ont été nommés sous Hosni Moubarak, renversé par un soulèvement populaire en février 2011. Pour dénoncer ces "pressions psychologiques et matérielles", la Cour a annoncé dans un communiqué la suspension sine die de ses audiences, fustigeant l'"assassinat psychologique" de ses juges et qualifiant les événements de dimanche de "jour sombre dans l'histoire de la justice égyptienne".

Le pouvoir judiciaire est engagé dans une épreuve de force avec Mohamed Morsi depuis le décret du 22 novembre par lequel le président a interdit tout recours en justice contre ses propres décisions et contre la Commission constituante, boycottée par l'opposition de gauche et laïque ainsi que par les Églises chrétiennes. La grève de la Cour constitutionnelle, composée de 19 juges et chargée d'examiner la constitutionnalité des lois, fait monter la pression sur le chef de l'État. La

Constitution, qui doit être soumise à référendum le 15 décembre, est au centre de la plus grave crise en Égypte depuis l'arrivée de Mohamed Morsi au pouvoir en juin, et révèle des divisions de plus en plus profondes entre la mouvance islamiste et les groupes laïques.

Samedi, des centaines de milliers d'islamistes ont manifesté leur soutien à Mohamed Morsi, au lendemain d'un rassemblement massif de l'opposition contre l'accroissement des pouvoirs du président et le projet de Constitution, accusé de menacer la liberté de religion ou d'expression ainsi que les droits des femmes. Plusieurs partis et groupes de l'opposition ont annoncé dimanche un nouveau rassemblement qualifié de "dernier avertissement" mardi devant le palais présidentiel. Ces opposants avaient déjà appelé samedi à rejeter le décret et à réclamer l'annulation du projet de Constitution, adopté en quelques heures entre jeudi et vendredi après des mois de blocages.

Behind the Iron Dome: Key engineer tells how Israeli defense system saved lives

By Paul Alster/FoxNews.com/December 02, 2012

HAIFA, Israel – If there was one clear winner in the latest round of hostilities between Israel and Hamas, it was the Iron Dome -- the Jewish state's complex defense system that plucks rockets out of the sky before they can threaten civilian targets.

As daily rocket attacks from Gaza leapt from a handful to hundreds earlier this month, the vaunted system was deployed to near universal praise, intercepting an estimated 400 potentially deadly missiles. In an exclusive interview with FoxNews.com, "Ari," an Iron Dome engineer whose real name is being withheld, described what it is like to be part of the team of cutting edge technology developers, and the challenges faced by the team at Rafael Advanced Defense Systems, which worked with two other Israeli companies, Elta, and mPrest Systems on the program.

I'm an engineer and not a politician, but I can tell you there were a tremendous amount of lives saved," Ari said of the Iron Dome, a system for detecting launches, determining the rockets' trajectory and intercepting those that pose a threat with counter-missiles fired from strategically-located batteries.

The defense system, under development since 2007, had never been deployed until the latest round of hostilities broke out just after the U.S. elections. Israeli Defense Forces used airstrikes to take out several of Hamas' launch sites, many of which were stationed next to hospitals and schools. For several tense days, there were indications the Israeli army could go into Gaza with tanks. According to Ari, by neutralizing the impact of rocket attacks, the Iron Dome may have prevented a deadlier confrontation in the Palestinian territory and helped pave the way for a ceasefire.

"The [political] situation, had there been more casualties and more damage done, would have been greatly different," he said. "The lives beings saved were not only those of Israeli citizens and soldiers, but of the Palestinians in Gaza who would have tended to suffer the most had there been an incursion."

In the past, rockets from Hamas and Islamic Jihad in Gaza had never reached Tel Aviv. But after it became clear that more advanced Iranian technology had reached Gaza there was a furious rush to ensure the metropolis would be protected. It wasn't a sure thing that the Iron Dome would work, he said. There were kinks to be worked out even after it was deployed.

"It should take about two weeks to put up a battery" Ari recalled. "I spoke to people on the Thursday morning who were told they had to make a battery in Tel Aviv, and when I spoke to them on Sunday they told me they had finished on the Saturday afternoon. They didn't go to sleep for 48

hours...a group of about 10 people managed to do it all in just two days.”

Images of Iron Dome’s interceptors taking out incoming missiles over the skies of Tel Aviv and in the south of the country were beamed around the world and demonstrated clearly just how effective the system was in negating incoming enemy missiles.

“Iron Dome is an active defense system, which means that for each rocket that is fired at us we send up an interceptor to shoot down that rocket,” Ari said. “It sounds quite simple, but in order to do that we first need to be able to identify that there is a threat – you need radar for that - then you need to determine the trajectory of the threat, which direction it’s going to go, and if it’s going to hit a place we need to defend? If it’s going to fall in open fields we’re certainly not going to waste an interceptor on it”. Each interceptor costs in the region of \$50,000.

“If we do need to intercept, we have to determine the best way to do it and we always want to be sure that we blow up the warhead. All of these things fit together in a system of radar, fire controls, launchers, and interceptors, and all have to talk to each other and talk to a central command. This has to be very finely tuned.”

Back in 2007 when the revolutionary ‘Star Wars-like’ concept was commissioned, many people in Israel and around the world scoffed. Indeed, a team of U.S. military experts returned from a visit to Israel and reportedly stated, “This is something that cannot be done”.

Israel’s Defense Minister at the time was Amir Peretz of the left-wing Labor party, a man whose tenure in the key job was perceived as anything but a success. He was best known - and mercilessly ridiculed in the Israeli media - for viewing a military exercise through his binoculars without removing the lens covers. But the success of the Iron Dome has gone a long way toward vindicating Peretz.

New technology runs the constant risk of becoming obsolete, Ari said the Iron Dome team, and more recently Raytheon, a U.S.-based defense contractor, are well aware that staying ahead of the game in missile technology is crucial for their systems to continue to prove effective.

“Iron Dome has been modified numerous times since it became operational in 2011,” he said. “To make it better it is simply a case of modifying software; that’s what is so great about this system. There’s a tremendous amount of potential that we haven’t even begun to use.”

The "Magic Wand," or alternatively "David’s Sling," is the next stage of Israel’s defense program and is claimed to be capable of intercepting missiles that might come from Syria or anywhere else within a 125-mile radius. The third stage will be the combined Arrow 2 and Arrow 3 systems that will have the capacity to shoot down longer range missiles from countries such as Iran.

Iron Dome success hasn’t gone unnoticed by various governments around the world with speculation that countries such as South Korea, Singapore, and even Turkey are seriously interested in obtaining the system. Its ongoing development seems set to provide some peace of mind for Israeli citizens and may one day even be the trump card in persuading all those in the conflict to sit down and try to reach a negotiated solution.

"Iron Dome was not created to fight yesterday or today’s war. Iron Dome was created to fight tomorrow’s wars," Ari said. "We always try to stay eight or nine steps ahead of the enemy.”

UN/AFRICA :

UN internet regulation treaty talks begin in Dubai

By Leo Kelion Technology reporter/bbc.co.uk/ 3 December 2012

A UN agency is trying to calm fears that the internet could be damaged by a conference it is hosting.

Government regulators from 193 countries are in Dubai to revise a wide-ranging communications treaty.

Google has warned the event threatened the "open internet", while the EU said the current system worked, adding: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

But the agency said action was needed to ensure investment in infrastructure to help more people access the net.

"The brutal truth is that the internet remains largely [the] rich world's privilege, " said Dr Hamadoun Toure, secretary-general of the UN's International Telecommunications Union, ahead of the meeting.

"ITU wants to change that."

Internet governance

The ITU traces its roots back to 1865, pre-dating the United Nations. Back then the focus was on telegrams, but over ensuing decades governments have extended its remit to other communications technologies.

It helped develop the standards that made sure different countries' telephone networks could talk to each other, and continues to allocate global radio spectrum and communication satellite orbits.

The current event - the World Conference on International Telecommunications (Wcit) - marks the first time it has overseen a major overhaul of telecommunication regulations since 1988.

The ITU says there is a need to reflect the "dramatically different" technologies that have become commonplace over the past 24 years.

But the US has said some of the proposals being put forward by other countries are "alarming".

"There have been proposals that have suggested that the ITU should enter the internet governance business," said Terry Kramer, the US's ambassador to Wcit, last week.

"There have been active recommendations that there be an invasive approach of governments in managing the internet, in managing the content that goes via the internet, what people are looking at, what they're saying.

"These fundamentally violate everything that we believe in in terms of democracy and opportunities for individuals, and we're going to vigorously oppose any proposals of that nature."

He added that he was specifically concerned by a proposal by Russia which said member states should have "equal rights to manage the internet" - a move he suggested would open the door to

more censorship.

However - as a recent editorial in the Moscow Times pointed out - Russia has already been able to introduce a "black list" of banned sites without needing an international treaty.

The ITU's leader is also playing down suggestions that Russian demands will see him gain powers currently wielded by US-based bodies such as the internet name regulator Icann.

"There is no need for the ITU to take over the internet governance," said Dr Toure following Mr Kramer's comments.

Pay to stream

One of the other concerns raised is that the conference could result in popular websites having to pay a fee to send data along telecom operators' networks.

The European Telecommunications Network Operators' Association (Etno) - which represents companies such as Orange, Telefonica and Deutsche Telekom - has been lobbying governments to introduce what it calls a "quality based" model.

This would see firms face charges if they wanted to ensure streamed video and other quality-critical content download without the risk of problems such as jerky images.

Etno says a new business model is needed to provide service providers with the "incentive to invest in network infrastructure".

A leaked proposal by Cameroon which talks of network operators deserving "full payment" has been interpreted by some as evidence that it is sympathetic to the idea.

Mr Kramer has suggested that "a variety of nations in the Arab states" also supported the idea.

However, the US and EU are against it which should theoretically stop the proposal in its tracks.

The ITU has repeatedly said that there must be common ground, rather than just a majority view, before changes are introduced to the treaty.

"Voting in our jargon means winners and losers, and we cannot afford that," Dr Toure told the BBC.
Rejecting regulation

Such assurances have failed to satisfy everyone.

The EU's digital agenda commissioner, Neelie Kroes, has called into question why the treaty needs to refer to the net.

"The internet works, it doesn't need to be regulated by ITR treaty," she tweeted.

Vint Cerf - the computer scientist who co-designed some of the internet's core underlying protocols and who now acts as Google's chief internet evangelist - has been even more vocal, penning a series of op-ed columns.

"A state-controlled system of regulation is not only unnecessary, it would almost invariably raise costs and prices and interfere with the rapid and organic growth of the internet we have seen since its commercial emergence in the 1990s," he wrote for CNN.

Google itself has also run an "open internet" petition alongside the claim: "Only governments have a voice at the ITU... engineers, companies, and people that build and use the web have no vote."

However, the ITU has pointed out that Google has a chance to put its views forward as part of the US's delegation to the conference.

"They are here, and they're telling everyone that it's a closed society," said Dr Toure when asked about the firm's campaign.

"We will challenge them here again to bring their points on the table. The point that they are bringing - which is internet governance - it's not really a place for discussion [of that] here.

"Therefore we believe they will find themselves in an environment completely different from what they were expecting."

Doha: Will the Arab World lead the way on climate change?

By Louise Gray, Environment Correspondent/telegraph.co.uk/03 Dec 2012

As the United Nations talks on climate change enter the final week in Doha, Qatar all eyes are on the nation with the highest carbon footprint in the world to lead the way on cutting emissions.

Almost 200 countries are gathered for the latest meeting of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

But already there is growing tension over which countries should be pulling their weight when it comes to carbon emissions.

As one of the richest countries in the world per head with the highest carbon footprint at 43t of CO₂ per capita, Qatar itself is expected to lead the way.

The oil and gas rich nation has seen emissions rise by 600 per cent since 1990, largely as a result of energy-intensive air conditioning and desalination and burning off gas flares.

Between 2010 and 2011 emissions rose a further 12 per cent but Qatar has no targets for cutting emissions.

The international community is looking to such 'developing' nations that have now achieved a comfortable lifestyle for their citizens to lead the way in cutting carbon.

Other rich Middle Eastern states including Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates may also make statements.

Already there have been a number of announcements on sourcing more power from renewable energy, especially solar in the desert nations.

Firms have been asked to tender for a 1,800 megawatt (MW) solar energy plant in 2014 costing between \$10-20 billion in Qatar.

Of six mosques contacted by The Associated Press in Doha, only one included an environmental message in last week's Friday prayers, telling those in attendance to plant trees, shun extravagance

and conserve water and electricity.

Fazlun Khalid, founder of the U.K.-based Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Sciences, said it was time for the Muslim world to go further.

"It's absolutely frustrating," he said. "We get very little support from Muslims. They don't connect. We have to wake them up to the fact their existence is threatened by their own behaviour. Modernity and the economic development paradigm is about dominating nature. Islam, as you are aware, is submission to the will of the creator. We need to remind ourselves that we have to submit."

The latest statistics from the University of East Anglia show that global carbon emission are at a record high, largely because of the growth of China, making a deal to cut carbon more crucial than ever.

However the talks are currently at a deadlock.

Hopes that Europe will commit to cutting emissions as part of a second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol are looking shaky as the block is split over whether to include CO2 reductions caused by the collapse of the Soviet Union (hot air).

The rest of the world is split over which countries make the most ambitious cuts in carbon emissions and how much rich countries should pay out to help the poor adapt to climate change.

His Excellency Abdullah bin Hamad al-Attiyah, Deputy Prime Minister of Qatar, who is President of the Conference of the Parties, known as COP18, has his work cut out.

As a former President of OPEC he is already treated with some suspicion by the environmental lobby.

He must keep the talks on track by reassuring the poor world that money is forthcoming and pushing for progress on achieving reductions in carbon.

Jonathan Grant, a climate change adviser at PwC, said this year's talks are key to making progress towards a major deal to global deal by 2015.

If they fail, Doha will suffer like Denmark, that hosted a chaotic summit in 2009.

"If the talks collapse, Doha will haunt delegates like Copenhagen. If they are successful, Doha will only be remembered as a housekeeping or administrative COP."

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