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BURUNDI :

RWANDA :

Rwandans React to UK Aid Freeze

By Edwin Musoni and James Karuhanga/The New Times/4 December 2012

British government's recent decision to freeze its financial support to Rwanda has sparked concerns among Rwandans, with many criticising the move as ill-conceived.

British International Development Secretary, Justine Greening, last week, announced that she was withholding the next tranche of aid totalling 21 million UK Pounds (about Rwf21 billion), which was due for disbursement in December.

Greening's decision based on a controversial report by the United Nations Group of Experts (GoE) which accuses Rwanda of backing the M23 rebels opposed to the government in Kinshasa.

"I am very disappointed, not because they suspended the aid but because of the unfounded reasons they gave. They claimed they took the decision based on that flawed (GoE) report, which was full of lies," said Marie Immaculee Ingabire, chairperson of Transparency International -Rwanda.

"Yet in doing so, the UK ignored Rwanda's own rebuttal to that report. It is clear that the donor community is punishing Rwandans, yet most of the beneficiaries actually have little knowledge about the so-called M23 and have no idea what is really happening in the Congo, they are the

biggest beneficiaries of this aid but are punished unfairly," she added.

The allegations accusing Rwanda of providing logistical support to the rebels first surfaced mid this year from a group led by Steve Hege, a man accused by Kigali of being sympathetic to the genocidal FDLR militias and promoting an anti-Rwandan government campaign.

In the years that preceded his appointment to the GoE on DRC, Hege published a series of articles in which he downplayed the threat posed by the Congo-based FDLR and described Rwandan leaders as Ugandan invaders.

In an article he wrote in 2009, he suggested that international opinion would ultimately "sour on Rwanda", which would give FDLR a political advantage.

Following release of the draft GoE report, a number of western countries withheld their aid to Rwanda.

However, the UK, the single largest donor to Rwanda, unfrozen part of its aid to Rwanda - US\$12 million (7.5 million pounds) - in September and was due to release the other batch of funding this month.

Over the last one week, FDLR has attacked Rwanda twice from their bases in eastern DRC, killing two civilians.

In a statement, the Rwanda Civil Society Platform expressed concerns over the likely increase in the number of people living below the poverty line, and accused western countries of ignoring the fact that Rwanda is a leader in effective use of aid.

"We are aware that developmental aid is politicised but that shouldn't be done at the expense of people's lives. The same donors who are accusing Rwanda of providing logistical support to the M23 have evaluated Rwanda on several occasions and concluded that the aid that is given to Rwanda is used very effectively, it is strange how the same people turn around and claim that that aid is used to fund a rebellion," Eduard Munyamaliza, the Chairman Rwanda Civil Society Platform, said.

He added: "Currently, 44 per cent of Rwandans live below the poverty line and with aid suspension, this situation will worsen. The civil society is ready to do all it takes to ensure that the political crisis in the region does not affect the welfare of the people of Rwanda."

The Director of the Centre for Conflict Management at the National University of Rwanda, Prof. Paul Rutayisire, accused donors of bias against poor countries.

"Let's call a spade a spade; if anyone was genuinely looking around for an African country where they could withhold their aid, that country is DRC. That would be for obvious reasons which the donors know very well," Rutayisire said.

He accused the west of babysitting the Congo because of they are interested in the country's minerals.

"When a government minister in a western country is questioned about aid that goes to some countries, they don't say the truth. In the case of Rwanda, their citizens don't know the truth; political and economic interests take precedence,"

He called on Rwandans to work harder for self reliance, and rallied for continued support of the Agaciro Development Fund.

The Director of Institute of Research and Dialogue for Peace (IRDP), Prof. Peter Rwanyindo, said the UK should have engaged Rwanda more before taking such freezing aid.

"There are agreements that are normally signed between donors and the aid recipients. As such before the donor country decides to terminate a standing bilateral agreement, they are required to call for a review of the partnership with the recipient country and then a conclusion reached. In this case what we are seeing are unilateral decisions by donor countries to withdraw aid...all of a sudden."

He proposed that a joint independent team should be set up between the UK and Rwanda, and tasked with reviewing the credibility of the basis upon which the aid was frozen (GoE report), with the purpose of determining whether Rwanda breached the principles of the bilateral partnership that exist between the two countries.

In the meantime, Rwanyindo said, the Minister of Finance and Economic Planning John Rwangombwa will need to revise his 2012-13 budget.

Public spending in the current financial year had been projected to rise above Rwf1.3 trillion, with local revenues amounting to Rwf745 billion.

Lawmakers also expressed their disappointment in the donors' move to withhold aid to Rwanda based on a highly questionable report.

"The main problem is that donors are really failing to address the issue at hand in the Congo. The roots of the current crisis in Congo can only be traced in that country. The central issue is governance inefficiencies in that country," MP Zeno Mutimura said.

He added: "Secondly, by trying to portray that conflict more as an external issue, the west is directly undermining the efforts of the ICGLR (International Conference on the Great Lakes Region), which have showed signs of potential success. It is a shot in the arm which I think, is very unfair."

MP Gédéon Kayinamura, the Chairperson of the Chamber of Deputies' standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Security, suggested that something suspicious is unravelling about aid and donor practices.

"Normally, governments should work and take decisions based on facts, in this case there no credible facts that implicate Rwanda in what's going on in the Congo.

"Another important element is that before suspending aid or any form of assistance, at least be courteous enough to respect the procedures; there should be minimum level of respect for the other partner" he said.

MP Ignacienne Nyirarukundo, Deputy Chairperson of the Chamber of Deputies' standing committee on Social Affairs, said, "Aid is always beneficial but what is very bad is the unexpected suspension yet we had planned for it in our national budget."

"There is nothing good about what is happening but it should also be an opportunity for us to re-examine the broad impact of aid. What is aid in the actual sense?" Nyirarukundo posed.

She added, "This is food for thought. Aid could be stopped for various reasons; it's really up to the giver to decide whether and when to give it to you. Of course, you want to see justice done; the reasons should be really sounding, as opposed to the current case. But still it's a lesson; we must continue to work hard to get out of aid trap."

RDC CONGO :

A Goma, le retrait des rebelles ne résout pas la crise

LE MONDE /Par Jean-Philippe Rémy Goma (République démocratique du Congo, envoyé spécial)/
03.12.2012

ANALYSE. Dans les rues de Goma, des policiers règlent désormais la circulation à grands coups de sifflet. Ce sifflet est leur seule arme visible, mais la "police de roulage" est l'une des premières manifestations du retour des autorités loyalistes de la République démocratique du Congo (RDC) dans la ville de l'est du pays, depuis le départ, samedi 1er décembre, des forces rebelles du M23, avec leurs armes, leur butin et leur administration.

Lundi 3 décembre, des responsables congolais (dont le ministre de l'intérieur) et un bataillon de l'armée régulière devaient arriver à Goma pour mettre fin à cette période de flottement, où personne n'était certain de savoir qui contrôlait la ville. Grâce aux merveilles de l'autorégulation de la population, le départ des rebelles n'a donné lieu à aucune scène de pillages généralisés, hormis ceux dont se sont rendus coupables les hommes en uniforme des deux camps.

Les premiers éléments de la Police nationale congolaise (PNC) étaient arrivés samedi, entassés à bord d'un bac rouillé qui avait abordé au port de Goma, en provenance de Bukavu. Il leur avait fallu patienter une journée entière avant de débarquer, tandis que les rebelles quittaient la ville par l'autre extrémité, dans une longue colonne de camions et de voitures volées les jours précédents. La dernière impression laissée à Goma par le M23 tient dans cette contradiction : un mélange d'ordre, au niveau militaire, et la main lourde sur les cambriolages, auxquels l'agence locale de la Banque centrale a échappé, faute des clefs et des codes pour ouvrir son coffre.

A son arrivée, le M23 avait pourtant tout mis en oeuvre pour tenir ses troupes et faire régner l'ordre, faisant passer un avertissement aux petits voleurs de la ville, dont les 1 150 détenus de la prison, libérés par les Forces armées de République du Congo (FARDC) avant leur départ : "Un délit, une balle." Cela n'a pas empêché les passages de rebelles dans les maisons de responsables loyalistes et le pillage de certaines administrations. De leur côté, les FARDC ont abondamment pillé les zones vers lesquelles elles se sont repliées, au sud de Goma.

RETRAIT DU M23 EN ÉCHANGE DE NÉGOCIATIONS À KINSHASA

Dans la prise de la ville, on ne distingue guère de gagnants. Les FARDC ont été battues une première fois au nord de la ville, au début de l'offensive rebelle, le 15 novembre, avant de perdre la capitale provinciale cinq jours plus tard. La contre-offensive loyaliste n'a pas eu lieu, donnant l'impression que les forces rebelles dominent le terrain.

Sans doute le M23 avait-il atteint la limite de déploiement de ses deux à trois mille hommes. Mais ce n'est pas la raison de leur départ de Goma, après onze jours de présence en ville, selon les termes d'un accord signé en Ouganda par les pays de la région une semaine plus tôt, qui prévoit le retrait du M23 en échange de l'ouverture de négociations à Kinshasa.

Il a fallu plusieurs jours de tractations pour que le M23 consente à organiser le repli de ses troupes en direction de la zone mal définie où il doit à présent être cantonné, à vingt kilomètres de Goma. Au passage, le mouvement a montré deux choses. D'abord, l'existence de divisions entre les partisans du chef d'état-major général du mouvement – le général Sultani Makenga, qui fait désormais l'objet de sanctions des Etats-Unis et de l'ONU – et les officiers proches de Bosco Ntaganda, qui vit caché et fait l'objet d'un mandat de la Cour pénale internationale (CPI). Ces derniers s'opposaient au retrait.

Les derniers jours ont aussi mis en évidence des réticences du M23 à obéir aux injonctions du Rwanda voisin. L'influence de Kigali est cruciale pour le M23, mais la volonté d'indépendance d'une partie des responsables rebelles n'en est pas moins réelle. C'est cependant la voix de Kigali qui l'a emporté. "On s'en va parce que nos partenaires nous l'ont demandé", commentait, avec dépit, un cadre du mouvement avant de quitter Goma.

Le M23, au final, a quitté la ville parce que d'importantes pressions ont été exercées sur le Rwanda, dont l'implication dans cette nouvelle rébellion congolaise a été mise en évidence par des rapports d'experts des Nations unies et confirmée par des enquêtes réalisées par plusieurs pays, dont la Grande-Bretagne et la Belgique.

"KABILA A QUARANTE-HUIT HEURES POUR SIGNER UN CESSEZ-LE-FEU"

La prise de Goma s'inscrivait dans la tentative de briser par une avancée militaire l'étouffement diplomatique de la rébellion et de ses parrains, le Rwanda et l'Ouganda. Mais une fois en ville, transiger était indispensable. C'est donc à l'extérieur du Congo que le sort de Goma a été scellé, en raison des "fortes pressions diplomatiques" exercées, notamment par les Etats-Unis, comme le relève un analyste d'International Crisis Group (ICG), qui s'exprime de manière anonyme en raison de menaces exercées sur l'un de ses collègues. La Grande-Bretagne vient d'annoncer le gel d'une tranche d'aide au Rwanda de 21 millions de livres. Kigali est loin d'être marginalisé, mais l'effet des enquêtes de l'ONU se fait sentir.

Alors, comme le résume Jason Stearns, analyste au Rift Valley Institute (RVI), "la façon dont la question de Goma a été gérée a permis au Rwanda d'apparaître comme une solution. La démonstration est faite que, sans le Rwanda, il n'y aura pas de paix dans la région".

Mais la mise en application du retrait ne signifie pas la fin de la crise. Techniquement, le M23 sort renforcé de l'épisode. Ses combattants ont fait la démonstration de leurs capacités (avec un appui ponctuel de l'armée rwandaise, selon les Nations unies) à balayer les FARDC. A Goma, ils se sont aussi emparés d'un important stock d'armes, que les forces loyalistes avaient abandonnées dans leur fuite.

A présent, deux solutions s'offrent à eux. La première consiste à obtenir de Kinshasa des postes pour les militaires et pour les politiques. Mais la nomination de ministres et de généraux issus de la rébellion serait un signal désastreux. Et pour tous les groupes armés qui pullulent à nouveau, cela constituerait une invitation à capitaliser sur le chaos.

De plus, le M23 n'a pas abandonné les armes. Comme l'assure une source au sein du mouvement, l'objectif de ses forces est à présent de s'installer sur des "collines stratégiques" proches de la ville de Goma, et peu importe si la distance de 20 km prévue par l'accord de Kampala est scrupuleusement respectée. "Personne ne viendra pour mesurer", assure la même source.

Stanislas Baleke, un des responsables politiques du mouvement joint par téléphone dans les environs de Rutshuru, la petite ville qui fait de nouveau office de "capitale" des rebelles du M23,

met en garde : "En quittant Goma, nous avons mis Kabila devant ses responsabilités. Nous lui avons donné quarante-huit heures pour signer un cessez-le-feu et mettre sur pied un calendrier de négociations clair." Cet ultimatum expirait lundi 3 décembre.

RDC : l'armée régulière congolaise de retour à Goma

le 03-12-2012/ AFP

GOMA (RDC) (AFP) - L'armée de la République démocratique du Congo (RDC) est revenue lundi à Goma, principale ville de l'est, deux jours après un retrait des rebelles du M23 qui attendent désormais l'ouverture de négociations avec Kinshasa et qui, selon l'ONU, ont été aidés par Kigali et Kampala pour prendre Goma.

Un bataillon de l'armée régulière (FARDC) est entré dans la capitale de la riche province minière du Nord-Kivu en milieu d'après-midi, a constaté une journaliste de l'AFP. Il s'est immédiatement dirigé vers le camp militaire de Katindo, un quartier de la ville.

Les rebelles avaient mis en déroute le 20 novembre les FARDC mais ils ont été aidés par le Rwanda et l'Ouganda, selon un rapport d'experts de l'ONU présenté au Conseil de sécurité et dont l'AFP a obtenu copie lundi.

Les forces rwandaises ont fourni un "soutien direct" aux rebelles dès le lancement de leur offensive début novembre, tandis que l'Ouganda fournissait surtout un appui "logistique", indique le rapport, qui estime "à plus d'un millier" les soldats rwandais mobilisés pour faire sauter le verrou représenté par la localité de Kibumba, sur la route de Goma. L'ONU et Kinshasa ont déjà accusé Kigali et Kampala de soutenir le M23, ce que démentent les deux pays frontaliers de la RDC.

Lundi, le flou régnait toujours sur les délicates négociations prévues entre Kinshasa et les rebelles, promises en échange du repli du M23 : aucune date n'était encore donnée pour leur lancement.

L'incertitude planait aussi sur les participants, même si la présence directe du président de RDC Joseph Kabila, affaibli par cette crise, semblait à ce stade exclue.

Présent lundi à Goma, le ministre congolais de l'Intérieur, Richard Muej Munge, a indiqué à l'AFP que les discussions pourraient commencer, a priori à Kampala, "dans les prochains jours". "L'équipe de dialogue est déjà constituée," a-t-il assuré, sans en donner la composition.

Le ministre a cependant souligné qu'il fallait que le M23 respecte lui-même pleinement son engagement de se retirer à au moins 20 km de Goma, ce qui n'est pas encore le cas.

Lundi encore, des combattants rebelles patrouillaient sur la route au nord de Goma, et d'autres tenaient des positions sur une colline stratégique surplombant une base militaire de la Mission des Nations unies au Congo (Monusco), à trois km de l'aéroport de la ville.

"Vous ne pouvez vous retirer que par étapes, c'est ainsi que les choses se font", a fait valoir un commandant rebelle, Antoine Manzi.

"Nous sommes totalement satisfaits de la mise en oeuvre de l'accord à ce jour", a estimé le chef d'état major ougandais, Aronda Nyakairima, à l'issue d'une réunion avec ses homologues de RDC et du Rwanda à Goma.

M23 "infiltrés"

Les autorités administratives, qui avaient aussi fui l'avancée des rebelles, commençaient elles aussi à revenir, notamment le maire de Goma et le gouverneur du Nord-Kivu.

Mais malgré le retour ces derniers jours de centaines de policiers, et des patrouilles régulières de la Monusco, la sécurité reste précaire à Goma, de l'aveu du maire, Naason Kubuya.

Les accusations de pillages se sont multipliées récemment contre les rebelles du M23 à Goma. Bâtiments et biens publics auraient été en particulier visés.

Mais l'armée régulière est elle-même régulièrement accusée de vols et autres exactions contre la population. Lundi, le porte-parole du gouvernement de RDC, Lambert Mende, a expliqué que le retour des soldats loyalistes avait pris du temps parce qu'il fallait "préparer" leur arrivée pour "qu'ils n'aillent pas chaparder à gauche, à droite."

Le maire a également accusé des éléments du M23 d'être restés à Goma, qu'ils "infiltrèrent" afin, selon lui, de déstabiliser la ville et "montrer que le gouvernement n'est pas efficace pour restaurer la sécurité".

La vie reprenait cependant son cours à Goma. Ecoles, commerces et administrations ont redémarré. Seules les banques étaient encore fermées, perpétuant la crise de liquidité qui frappe les habitants depuis presque deux semaines.

Les autorités provinciales du Nord-Kivu ont indiqué que l'aéroport international de Goma et la Banque centrale rouvriraient jeudi.

Les rebelles du M23 combattent l'armée régulière de RDC depuis environ huit mois dans le Nord-Kivu.

Le M23 est composé d'ex-rebelles qui avaient intégré l'armée de RDC après la signature d'un accord de paix avec Kinshasa le 23 mars 2009. Ses hommes se sont mutinés il y a environ huit mois, estimant que les autorités congolaises n'avaient jamais pleinement respecté leurs engagements.

Les mutins, essentiellement des Tutsi congolais, refusent notamment toute mutation hors de leur région du Kivu afin, disent-ils, de protéger leurs familles et les membres de leur communauté qu'ils estiment en danger.

Leurs revendications sont aussi politiques, les rebelles allant jusqu'à remettre en question la légitimité du président Kabila.

UGANDA :

Congo-Kinshasa: DRC, Rwanda, Uganda Defence Chiefs Meet in Goma

By James Munyaneza/The New Times/4 December 2012

Chiefs of Defence Staff of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Uganda, yesterday, met in the eastern Congolese city of Goma, two days after the withdrawal of the M23 rebels from the strategic lakeside city.

The meeting was aimed at assessing the progress of the implementation of the resolutions of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region Heads of State and Government Summit of November 24, according to Brig. Gen. Geoffrey Muhesi, the commander of the Goma-based Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism, composed of all the ICGLR member states.

"The Defence Chiefs received reports from the Expanded JVM and MONUSCO (UN peacekeepers) on the withdrawal of M23 as well as the re-insertion of DRC National Police and FARDC (in Goma)," Gen Muhesi told The New Times last evening.

He added, "We briefed them about the progress in respect of the implementation of the Heads of State resolutions. The M23 have done what was required of them, and that is a good thing."

Gen. Muhesi leads a team of 24 senior military officers drawn from 11 ICGLR member countries (South Sudan was admitted only over a week ago as the 12th member), working under what is known as Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism, designed to help provide technical input in the ongoing efforts to help end the conflict.

The M23 rebellion began in April after hundreds of soldiers from a previous rebellion - the National Congress for the Defence of the People (CNDP) -mutinied accusing the government of breaking the terms of the March 23, 2009 peace deal under which they had been integrated in the army.

They have since called for peace talks that include the terms of that peace agreement, brokered by former African Heads of State Olusegun Obasanjo (Nigeria) and Benjamin Mkapa of Tanzania.

The Kampala regional Heads of State summit also urged President Joseph Kabila's government to "to listen, evaluate and resolve the legitimate grievances of M23, including taking into account the report of the work already done by the ICGLR."

Yesterday, the Goma meeting was chaired by Uganda's Chief of Defence Staff, Gen. Aronda Nyakairima, who, along with his Congolese and Rwandan counterparts, Lt. Gen. Didier Etumba and Lt. Gen. Charles Kayonga, respectively, were tasked by the ICGLR Heads of State to oversee the M23 withdrawal from Sake and Goma.

Asked about the way forward now that the rebels have pulled back 20km as demanded by the ICGLR leaders, Gen. Muhesi said the next step was "negotiations as agreed".

"Kinshasa has responded positively and negotiations could begin on Wednesday," he said.

He added that the M23 rebels were also preparing to send one company to Goma to be part of a proposed composite force, which also includes one company-Neutral Force and one company of the Congolese forces, to be deployed at the city's airport.

Yesterday, Muhesi said, 600 FARDC troops arrived in Goma, a city the army dramatically deserted nearly two weeks ago as it fell to the M23 rebels. Hundreds of Congolese police personnel are already in Goma.

Goma airport is expected to resume functioning soon with the deployment of Neutral Observers from Tanzania.

The three Defence Chiefs are expected to transmit their report to the Heads of State Summit through the Chair of the ICGLR Ministers of Defence.

Uganda: The Ten Point Plan to Kick HIV Out of Uganda

3 December 2012/The New Vision

The theme of this year's(2012) World AIDS Day, Getting to Zero (zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths), shows how far the world has gone in reversing the killing tide of the deadly virus.

But while they are strategising on how to reduce the HIV impact to zero, Uganda is not sharing the euphoria because the prevalence rates are rising instead. VICKY WANDAWA and HILARY BAINEMIGISHA explore ways in which we, too, can jump onto the celebrating wagon

Uganda the master of HIV management

In 1991, HIV prevalence among pregnant women peaked at 21%.

The general incidence was 15% and about 1.3 million people were living with HIV. Uganda impressed the whole world by wrestling down this incidence to about 4.4% by 2003.

The world flocked to our shores to study Uganda's holistic multi-sectoral approach to HIV/AIDS epidemic. They took back the lessons and implemented them. Not only did they manage to halt their infection rates, but also started reducing their HIV incidence.

Tables turn

In the meantime, something was going wrong for us. We lost the plot, HIV incidence stagnated at 6.5%, before rising and to 7.3%. People living with HIV are now over 1.2 million. Our former students, the neighbours, have raced past to become our teachers. Kenya's incidence is now at 6.3%, Tanzania at 5.6% while Rwanda is at 2.8%, from 27% and DR Congo, 1.4%, and all these are going down.

Today, scientists know a great deal about the virus; how it spreads, mutates, hides and how to kill it. Many countries have national programmes of free ARVs, medical circumcision, prevention of mother-to-child transmission of the virus (PMTCT), free condom distribution and functional health systems. HIV is taken as a condition and not a death sentence.

However, in Uganda, the AIDS Commission (AiC) still says we are losing 64,016 people to AIDS-related illnesses every year. Uganda is the only major recipient of PEPFAR (US global AIDS funding), with rising HIV infection rates.

According to UAC's statistics, about 128,980 people acquired HIV in 2010, up from 124,261 in 2009. Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Sudan and DR Congo have declining HIV rates.

Yet these neighbours have similar problems of poverty, a high debt, disease, malnutrition and poor sanitation levels, population growth that exceeds resources and political instabilities.

What are we not doing right?

Mothers infecting babies:

Let us take this example of mothers transmitting HIV to their babies, which the world has generally rolled down to zero. Uganda pioneered the Nevirapine research, which brought to the world an

important drug in PMTCT. But PMTCT is hardly visible.

Last year, 22,000 Ugandan babies were infected by their mothers. Over 50% exposed infants are not tested, 39% of those tested do not receive results, 35% of those who receive results are not enrolled into ART care and 42% of those enrolled are not followed up.

Rwanda was providing free ARVs to 60% of HIV-positive pregnant women by 2007 and, as a result, mother-to-child transmission rates decreased from 30.5% in 2001 to 8.9% in 2007. Today, it is 4.2% and it is still aiming at less than 2% by 2015.

Where did we go wrong?

According to Dr Carol Nakazzi, the HIV prevalence officer at UAC, the reverse gear started when Uganda lost funding in 2006, due to corruption. Global Fund cut off its aid after most of the money sent was stolen.

"Losing GAVI funding stagnated our efforts to fight HIV. Earlier, we were improving faster than other counties, but when the funding was withdrawn, the programmes stalled, while Tanzania and Rwanda continued receiving their money," Nakazzi explains.

In an earlier interview, the Director General of AIC, Dr Kihumuro Apuuli, explained that corruption cost us a lot. "You talk of Rwanda; do you know that Kigali receives about three times more money for HIV than Uganda? When donors suspended funding because of the Global Fund scandal, our programmes were affected.

"You know 67% of our interventions are donor-funded. The Government only contributes 11%. We cannot roll out circumcision, for instance, use treatment as protection, or offer ARVs to all who need them. We need more money."

Citizens propose 10-point programme to reverse trend:

Civil Societies Organisations (CSOs) in Uganda came together and drafted a 10-point plan to fight the scourge. It was presented to the joint review by HIV stakeholders, organised by UAC last month. According to Alice Kayongo, a fellow in the Community Health Alliance Uganda, the CSO plan was well received, but the Government says there is no money to implement the proposal.

"Look at the money being stolen," she said. "It can put all people who need treatment on ARVs. It is clear our Government is not prioritising HIV, health systems and workers."

People living and affected by HIV in Alwa sub-county, Kaberamaido district receiving sheep and goats donated by Child Fund International, an NGO, last year

Proposals from civil society organisations:

1. Give ARVs to many more and in time

Research has shown that when a person living with HIV starts ARVs early, his ability to transmit the virus to someone else reduces by 96%. His survival opportunities remain high, preventing costly infections that may arise because of low immunity from HIV, such as chronic herpes, simplex virus and Tuberculosis.

However, in Uganda, only about 50% of the people who need ARVs get them free. World Health

Organisation wants every HIV positive person, regardless of the CD4 count, to get ARVs. under the Millennium Development Goals set countries a goal to avail ART to all who need it by 2015.

By 2009, 95% of all people in Rwanda, who needed ARVs were getting them for free. About 65% of the people in Kenya get free ARVs.

CSOs demand that the Government targets at enrolling 80% of people living with HIV and implements the PMTCT Option B+, where pregnant HIV-positive mothers are placed on highly active ARVs, regardless of their current immunity, to prevent passing HIV onto their babies.

Response from UAC:

Dr. Carol Nakazzi says while the health ministry is the official implementer of Government health programmes, UAC plays a a coordinating role with other stakeholders and development partners. Last year, UAC changed the qualification to free ARVs from 250 CD4 count (a measure of immunity - ability to fight infections) to 350.

However, she notes that the Government cannot afford to raise the number.

"UAC is encouraging community involvement and participation," she says. "Under UAC, a number of organisations are scaling up ART, for example the Civil Society Fund, community based organisations, non-governmental organisations, Integrated Community Based Initiatives, community based initiatives and a number of AIDS support organisations which are district based."

Nakazzi contends that treating 80% is unrealistic and reaching it is an uphill task. "I do not see us increasing," she says.

2. Focus where HIV impact is high

CSOs acknowledge that the Government policy of Abstinence from sex, Being faithful in marriage and Condom use 'if you are too weak to abstain or be faithful' helped us in the past.

"But the situation has changed and our prevalence stagnated before it started rising again," Kayongo said.

"It is clear that ABC alone will not help us. But we have other alternatives that other countries are using; the scientifically proved preventive technologies"

These are ART, PMTCT and safe male circumcision. Because of scarce resources, CSOs suggested priorities in prevention investment. ABC should be reinforced with tested prevention technologies like free treatment to all people living with HIV, safe male circumcision, house-to-house HIV testing, immediately followed by free treatment.

"We need to move away from behaviour change programmes that are not working towards evidence-based, comprehensive HIV prevention," advises Kayongo.

"Condom use has declined sharply over the last five years, while the HIV prevalence is rising! Disparaging condom use is completely counterproductive."

CSOs also want leaders to stop blaming individuals or groups at high risk of infection. The emergency is to access effective prevention and treatment services without debates on who has the moral high ground because it builds stigma over vulnerable groups like discordant couples, men

who have sex with men, fishermen, sex workers, migrant populations and prisoners, they wrote.

CSOs also want the Uganda Revenue Authority to stop taxing essential health commodities like medicine, mama's kits and family planning items.

Response from UAC:

The Government recognises that discordant couples, fishing communities, migrant populations, prisoners and youth are vulnerable populations and has specific HIV programmes targeting them, Nakazzi says.

However, she insists, sex workers and homosexuals are excluded because their operations are not legalised. However, Nakazzi adds, the Government does not stop any NGO which can address the HIV problem among sex workers and homosexuals.

She says the Government and a number of NGOs like ICOBI and TASO are doing the house-to-house HIV testing in central, mid-western and mid north and, by August next year, the whole country should have been covered.

"For fishing communities, there are AIDS support organisations like the Alliance of Mayors' Initiative for Community Action on AIDS (AMICAAL) in Kalangala, Mayuge and Rakai districts. Star EC (American government) is operating in Mayuge and Jinja. All these organisations give comprehensive HIV services. The services include counselling, testing, link to care and psychosocial support," she says.

In the prisons, there are health departments giving all services, except condoms. But these are given to inmates when they are released to protect their wives.

"As for halting taxation by URA, negotiations are ongoing," she says.

3. Endorse and expand safe male circumcision

Safe male circumcision reduces the risk of HIV infection by 60%, but the Government, apart from coming up with the policy, has not committed to investing in the exercise.

Elsewhere, Governments are taking it seriously. Rwanda offers free medical male circumcision at all district hospitals. Kenya offers it free in districts where male circumcision is not traditionally practiced. WHO estimates that if Uganda achieved the 80% circumcision target within five years, about 340,000 new HIV infections could be averted.

But political leaders are not showing support for safe male circumcision. According to a WHO report, Uganda's male circumcision lacks leadership, with no prominent national champion. Activists blame President Yoweri Museveni's continued lack of enthusiasm and always questioning the scientific evidence behind it.

By contrast, Kenya's Prime Minister, Raila Odinga, who comes from the non-circumcising Luo community, embraced it by leading several Government officials for public circumcision events.

Response from UAC:

Nakazzi defended the Government, saying there is a circumcision policy in place. Although there has been no money released for free circumcision, UAC coordinates for all activities in HIV

management and whoever is carrying out circumcision is doing it on behalf of the Government.

"So far, 25% of adult males have been circumcised and we are aiming at 4.2 million men by 2016."

NGOs carrying it out include Walter Reed, Rakai health project, and PEPFAR.

Nakazzi further explains that women are told to encourage their husbands and sons and male relatives to go for safe male circumcision and be patient for the six weeks it takes their husbands to heal, before sex is resumed.

4. More government funding for HIV/AIDS projects

CSOs demand that in the next financial year, more money should be committed to the HIV fight. More health workers should be recruited and be paid more, so that they are retained. They recognise resource constraints and propose an 'AIDS levy' or a small tax to generate additional resources.

This is a tax on some element of the economy, for example large corporations, liquor, oil or on the payroll where the revenues raised would be ring-fenced to be used strictly for service delivery, such as ARVs.

Parliament has been briefed on this idea, but concrete action is urgently needed. It has been implemented in Zimbabwe.

Response from UAC:

Nakazzi says the Government welcomed the proposal and negotiations are ongoing. As for the HIV funding, she notes that currently, 68% of Uganda's HIV funding comes from donors, and 20% from individuals and their families. "But while only 11% comes from the Government and 1% from the private sector, funds are being sought from the World Bank to run a project for recruitment," she said.

So far, Nakazzi added, the health ministry was given an additional sh49.5b, sh6.5b of which will cater for recruitment of 6,172 health workers. "The plan is to recruit 800 health workers within four years, 200 each year," she says.

5. Streamline the health systems

Uganda has a massive shortage of professional health workers, especially at local government levels. The additional 6,172 professional health workers promised by the Government are not enough. CBOs want the Government to ensure that health centre IIIs are in position to give ARVs.

Response from UAC:

Nakazzi explains that they are currently trying to empower health centre IIIs to provide ARVs and PMTCT, depending on the infrastructure of the health centre, number of patients it receives and presence of human resource trained to handle HIV patients.

"This is a nationwide project, though not all districts have accredited health centre IIIs, but we want to finish them by the end of next year."

6. Community based HIV prevention and treatment services

Rather than people crowding at health centres, where health workers and essential health commodities are in short supply, CSOs recommend use of village health teams (VHTs).

The Government should fund VHTs, civil society organisations and people living with HIV, who play a role in spreading the gospel about the HIV scourge.

Response from UAC:

Nakazzi says UAC is already using VHTs, people living with HIV and other stakeholders. She, however, explains that due to financial constraints, the VHTs may not be motivated financially, or well enlightened on what they should do.

"They are barely paid and facilitated to move around," she said. "NGOs are encouraged to motivate them, for example the Centre for Diseases Control, gives some allowance or items like soap. They are also overwhelmed because they are not only giving HIV services, but malaria, and Tuberculosis among others."

7. Help women and girls

HIV prevalence is higher in women at 8.3% compared to men at 6.1%. It is also particularly high among married women. 63% of young women start sex before age 18, yet only 27% of them use condoms.

Lack of economic independence, access to quality, free education, and lack of protection from sexual coercion and sexual violence is fueling the HIV epidemic among women and girls in Uganda. Many pregnant HIV-positive women report an alarming rate of abuse and stigma by health workers. As a result, they fear accessing PMTCT services.

Response from UAC:

Nakazzi notes that the Uganda National HIV and AIDS policy 2011, focuses on reducing gender based vulnerability, concerns in HIV prevention, AIDS care, treatment and impact mitigation. The Government will support appropriate cross sector strategies developed to address them.

8. HIV testing

CSOs want the Government to saturate communities with testing programmes and immediate linkage to care and treatment. Currently, only 15 districts have home-based HIV testing. These are Gulu, Masaka, Mityana, Soroti, Mbarara and Kumi. Others are Rukungiri, Masindi, Jinja, Wakiso, Tororo, Kalangala and Apac.

Massive testing will identify people for treatment. During the Uganda AIDS indicator survey 2011, 55% of the people found HIV-positive did not know they had it. 26% had never tested and 29% had last tested negative.

Response from UAC:

The Government is doing its best, through the health ministry and a number of NGOs carrying out home-based care and house-to-house testing. The Government also asked every organisation giving HIV/AIDS services to provide house-to-house testing, but some do not because of limited funds.

9. Avail information to people

CSOs complain that data on the AIDS response is unreliable, incomplete or simply unavailable. The Government should prioritise data collection and recording, they say.

Response from UAC:

UAC is developing a comprehensive addendum with all strategies against HIV. By the end of the next financial year, we shall have all the data," says Nakazzi.

10. End harmful discriminatory policies

CSOs challenged Uganda's policy positions and bills, such as the HIV/AIDS prevention and control Bill and the Anti-Homosexuality Bill, which would criminalise people with HIV, people at highest risk of infection and criminalise efforts to provide evidence-based prevention to these communities.

"These bills should not be passed and vulnerable populations should instead be prioritised in an effort to expand HIV service delivery," the document reads.

Response from UAC Discussions on these are still ongoing.

SOUTH AFRICA :

South Africa: Ministers Converge in Doha for Climate Change Talks

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

Doha — African environmental affairs ministers have arrived in Doha, Qatar ahead of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP18/CMP8) high-level segment talks which will officially kick off tomorrow.

They are among the more than 100 ministers from around the world attending the high-level segment of the meeting, which will also be attended by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon.

At the COP17/CMP7, held in Durban in December 2011, nations agreed and set targets for including working for greater climate change action and taking concrete steps to fill the gaps in the international policy response to climate change COP18 which is currently underway.

Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs Edna Molewa and Deputy Minister Rejoice Mabudafhasi are also attending the conference.

Molewa said South Africa regarded the global climate change response as part of sustainable development agenda and not just a purely environmental issue.

"An effective global solution to the climate change crisis involves the negotiation of delicate balances and trade-offs between a wide range of extremely complex, highly political and sometimes conflicting set of social, economic and environmental development issues," she said.

Molewa added that South Africa needed a strengthened international climate regime that ensured global reductions in greenhouse gas emissions in accordance with what is required by science.

"We need to ensure that the impacts of climate change do not undermine development in our own country, the African continent and the world at large," she said.

The outcomes from COP17/CMP7 inform South Africa's position going into this week.

These outcomes, which followed a three-pronged approach, include implementing urgent action from 2013 to 2020 and the adoption of a second Commitment Period under the Kyoto Protocol and a number of institutional mechanisms such as the Green Climate Fund; having acknowledged the inadequate commitments to reduce emissions made to date, a work programme was agreed to in an effort to increase current pre-2020 levels of ambition; and lastly action for the future with the negotiation of a legal agreement for the period beyond 2020.

COP17/CMP7 also led to the establishment of the Durban Platform - the Ad hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action - which is tasked to, among others, to take the next steps necessary to negotiate a global climate change agreement to be adopted by 2015, and to enter into force from 2020.

"It is the responsibility of COP18/CMP8 to decide on how to deal with all issues that do not find satisfactory resolution by the end of 2012. However, what is clear is that all the necessary arrangements for mitigation and finance are clarified in Doha, including operationalize all agreed to institutions," said Molewa.

Meanwhile, Ban said he hoped that the Doha Climate Change Conference will extend the Kyoto Protocol when its first commitment period expires at the end of this year. The second period will begin on 1 January 2013.

He further hoped that all these agreed international institutions like the Green Climate Fund and Climate Technological Centre Networks should be established in Doha. "We should discuss and formulate how we can mobilise the necessary funding," he added.

This is the first United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change conference to be hosted in a Gulf oil-producing country.

South Africa: 2012 Ana Results Show Learners Making Progress

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

Pretoria — The results of the 2012 Annual National Assessment (ANA) show the numeracy and literacy performance of South African learners in the lower grades has improved.

"Learner performance in the Foundation Phase Grades 1, 2 and 3 is pleasing. There is progress also in the Intermediate Phase Grade 4, 5 and 6," said Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga, while officially revealing the results at Ipontshe Primary School in Tembisa on Monday.

"The Annual National Assessment was a massive undertaking with over seven million learners writing. This is an achievement in itself, showing teachers are getting it right and learners are making progress."

The ANAs is a testing programme that requires all schools to conduct the same grade-specific language and mathematics tests for Grades 1 to 6 and Grade 9.

The results showed that in Grade 3, the national average performance in literacy stands at 53% compared to the 35% in 2011 -- an improvement of 17% from 2011.

"In Grade 3 numeracy, our learners are performing at an average of 41% compared to the 28% in 2011. Again, a great improvement of 13%, particularly noting our commitment to ensure that our learners pursue mathematics and science in later grades," said Motshekga.

She said her department was concerned that few learners took Mathematics and Science, and even those that had the potential to take these subjects did not because to fear of failing.

Provincial performance in these grades ranged between 34% and 47%, with Gauteng and the Western Cape being the highest.

In Grade 6, Motshekga said the national average performance in language was 34% for the Home Language and 36% for the First Additional Language compared to 28% in 2011. This showed an improvement of 15%.

The First Additional Language was not assessed in the 2011 ANAs, and these results would serve as a benchmark moving forward.

Motshekga pointed out that the First Additional Language was very important because the majority of black learners studied in a language that was not their home language.

In Grade 6 Mathematics, the average performance was 27% compared to 30% in 2011. Provincial performance ranged between 21% and 33%.

In Grade 9, the national average performance in language stands at 43% Home Language and 35% First Additional Language. Provincial performance ranged between 30% and 40%.

"In Grade 9 Mathematics, the average is 13%. Provincial performance ranges between 9% and 17%. These results explain to a very large extent why among many other reasons we have a high failure and dropout rates at Grade 10 and 11," said the minister.

The national average performance for Grades 1, 2, 4 and 5 literacy in 2012 is as follows:

Grade 1 - 58% (59% in 2011)

Grade 2 - 55% (52% in 2011)

Grade 4 - 43% Home Language and 34% First Additional Language (34% in 2011)

Grade 5 was 40% Home Language and 30% for First Additional Language (28% in 2011)

The national average performance for Grades 1, 2, 4 and 5 in numeracy in 2012 is as follows:

Grade 1 - 68% (63% in 2011)

Grade 2 - 57% (55% in 2011)

Grade 4 - 37% (28% in 2011)

Grade 5 - 30% (28% in 2011)

"These improvements again are a great hope because we are beginning to see improvements at the lower end of the system whilst we have to be concerned that the higher end seems to be stagnating," said Motshekga.

She said the ANAs were an instrumental tool for districts in provinces to show them which schools were in need of urgent assistance.

Another priority was ensuring that every learner had access to a minimum set of textbooks and workbooks required according to the national policy.

Arthur Chaskalson, Chief South African Jurist, Dies at 81

By DOUGLAS MARTIN/nytimes.com/Published: December 3, 2012

"The last time I was in court was to hear whether or not I was going to be sentenced to death," Nelson Mandela said in 1995. Mr. Mandela, South Africa's president, was speaking during the inauguration of Arthur Chaskalson as the first presiding judge of their country's newly established Constitutional Court. The moment signified the new order that Mr. Mandela had for decades fought to achieve: a majority-ruled nation where minority rights were protected by a Constitution and a bill of rights.

Justice Chaskalson, who died on Saturday in Johannesburg at 81, had helped write that Constitution and create the court that would be its safeguard. He had earlier been part of the team of defense lawyers that saved Mr. Mandela and other antiapartheid activists from the death penalty at the infamous Rivonia trial in 1963-64. Mr. Mandela, convicted of sabotage and other crimes, spent 27 years in prison before being released in 1990.

The court grew out of the ensuing four years of negotiations between Mr. Mandela's political party, the African National Congress, and the white minority government. An important goal of both whites and blacks was setting checks and balances on Parliament. The independent Constitutional Court was a big part of the answer.

Blacks wanted an end to what had effectively been a parliamentary dictatorship, even though they would now dominate Parliament. Whites, aware of their diminished power, demanded the very protections that they had denied blacks since the imposition of the segregationist apartheid government in 1948.

"For the first time," Justice Chaskalson said at the opening of his court, "the Constitution trumps Parliament."

Like him, six other justices on the 11-member court were white, but all had opposed apartheid. The court's first major decision was to abolish the death penalty.

"Everyone, including the most abominable of human beings, has a right to life, and capital punishment is therefore unconstitutional," Justice Chaskalson wrote.

The court went on to guarantee a right to shelter and to allow same-sex marriage.

Justice Chaskalson's path to leadership of his nation's top constitutional court had much in common with that of Justice Thurgood Marshall of the United States Supreme Court. Justice Chaskalson founded South Africa's first public interest law firm to fight apartheid, modeling it after the NAACP

Legal Defense and Educational Fund, which Justice Marshall had directed.

While there was no constitution or bill of rights to use as weapons in the manner that Justice Marshall had battled segregation in the United States, Justice Chaskalson, as a human rights lawyer during the apartheid era, used existing South African statutes to limit a bureaucracy that had dictated where blacks could live. He and the Legal Resources Center, a nonprofit organization he helped establish, won some of South Africa's first consumer protection cases on behalf of poor blacks, some of whom had been defrauded by bill collectors.

In 1989, he was a consultant in the drafting of a Constitution for Namibia, the country that had been administered by South Africa and that would become independent in 1990. He then helped write South Africa's Constitution.

After Mr. Mandela was elected in 1994, he appointed Justice Chaskalson president of the new Constitutional Court. In 2001, the court was merged with South Africa's top court for nonconstitutional matters, and Justice Chaskalson became the body's chief justice.

Arthur Chaskalson was born in Johannesburg on Nov. 24, 1931, and earned bachelor of commerce and law degrees from the University of the Witwatersrand. He had a lucrative private practice until helping to start the Legal Resources Center with a staff of two in 1978. Financing came largely from three American sources: the Ford Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

He set up a fellowship program to offer opportunities to black women with law degrees. In a speech to the New York City Bar Association in 1985, he noted that he was a double outsider: not only was he not an Afrikaner, a member of South Africa's German-descended white ruling group; he also was Jewish. That status, he said, helped him to identify with the powerless.

"I think it is probably easier for someone who has grown up outside the Afrikaner establishment to look upon the structure which the Afrikaners have erected to gain power and protect their position far more critically than they would do themselves," he said.

Justice Chaskalson — whose death, which news reports attributed to leukemia, was announced by President Jacob Zuma of South Africa — was president of the International Commission of Jurists from 2001 to 2012. He is survived by his wife, Lorraine; his sons, Matthew and Jerome; and several grandchildren.

Before he retired as chief justice in 2005, he laid the cornerstone for a new home for the Constitutional Court, the site of a dilapidated prison that once held South African freedom fighters.

Justice Chaskalson said the site had been chosen to send a ringing message: "Come here because here, at this site, your freedom is now protected."

South African women rights at risk as Zuma woos tribal chiefs

By Katy Migiro/reuters.com/Mon Dec 3, 2012

AMAHLUBI, South Africa, Dec 4 (TrustLaw) - Pregnant and bereaved, Thandiwe Zondi considered killing herself and her five daughters when she was evicted from her marital home.

Under customary Zulu law, only males can inherit land. But Zondi had borne no sons when her husband, a chief, died of natural causes, so his successor moved into her house and turfed the family

out.

She appealed to a traditional court of tribal leaders - but they sided with the new chief.

Traditional courts are the most accessible form of justice for poor, rural South Africans, and their power is growing, setting back the clock on women's rights in one of Africa's most progressive countries.

Their increasing influence is largely thanks to President Jacob Zuma, a proud Zulu who has four wives and a fondness for dancing dressed in a leopard skin cloak and a kilt of animal tails with a cow-hide shield and spear.

As Zuma fights for re-election as head of the African National Congress (ANC) in December and as president in 2014, he plans to make traditional courts the only option for millions of South Africans by denying them access to civil courts.

Zondi's eviction was not based on any statute, and it flew in the face of South Africa's post-apartheid constitution, which guarantees gender equality and outlaws "unfair discrimination". But that didn't make it any less real.

"They asked me who is going to look after me," she recalled, sitting in her father's cluttered mud home, overlooking a valley in KwaZulu Natal, Zuma's home province.

"They needed a man. I said there's no one. That's when they started getting angry and violent. It was very painful. I had all these thoughts of killing myself and my children."

Today, 18 family members spanning three generations squeeze into her father's three-bedroom home. Every inch is filled with bulging suitcases, cardboard boxes and furniture shrouded in sheets. Photographs of family members hang by her daughter's sporting trophies and pictures of Jesus.

BILL BEFORE PARLIAMENT

Presided over by tribal elders steeped in customary law, traditional courts in the densely populated apartheid-era "homelands" rule on everything from land rights and domestic violence to trespassing by livestock.

The Traditional Courts Bill, which had its latest round of public hearings in September, would subject the 18 million South Africans who live in the homelands - where the tribal chiefs still exercise power - to this separate justice system.

Speaking to traditional leaders about the bill last month, Zuma lambasted South Africans opposing it for trying to be "too clever" and aping "the white man's way".

Critics say the bill will almost certainly be kicked out as unconstitutional, but they say the fact it is before parliament at all, and that at least one other bill boosting the power of traditional chiefs are planned, harks back to apartheid.

"It's going to take us back to prior to democracy when, as women, our rights were not recognized," said Priscilla Matsapola, a lawyer with People Against Women Abuse, a rights group that provides legal advice and other services to victims of abuse.

The white minority government that ruled the country before the first democratic elections in 1994

created the homelands as a dumping ground for black Africans in pursuit of its goal of a racially segregated South Africa.

Many of the black majority were evicted from their homes and squeezed onto 13 percent of the land where they were ruled by tribal chiefs co-opted into the white segregationists' scheme. Others lived in crowded townships round the cities.

"It's ironic that the democratic government should be moving towards realizing the goals of the apartheid government," said Sindiso Mnisi Weeks, a senior researcher at the University of Cape Town.

She and others argue that the government is distorting customary law by giving chiefs so much power and creating an illegitimate, unelected fourth layer of government.

"People are saying what's at issue here is the transition to democracy and you are selling us out on that," said Aninka Claassens, an expert on land rights at Cape Town University.

WIDOWS

Women, who make up 59 percent of rural residents, would be worst affected by the bill as traditional leaders and cultures tend to be patriarchal, critics say.

There are few working age men living in the simple mud homes that pepper the green and brown hills of KwaZulu Natal. Most migrate to the cities and mines. Half of rural households are run by women, usually grandmothers or single mothers who rely on pensions and child grants to get by.

In South Africa's traditional courts, women usually have to be represented by a male relative or neighbor.

Widows involved in disputes over their late husband's property, like Zondi, are particularly vulnerable. They are expected to go into mourning for at least six months, without appearing in public, because they are considered impure.

"When decisions are being made about their lives and the future of their children... they are not there," said Nomboniso Gasa, who writes on gender issues.

Instead, they are represented by their husband's relatives, often the very same people who are trying to evict them.

Since the introduction of South Africa's 1996 constitution, customary law has been evolving to reflect the new democratic values, such as allowing single mothers to be allocated land.

Critics regard the bill as a backlash by traditional leaders against these changes. Elders counter that the bill would bring the work of traditional leaders into line with the constitution.

"It's not going to violate women ... That is just an exaggeration," said Wilson Makgalancheche, head of the National House of Traditional Leaders, set up by the post-apartheid government to bring traditional leaders into discussions about the new democracy.

"Culture is definitely evolving. In as much as we want to cling to our culture and we want to hand over the culture from one generation to another, we need to be cognizant of the developments within the areas where we live."

‘CODE FOR MISOGYNY’

The chiefs are lobbying for ANC support in exchange for their ability to deliver rural votes.

"The bill on the table now is about the kinds of stresses and pressures on the ANC to build as wide a support base as possible," said Nic Borain, a political analyst.

"They have made very direct appeals to the traditional leadership, which is very patriarchal, very conservative."

Zuma ousted Thabo Mbeki as ANC president in 2007 with the backing of traditional leaders whose power had been waning, said William Gumede, a professor at Witwatersrand University.

"Now they have credibility because they are aligned to the president... Now they are pretty powerful," he said.

Several ANC parliamentarians are chiefs, such as Phathekile Holomisa, who heads the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa, a lobby group which wants the clause protecting gays and lesbians from discrimination removed from the constitution.

Gasa cites Zuma's polygamous lifestyle, rape trial - in which he was found not guilty - and his labeling of unmarried women as "a problem" as signs of a new cultural tone.

Gumede said: "He has set a new example, I think, of social conservatism and he has made it kosher again."

(TrustLaw is a global news service covering human rights and governance issues and run by the Thomson Reuters Foundation, the charitable arm of Thomson Reuters)

(Editing by Philippa Fletcher and Sonya Hepinstall)

TANZANIA :

Tanzania: China Gains Market Share in Africa

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

CHINA exports to Africa are projected to surpass 200 billion US dollars this year, up from 166 billion US dollars last year.

A report by Standard Bank Economists Mr Jeremy Stevens and Mr Simon Freemantle made available to the 'Daily News' noted that China continues to gain market share in Africa.

The bank estimates that 18 per cent of Africa's imports were sourced from China this year up from 16.8 per cent in 2011, and as low as 4.5 per cent a decade ago, while Africa's share of China's exports is steadily increasing from 3.3 per cent last year to 5 per cent this year.

Mr Stevens, Standard Bank Group's Beijing-based economist, noted that African markets matter more to China and vice versa, as China's exports to Africa have grown at a pace five percentage

points faster than to any other region this year. He added that China's imports from Africa have increased by 26 per cent this year, which is twice the speed of China's imports from any other region.

"Africa is China's fastest-growing export destination and trade partner. China's trade with Africa has grown nearly twice as fast as its trade with Latin America, which is the second strongest performer," Mr Stevens noted. He added that Chinese firms, confronting subdued activity in mature markets and tasked with shifting up the value chain, have recognized the importance of selling goods to the large emerging economies.

"Especially, the highly populated and increasingly wealthy ones in Africa, demand from African countries, especially the largest ones such as Kenya, Egypt, Angola, Nigeria and South Africa (KEANS), has simply become even more important to Chinese firms," he added.

Mr Stevens noted that China's exports of industrial goods are continuing to squeeze out producers from mature economies as sellers move up the value chain to offset rising costs. The report also notes that the rise in China's imports from Africa this year is virtually single-handedly on the back of sales of crude oil, notably from Angola.

China's imports of African iron ore are flat, while copper, steel and aluminum have slumped by 29 per cent, 54 per cent and 60 per cent respectively, during the first ten months of the year, according to the report. Early this year, Tanzania signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT) in bid to improve trade and investment between the two countries.

Currently, more than 20 companies from China have invested in Tanzania in different areas, including construction and agriculture. Between 1990 and 2011 the Tanzania Investment Centre (TIC) registered investments with Chinese interests worth 868 million US dollars in various sectors including manufacturing, tourism, services and trade.

Tanzania: Police to Investigate Death of Canadian Woman

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

POLICE have embarked on investigation to establish circumstances behind the death of a Canadian woman who died mysteriously while volunteering to help children in Dar es Salaam on Wednesday last week.

Director of Criminal Investigation (DCI) Robert Manumba, confirmed yesterday that Ms Suzan Wells (41) died in unclear circumstances but would not reveal more details, saying any disclosure would interfere with investigations.

A family friend, Rev. Brian Goodings of Trinity United Church, confirmed that the Collingwood resident had died on Wednesday. He added that Wells had left the town, about 120 kilometres northwest of Toronto, for a month-long trip in Tanzania, carrying suitcases stuffed with educational materials for children.

Goodings was quoted by the Canadian press as saying the Foreign Affairs ministry had told Wells' family that an autopsy has been performed in Tanzania as authorities there try to discover the cause of death. He said the department had informed the family her death was not due to misadventure.

According to Goodings, Wells was an experienced traveller who had gone on numerous trips abroad

to help out charities, including five previous voyages to Tanzania. He said Wells' family is devastated. "They are just shocked. It has been really horrible," Goodings said.

Canada's Foreign Affairs spokesman Ian Trites said in an email that a Canadian national had died in Tanzania, and that consulate officials in the city of Dar es Salaam are working with local authorities to gather more information.

Tanzania: 2,000 Burundian Refugees Will Not Be Repatriated - Official

By Christopher Majaliwa/Tanzania Daily News (Dar es Salaam)/4 December 2012

SOME 2,000 Burundian refugees out of 38,000 camped at Mtabila in Kasulu District, Kigoma Region since 1993 will not be repatriated due to various factors including security reasons.

After a thorough cross examination it was discovered that 36,000 Burundian refugees had no reasons to continue staying in Tanzania while Burundi has already become a favourable place to call home.

Home Affairs Ministry spokesperson, Mr Isaac Nantanga said during an interview that those who were found to have convincing reasons to continue taking refuge in the country were transferred to Nyarugusu camp in the same region.

Nyarugusu camp was established to accommodate refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) following civil wars that dominated some parts of the country.

The decision to step up a voluntary repatriation and close down the camp by the end of the year was agreed by both governments of Tanzania and Burundi under concession of the United Nations Refugees agency, UNHCR. Repatriation operation that was embarked on following conclusions reached during the talks held in Bujumbura in February 22, this year by the respective countries' representatives only saw some few refugees showing willingness to go back home.

He said: "The decision came after a tripartite commission meeting between the two governments with the United Nations Refugees agency." Such reluctance thereafter forced the government of Tanzania to invalidate their status as refugees effective August 1, this year.

"By December 31, this year, all refugees are supposed to be in their home country -- Burundi, failure to do so they will be regarded as illegal immigrants and whoever found to be under that category will be dealt with in accordance with the law," Mr Nantanga explained.

Commenting on the progress of the repatriation operation, Mr Nantanga said the exercise was progressing well as a large number of refugees had already been sent back home. As of yesterday, he said that 24,867 out of 36,000 refugees have been repatriated with only a small number remaining.

He, however, said that the number only includes those who were transported by the government while the reality on the ground showed that there were others who started the journey on their own thus the number was likely to be higher than that. He said that the operation was still on-the-go thus it was the ministry's hope that by the end of the year, everything will be on track as planned.

The Deputy Minister for Home Affairs, Mr Pereira Amme Silima, also told the 'Daily News' over the weekend that Burundi was now enjoying peaceful atmosphere thus it was illogical to continue accommodating such refugees.

He said that UNHCR, Burundi and Tanzania reached a compromise that upon reaching in Burundi, the refugees will be given all basic needs including food free of charge for a period of six months.

Mr Silima said that the repatriation operation has been thorny for most of the refugees still have displaced mentalities that the authorities were not serious for they have been speaking of repatriation but did not implement it.

"This time around we are serious, they must be back to their home countries, and it is true that we have been singing the song for a long time without implementation, we are now convinced that Burundi is safe and they must go back," he said.

Tanzania: TCRA Trumps 'No Texts, Calls' Option

By Alvar Mwakyusa/Tanzania Daily News (Dar es Salaam)/4 December 2012

MOBILE phone operators should provide customers with an option to block unwanted text messages and phone calls on various services and offers by the operators, the industry regulator has urged.

Customers, on the other hand, should ensure that they read and understand the terms and conditions set by the companies before subscribing to such services or other offers. Subscribers of mobile phone companies in Tanzania have, for a long time now, complained about the 'irritating' unsolicited messages (SMS) and phone calls, which are sometimes charged.

"Most people hardly read the terms and conditions set by the firms and this is not proper. They should understand such conditions before joining the service provider of their choice," the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) Manager for Communications, Mr Innocent Mungu, said.

Mr Mungu made the remarks during a brief interview shortly after a press conference on the Annual Broadcasters' Meeting slated for Thursday, this week. "We have met with officials of the mobile companies in connection with complaints from members of the public on the unsolicited text messages and phone calls," Mr Mungu, said.

For some time now, it has been a trend by mobile phone operators to send unsolicited text messages and making phone calls to their customers informing them about new products, services and offers among others. Meanwhile, Vice-President, Dr Mohamed Gharib Bilal, is expected to grace the Annual Broadcasters' Conference to be held on Thursday in Dar es Salaam.

Briefing journalists, TCRA's Acting Director General, Ms Rehema Makuburi, said the conference with a theme; 'Beyond analogue switch-off: Challenges and Opportunities' will attract 200 participants. "The participants will include all licensed broadcasters in Tanzania as well as national broadcasting organizations and regulators from Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi," Ms Makuburi said.

The annual conference will also be attended by exhibitors of digital broadcasting equipment from Tanzania, Kenya, France, South Africa as well as Italy and the United Kingdom. Before the meeting, TCRA will also conduct a one-day workshop to discuss the challenges of broadcasting in the digital environment and a case for establishment of an independent National Broadcasters' Association.

According to Ms Makuburi, the theme for the workshop is; 'Challenges of Broadcasting in the Digital Environment.' The TCRA Director of Broadcasting, Mr Habbi Gunze, said that as the East African Community (EAC) gears up for the analogue switch-off on December 31, this year, some members of the public are still unaware of the new technology.

The migration from analogue is intended to pave the way for full digital terrestrial television (DTT) broadcasting in Tanzania. The Minister for Information, Youth, Culture and Sports, Dr Fenella Mukangara, is expected to officially close the conference. The Minister for Communications, Science and Technology, Prof. Makame Mbarawa, is also expected to attend the event.

Tanzania: Plan Eyes U.S.\$65 Million More Investment in Tanzania

By Leonard Magomba/East African Business Week (Kampala)/3 December 2012

Dar es Salaam — Plan International (Plan), in a bid to deepen the impact of its programmes, has said that it will invest an additional \$65m in Tanzania the next five years.

According to Plan, one of the oldest and biggest global development organizations focusing on children's rights, it has so far sunk in Tanzania more than \$100m in different development projects.

Plan said the development projects focused on improving community health, giving children access to education, water and sanitation as well as strengthening children's capacity to participate in issues that affect them.

Plan's Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Nigel Chapman told East African Business Week in Dar es Salaam that so far, nearly 1.6 million children have benefited from their programmes.

"We are working in partnership with other organizations to promote Village Savings and Loans Associations (VLSAs) to support a plethora of rural communities access loans to shore-up agricultural productivity and help them venture into small business enterprises," Chapman said. Chapman added that currently there are more than 4,000 VSLA groups established across the country with more than 80,000 members. Majority of them are women. VSLAs are proving to be hugely popular in the country as they offer cheap and easily accessible loans to rural communities.

Plan is also involving children in VSLAs to encourage a culture of saving among children and youth, he said, adding that the number of savings clubs run by children has swollen to 300 as 9,000.

KENYA :

Kenya: Foreigners Told 'Keep Off' As TNA-URP Sign Deal

By Judie Kaberia/Capital FM (Nairobi)/3 December 2012

Uhuru Kenyatta's The National Alliance (TNA) and William Ruto's United Republican Party (URP) have formally sealed their coalition deal and presented the documents to the Registrar of Political Parties.

Speaking at the signing ceremony at Nairobi's Jeevanjee Gardens, Kenyatta asked the international community to let him and his running mate Ruto to express their democratic right of vying for political office despite the pending crimes against humanity charges at the International Criminal

Court (ICC).

"Even a suspect has his own right in their own nation. From the time we were falsely accused we stood in front of the nation and the world and said we are determined to follow due process; we are determined to protect our integrity as a nation, please let Kenyans express their democratic right," he implored.

According to Kenyatta, the ICC process should not be used to limit their rights.

The ICC has previously said the decision to have the two on the ballot was squarely dependent on provisions in Kenyan law.

The Gatundu South MP said; "That power is in all those hands including that court at The Hague, which holds it on behalf of humanity. This is humanity, all we are saying is that let this humanity be given the right to elect their leaders... you claim to represent them, let them be given the freedom to elect their leaders in a manner that is democratic."

Kenyatta who addressed hundreds of people who gathered to witness the grand political deal insisted that Kenya is a sovereign country that should be allowed to run its affairs.

"Next year we shall be marking 50 years of our independence, we are determined to protect our sovereignty. We want to work with nations of the world who claim to be believers of democracy. We don't plan to be enemies of anybody. Kenya has been a friend of all and wants to remain a friend of all. It wants to be the island of peace in the region filled with conflicts where we harbour our brothers and sisters who are from war torn countries," he said.

Kenyatta also told visiting former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and ex-Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa who are members of the Panel of Eminent African Personalities to keep off Kenya's affairs.

"We plead with you, we respect your concern because you are a friend and a friend must always be concerned, but at some stage you must leave the home to determine its own future. Kenya wants to determine its future, and we shall do so with our fellow Kenyans," he said.

Earlier, Annan said they were not meddling in Kenya's affairs, but walking with the country as it prepares to implement its constitution and also hold general elections under the new law.

Ruto - the Eldoret North MP - who will be Kenyatta's running mate in the polls, said URP and TNA will ensure that Kenya does not return to violence and announced their commitment to ensure peace and unity will prevail in the country under their leadership.

However, he urged their political rivals to desist from using abusive politics likely to deter peace efforts.

His remarks were echoed by URP chairman Francis ole Kaparo.

"We are not in a competition of insults... we are not in the business of insults and we are not competing with anybody about insults, you can have all the insults you want without contest from us. We are also telling our competitors please be honest," he said.

The National Alliance and United Republican Party later presented their agreement to the registrar of political parties ahead of the deadline on Tuesday.

Kenya: Kalonzo Finally Admits It's an ODM Deal

3 December 2012/Capital FM (Nairobi)

Vice President Kalonzo Musyoka now says his Wiper Democratic Movement, Raila Odinga's Orange Democratic Movement and Moses Wetangula's Ford Kenya will sign a pre-poll pact on Tuesday.

Musyoka who spoke in his Mwingi North constituency after registering as a voter on Monday said the agreement was for the parties to work together ahead of the 2013 General Election.

The statement by the VP came as his lieutenants and those of Odinga met in Nairobi to craft the agreement.

Among those at the meeting at Orengo's personal office at Lonrho House were Education Minister Mutula Kilonzo, David Musila, Johnson Muthama and Mohammed Affey.

Odinga's team at the six-hour talks was represented by Orengo, Anyang' Nyong'o, Dalmas Otieno and Musa Sirma.

Later, Cabinet Minister Charity Ngilu was seen emerging from the offices in the company of Mutito MP Kiema Kilonzo.

As they left, nominated MP Musikari Kombo was seen entering Orengo's office.

Kenya: Annan, Mkapa Deny Meddling in Kenyan Affairs

3 December 2012/Leadership (Abuja)

African Union (AU) Panel of Eminent Personalities members Kofi Annan and Benjamin Mkapa on Monday denied claims they are meddling in Kenya's internal affairs.

Annan, a former UN Secretary-General, and Mkapa, a former Tanzanian President, are members of the Annan-led panel which brokered the peace talks that ended the 2007 post-election violence, culminating in the formation of Kenya's Grand Coalition Government.

The violence was sparked by the disputed election in which incumbent President Mwai Kibaki was declared the winner by the now disbanded Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK), to the chagrin of his key challenger, Raila Odinga.

The ensuing violence left 1,300 people dead and 350,000 displaced.

The pair brushed aside the meddling claims when they met Chief Justice Willy Mutunga as part of their three-day tour of Kenya which ends Tuesday.

They described themselves as friends of Kenya, whose core mandate is to help the east African country in its reform process.

The two leaders said they were in the country to observe the framework laid out by various institutions to ensure security, transparency and peace during the March 4, 2013 election period.

"We have been engaged since 2008. A lot has happened and as we look forward to the next elections, I am sure most Kenyans are hoping for free and fair elections and we as friends and people of goodwill wish the country well.

"There are lots of goodwill to the people of Kenya in the outer world and these people would want to see this happen.

"That is what has kept us engaged in the process over the years, and that is what we are here to encourage as we move towards March 2013," he said.

The pair said they actively participated in the mediation process and were determined to ensure Kenya succeeds in its efforts to restore its institutions, especially through democratic elections.

Some politicians, especially presidential aspirants Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto, have been critical of Annan's frequent visit to Kenya, at times accusing him of favouring certain presidential aspirants.

Uhuru and Ruto are among the initial six Kenyan suspects, whom the International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecution suspected of playing key roles in the post-election violence.

Other suspects were former Police Commissioner Hussein Ali, former Head of Public Service and Secretary to The Cabinet Francis Muthaura, broadcast journalist Joshua Sang and Industrialisation Minister Henry Kosgey.

The ICC Pre-Trial Chamber 2 acquitted Ali and Kosgey, citing lack of sufficient evidence, but ruled that Uhuru, Muthaura, Ruto and Sang should answer crimes against humanity charges at The Hague from March 11, 2013.

Unlike other ICC suspects who are held in custody at The Hague, the Kenyan suspects are free and will only be held in custody if they breach the terms and conditions given by the ICC.

In the meantime, Uhuru and Ruto have crafted a pre-poll alliance in which Uhuru will be the presidential contender and Ruto his running mate.

Annan was the one who forwarded to ICC the envelope containing the names of people suspected to have played key roles- masterminding and funding- the violence.

The envelope was presented to High Court Judge Philip Waki, who led the Commission of Inquiry into the post-election violence.

Chief Justice Mutunga assured the two leaders that the Judiciary had seriously considered the elections and was ready to handle any disputes arising therefrom.

Kenya: Six Million Have Registered So Far - IEBC

By Lordrick Mayabi/Capital FM (Nairobi)/3 December 2012

Close to six million people have been registered as voters in two weeks according to the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC).

A statement from the commission on Monday said the number represented 33 percent of the estimated Kenyan voting population.

Nairobi County leads with the most number of those registered at 632, 145 out of an estimated voting population of about 1.5 million people followed by neighboring Kiambu County with 329, 340 people registered out of 756,773 estimated eligible voters.

Nakuru County comes in third place with 307,687 registered voters.

Counties in Northern Kenya still have low numbers with Marsabit recording the lowest numbers at 14,344; Lamu County with 22,272 out of an estimated voting population of 47,337 while Samburu County has so far registered 34,980.

Wajir County has 56,728 registered while Mandera has achieved 57,534 voters in two weeks.

Other counties with steadily rising numbers include Kakamega with 266,155, Meru which had registered 202,388, Bungoma County with 184, 479, Kisii with 190,259, Busia, 123, 615 and Siaya County with 178,243.

Tharaka Nithi County has registered 68,889, Baringo 81,768, Machakos 125, 685, Makueni 108,365, Kitui 115,669, Laikipia 65,844, Garissa 54, 838 and Vihiga 91,600.

At the coast Kilifi has recorded 126, 285, Tana River 32,962 while Mombasa has 146,876 out of an estimated half a million voters.

Out of the 22 million eligible voters, IEBC aims to register at least 18 million Kenyans by the end of the 30 day period on December 18.

Meanwhile, Vice president Kalonzo Musyoka who registered on Monday in Tseikuru once again appealed to Kenyans to vote for leaders irrespective of ethnic and political backgrounds in the next elections.

He expressed concern at the manner in which residents in many parts of the country were turning up in small numbers to register barely two weeks before the deadline of the exercise.

The VP made a passionate appeal to all Kenyans to make use of the ongoing biometric voter registration to enlist in large numbers so as to participate in the forthcoming General Election.

He said the biometric voter registration exercise will ensure names of ghost voters do not appear in the register.

Musyoka at the same time directed the department of Registration of Persons to move with speed and ensure Kenyans over the age of 18 and who have applied for IDs are given within the shortest time possible so that they can participate in voter listing exercise.

"It has become clear that thousands of Kenyans are yet to get IDs especially now that the country is preparing for elections," he said.

ANGOLA :

AU/AFRICA :

L'opposition au président égyptien ne désarme pas

Par Pierre Prier/lefigaro.fr/le 04/12/2012

Après l'adoption du projet de Constitution qui sera soumis à référendum le 15 décembre, l'opposition à Mohamed Morsi a appelé à nouveau à une grande manifestation ce mardi.

Envoyé spécial au Caire

Place Tahrir, au centre du Caire, en ce lieu symbolique de la révolution anti- Moubarak, l'opposition libérale se rassemble désormais contre le nouveau pouvoir, représenté par un président issu des Frères musulmans. La large coalition de l'opposition, formée des partis laïques de droite comme de gauche, veut boycotter le référendum prévu le 15 décembre. Ce jour là, les Égyptiens devront dire «oui» ou «non» au projet de Constitution soutenu par le président Morsi, les Frères musulmans et leurs alliés salafistes.

L'opposition juge ce projet dangereux pour la démocratie, car il donne, selon elle, trop de place à la religion et ne garantit pas suffisamment les libertés. Le texte, très long avec ses 234 articles, parfois vagues, a été rédigé par une Commission constituante entièrement islamiste, ses membres laïques ayant démissionné.

L'opposition souhaite mobiliser ce mardi au moins autant de monde qu'il y a sept jours. Comme le 27 novembre, les leaders des principaux partis devraient être présents, de Mohammed ElBaradei, l'ancien chef de l'Agence internationale de l'énergie atomique (AIEA) à Hamdine Sabbahi, l'homme de gauche nassérien arrivé troisième à l'élection présidentielle du 24 juin.
«Dernier avertissement»

Les opposants parlent de «dernier avertissement». Le président, lui, semble toujours décider à passer en force. Il a reçu lundi le renfort du Conseil supérieur de la justice, l'une des institutions de l'appareil judiciaire. Le Conseil encourage les juges à superviser le référendum, comme la loi le demande. Nombre d'entre eux pourraient lui obéir. Les 14.000 juges égyptiens seraient alors divisés. Le Club des juges, syndicat de facto des magistrats, maintient pour sa part son mot d'ordre de boycott du référendum et de grève de ses adhérents. Il est suivi par les membres de la Cour de Cassation et de la Haute Cour constitutionnelle, toutes deux en grève illimitée. Douze journaux ne paraîtront pas ce mardi, et cinq chaînes de télévision couperont l'antenne le lendemain pour protester contre les articles du projet de Constitution qui restreignent la liberté d'expression.

La manifestation de ce mardi ne fera sans doute que renforcer la division en deux de l'Égypte, entre islamistes et non-islamistes. Le président semble confiant. La victoire du «oui» sera facilitée si les Égyptiens suivent le mot d'ordre de boycott. L'opposition prend, elle, le pari risqué d'une abstention significative pour déclarer le référendum illégitime. Place Tahrir, lundi, des débats juridiques se sont improvisés entre les militants qui occupent l'endroit et des curieux de passage. Un avocat en costume gris répondait tant bien que mal à des électeurs tentés de participer au référendum, mais perplexes devant l'exercice. «Est-ce qu'on peut voter oui, sauf pour les articles qu'on n'aime pas?» demandait Ahmed, un petit commerçant.

La crise politique perdure en Égypte

le mardi 4 décembre 2012 /Radio-Canada avec Agence France-Presse, Reuters et Al Masry al youm

La multiplication des déclarations de l'entourage du président égyptien Mohamed Morsi sur le caractère provisoire du décret constitutionnel accordant de larges prérogatives au président n'a satisfait ni l'opposition ni les juges.

Les partis d'opposition ont appelé à une manifestation mardi au Caire et les autres villes du pays sous le slogan : « dernier avertissement ».

Des partis appellent à se rassembler à l'emblématique place Tahrir au Caire, alors que d'autres se rendront manifester devant le palais présidentiel. Le Courant patriotique égyptien invite quant à lui ses partisans à manifester devant deux mosquées de la capitale.

Les jeunes du Front du salut national (FSN), une coalition d'opposition dont font partie le parti de la Constitution de Mohamed ElBaradei et le mouvement du Courant populaire de Hamdeen Sabbahi, arrivé troisième à l'élection présidentielle, ont prévu de marcher mardi sur le palais présidentiel.

Si M. Morsi maintient son décret, « nous verrons quelles mesures nous prendrons », a déclaré Tarek el-Khouly du mouvement du 6-Avril, membre du FSN, tout en n'écartant pas un appel à la désobéissance civile.

Et il n'y a pas que l'opposition qui s'en prend au président, les journaux critiquent aussi violemment la décision du président d'accélérer l'adoption de la Constitution, qu'ils rejettent.

Onze quotidiens ont publié lundi le même dessin en une, montrant un journal menotté dans une cellule, avec en légende : « Une Constitution qui supprime des droits et menotte la liberté. Non à la dictature ».

Ces 11 journaux ont d'ailleurs décidé de ne publier aucune édition mardi pour protester contre le manque de garanties pour la liberté de la presse dans le projet de Constitution.

Les juges se sont également joints à la fronde. Le Club des juges d'Égypte a annoncé que les magistrats, dont la plupart ont été nommés sous Hosni Moubarak, ne superviseront pas le référendum.

« Tous les juges d'Égypte se sont accordés pour ne pas superviser un référendum sur un projet de Constitution et pour le boycotter », a affirmé le président du Club des juges, Ahmed al-Zind, alors qu'il revient au pouvoir judiciaire d'assurer la surveillance des scrutins et d'en proclamer les résultats.

La haute cour constitutionnelle avait rejoint la Cour de cassation et d'autres tribunaux du pays dans une grève illimitée pour dénoncer des « pressions » exercées par le camp du président islamiste.

Un des anciens présidents du Club des juges, Zakaria Abdel Aziz, estime qu'il en va du devoir des juges de superviser le référendum.

« Beaucoup de juges m'ont appelé et ils s'orientent vers une supervision du référendum », a-t-il déclaré. « Le président du Club des juges prône une politique de la terre brûlée. Lui et certains de ceux qui l'ont soutenu ont poussé les juges sur le terrain de bataille politique », a-t-il expliqué.

Deux camps

Si dans cette crise, qui dure depuis 10 jours, l'opposition a pu mobiliser ses partisans, les islamistes

n'ont pas été en reste. Samedi, des centaines de milliers d'islamistes ont manifesté leur soutien à M. Morsi.

Dimanche, un responsable islamiste ayant participé à l'élaboration du texte avait estimé que la fronde des juges n'empêcherait pas le bon déroulement du référendum sur la nouvelle Constitution, prévu le 15 décembre.

Et le Conseil supérieur de la justice lui a donné raison lundi, en annonçant qu'elle avait décidé de déléguer des magistrats pour superviser le référendum. Environ 10 000 magistrats seront nécessaires pour l'organisation du scrutin.

UN/AFRICA :

The road to a climate change deal goes through Doha

By Editorial Board/washingtonpost.com/Tuesday, December 4, 1:58 AM

CLIMATE CHANGE is global. Unless enough big-emitting nations stop pumping carbon into the atmosphere, no single country's efforts will matter much. That is why, despite the many unmet deadlines, petty squabbles and dashed hopes, it is still important for world leaders to gather and work toward a climate deal, as they have done many times in the past two decades and as they have been doing in Doha, Qatar, since last Monday.

World governments were supposed to have made a big step toward solving the problem through the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, but that agreement has proved inadequate for a variety of reasons, including the fact that the United States pulled out of the treaty. Leaders were then supposed to have achieved the dream of a legally binding, consensus-driven international climate treaty at a U.N. conference in Copenhagen three years ago, but they failed. Three major U.N. climate confabs later, the goal is to have such an agreement negotiated by 2015 and in force by 2020. The science, meanwhile, counsels both faster action and larger emissions reductions than countries have pledged.

Not surprisingly, the toughest question to resolve in such negotiations is which countries will be obliged to cut their projected emissions deeply. It pits developed countries, particularly the United States, against big developing ones such as China and India. U.N. talks in the 1990s enshrined the notion that developing nations need not enforce serious emissions restrictions, because they were poorer and responsible for less of the greenhouse gas in the atmosphere. But with China now emitting nearly twice as much carbon dioxide as is the United States, demanding lots from the West and little from China is nonsensical on the science and impossible politically, since Western voters would balk.

U.S. representatives have been right to insist that developing nations do their part as their economies expand. The United States is on track to meet its commitment to reduce emissions by 17 percent of 2005 levels by 2020; Americans must have a sense that China's activities won't render further effort futile.

Somewhat paradoxically, though, securing larger commitments from big developing nations requires Western, particularly American, leadership. President Obama has failed to put climate policy high on his agenda, let alone to push a policy framework for cutting carbon after 2020. U.S. negotiators must convince other nations that Washington will follow through on a deal that involves shared action to cut global emissions. In the process, they must also ensure that the action is

genuinely shared. That will require more work at home. And it will require a flexible approach to negotiations abroad, instead of putting all hopes in one big U.N.-brokered agreement.

Climate change is now on the agenda of all sorts of international meetings. These can lead to small-scale agreements that build trust — or even to bigger pacts among key players to which others eventually sign on.

EU/AFRICA :

Le procès de l'Arche de Zoé s'est ouvert à Paris

le lundi 3 décembre 2012 /rtbf.be

Le procès de l'Arche de Zoé, association qui avait tenté en 2007 d'exfiltrer 103 enfants présentés comme des orphelins du Darfour, s'est ouvert lundi à Paris en l'absence des deux principaux protagonistes du dossier, qui n'ont pas souhaité se présenter devant le tribunal correctionnel.

Eric Breteau, président de l'association humanitaire et sa compagne Emilie Lelouch ont fait savoir qu'ils refusaient de comparaître devant le tribunal correctionnel pour "exercice illicite de l'activité d'intermédiaire pour l'adoption", "aide au séjour irrégulier" et "escroquerie" au préjudice des 358 familles accueillantes.

En revanche, les quatre autres prévenus -le médecin Philippe van Winkelberg, le logisticien Alain Péligrat, la journaliste Agnès Pelleran et Christophe Letien, un membre de l'association resté en France- étaient présents.

Une vingtaine de familles françaises se sont constituées partie civile, certaines estimant que l'Arche de Zoé a abusé de leur désir d'enfant.

Le 25 octobre 2007, dix-sept Européens, dont neuf Français, étaient arrêtés à Abéché (est du Tchad), alors qu'ils s'apprêtaient à faire embarquer illégalement vers la France 103 enfants affublés de faux pansements, présentés comme des orphelins du Darfour, région soudanaise frontalière du Tchad.

Or les enfants, promis à des familles d'adoptants en France, étaient pour la plupart Tchadiens et la quasi-totalité d'entre eux n'étaient pas des orphelins, comme l'association l'affirmait sur internet, appelant à leur adoption.

Le procès est prévu pour durer jusqu'au 12 décembre.

Eric Breteau, Emilie Lelouch, Philippe van Winkelberg et Alain Péligrat avaient été condamnés par la justice tchadienne pour tentative d'enlèvements d'enfants à huit ans de travaux forcés. Ils avaient été transférés en France et leur peine avait été commuée en années de prison, avant que le président tchadien Idriss Deby ne les gracie fin mars 2008.

Belga

Affaire Merah : deux arrestations pour complicité à Albi et Toulouse

V.F./leparisien.fr/le 04.12.2012

Deux personnes ont été arrêtées mardi matin, l'une à Albi (Tarn), l'autre à Toulouse (Haute-Garonne), dans le cadre de l'enquête sur les complicités dont aurait pu bénéficier Mohamed Merah, le tueur au scooter de Toulouse. Un homme, qui fait partie de la communauté des gens du voyage, a été arrêté à Albi sur son lieu de résidence et immédiatement placé en garde à vue. L'interpellation s'est déroulée sans heurts et l'homme devait être conduit à Toulouse.

Une source proche des investigations a cependant mis en garde contre la conclusion hâtive que cette personne serait le «troisième homme» présent au moment du vol du scooter utilisé par Merah pour commettre ses crimes. Cette piste d'un «troisième homme» est évoquée depuis le début de l'enquête. La personne interpellée à Toulouse, également sur son lieu de résidence, est l'ex-compagne de l'homme interpellé à Albi. Elle a elle aussi été placée en garde à vue. Tous deux sont «susceptibles d'avoir apporté une aide à Merah dans la commission des faits».

Le «tueur au scooter» Mohamed Merah a tué trois enfants et un enseignant le 19 mars dans une école juive de Toulouse, ainsi que trois militaires dans cette même ville et à Montauban.

En garde à vue, son frère Abdelkader Merah, seul mis en examen pour «complicité d'assassinat», avait mis les enquêteurs sur la piste d'un troisième homme. Mais il avait refusé de donner le nom de cet «ami d'enfance» qui n'avait alors pas été identifié.

Interrogé par M6, Abdelghani Merah, frère aîné de Mohamed Merah, avait également évoqué l'hypothèse d'un «troisième homme», possible complice du vol du scooter, estimant qu'il s'agissait d'une connaissance, «quelqu'un des gens du voyage».

EN BREF, CE 04 Décembre 2012 ... AGNEWS/DAM,NY, 04/12/2012