



[The Kenyan government on Thursday blamed a spate of bomb and grenade attacks in Nairobi in Eastleigh residential estate on Al-Shabaaab militants from Somalia. Nairobi Provincial Commissioner Njoroge Ndirangu told a news conference in Nairobi that so far the police are holding 23 suspects in connection with Wednesday night's attack and will be arraigned in court after investigations are completed. "We have the capacity, will and ability to secure the city and eliminate criminal elements," Ndirangu vowed, adding that during the festive season the police will be on standby to provide security to party-goers.]

BURUNDI :

RWANDA :

### U.S. under pressure over Rwanda involvement in Congo fighting

By Robyn Dixon, Los Angeles Times/December 20, 2012

As evidence mounts of Rwandan backing of eastern Congo rebels, pressure is on the U.S. to cut aid for the regime.

GOMA, Congo — It was not the bullet lodged in the officer's gut, or the botched operation he'd had in a field hospital, that made the case so difficult for doctors in a Goma hospital.

It was trying to save the life of a Rwandan officer injured in the recent Congolese battle for the eastern city when Rwanda's government insisted it wasn't involved in the Goma fighting.

Doctors were convinced the officer would die if he wasn't sent home to Rwanda, where he could get better medical care.

"His family in the military in Rwanda came and took him from here," Dr. Jo Lusi, founder of the Heal Africa Hospital, said in an interview last month. He said the hospital treats wounded people from all military groups in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The move apparently infuriated the Rwandan military. "They said, 'Why did you allow this [officer] to go to Rwanda? If you take back wounded to Rwanda, it's like proof,'" Lusi said. The Rwandan government has long denied it is supporting rebels in eastern Congo, its neighbor.

That assertion conflicts with the reports of outside observers. A November report by United Nations experts on the conflict in eastern Congo said Rwandan authorities had frequently facilitated the evacuation of casualties to Rwanda. It accused the regime of Rwandan President Paul Kagame of

arming and commanding a group known as M23, associated with war crimes suspect Bosco Ntaganda. The British government said it had "compelling" evidence of such a link.

"The government of Rwanda continues to violate the [U.N.] arms embargo by providing direct military support to the M23 rebels, facilitating recruitment, encouraging and facilitating desertions from the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and providing arms, ammunition, intelligence and political advice," the report says. "The de facto chain of command of M23 includes Gen. Bosco Ntaganda and culminates with the minister of defense of Rwanda, Gen. James Kabarebe."

Analysts say that without Rwandan forces, M23 would not have made its recent territorial gains. In a report leaked this month, the U.N. experts alleged that Rwandan forces took part in M23's October attack and capture of Goma.

"If it was difficult before, now it is almost impossible to justify this belligerence from Kagame's government," Congo analyst Jason Stearns said in a recent article in Foreign Policy magazine.

Critics and human rights groups have criticized the Obama administration's support for Rwanda despite evidence of chronic interference in Congo, where conflicts have killed more than 5 million people. However, there are signs of change in Washington's position. President Obama called Kagame this week and asked him to end support for any rebel groups in Congo, according to a White House statement.

Rebels tied to M23 have perpetrated atrocities and human rights abuses, including recruitment of child soldiers, among them girls, the burning of houses and the killing of hundreds of people in ethnically motivated attacks, according to Human Rights Watch and the U.N. report. Dozens of forced recruits and prisoners of war were executed by M23, the report alleges.

Human Rights Watch also reported in September that M23 rebels were involved in killings, rape and forced recruitment of child soldiers, and summary executions of men and boys who tried to escape forced recruitment. The group has called for sanctions against Rwandan officials it says are responsible for backing the movement.

Human rights advocates have strongly criticized Susan E. Rice, American ambassador to the U.N., saying she was among those most responsible for America's support for a government that continues to fuel the Congolese conflict.

Rice, who is close to Kagame, met with British and French diplomats in New York in October to discuss the crisis in eastern Congo, according to another article in Foreign Policy magazine last month. She also strongly opposed a push by France's U.N. ambassador, Gerard Araud, for the U.N. to implicate Rwanda as a supporter of the rebels and hold up the threat of sanctions, according to the article.

"Gerard, it's eastern Congo," Rice said, according to the article. "If it were not the M23 killing people, it would be some other armed groups."

America has long held that it's better to work with Kagame than to alienate him with sanctions, but critics see the chronic fighting in eastern Congo as proof that protecting the Rwandan president from international censure hasn't worked. Obama made his call a week after 15 prominent think tanks and rights organizations wrote him saying that the policy of quiet diplomacy had failed to stop Rwanda from incursions into eastern Congo and support for rebel groups.

The U.N. Security Council has condemned M23 and issued sanctions against its Congolese leaders, including Ntaganda. Last month the council said further sanctions against M23 and its supporters would be considered — without naming Rwanda. Analysts accuse Rice of delaying the release of the U.N. report on the conflict and intervening to prevent a council resolution on the Congo crisis from naming Rwanda.

An October report by the International Crisis Group, a think tank, called on the international community to suspend assistance to Rwanda, which relies on foreign aid to support its budget, and to consider a weapons embargo against it.

The British government last month cut aid to Rwanda, citing evidence that the regime in Kigali, the capital, backed the M23 rebellion. The U.S. has also cut some military aid, but it continues to provide substantial assistance.

In June, Human Rights Watch reported that 200 to 300 Rwandans were recruited in their homeland in April and May and taken across the border to fight alongside M23 forces. "Rwandan military officials have continued to recruit by force or under false pretenses young men and boys, including under the age of 15, in Rwanda to augment the M23's ranks. Recruitment of children under age 15 is a war crime and contravenes Rwandan law," it said in a later report, in September.

Rice's intervention to protect Rwanda left Kagame's government confident that international criticism would be minimal, according to a Rwandan official quoted in Stearns' article.

"The question is not whether Rwanda is the Beelzebub or the savior of Central Africa; it is neither," Stearns wrote. "But given the gravity of the crisis, and the significant support the United States was providing to the Rwandan government, simply giving Kigali a pass for repeated mass abuses was unacceptable and sent the wrong signal."

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### Rwanda Much Better Today - Kagame

By Eric Didier Karinganire/Rwanda Focus (Kigali)/20 December 2012

President Paul Kagame has once again emphasized the vision of the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF) Inkotanyi to remain focused on the struggle meant to sustain a bright future of the country.

"Even in the face of hard situation, RPF will not give up on its goal of building a prosperous country. We are still capable of going back to the trenches to fight for the truth and for our nation," he pointed out, adding that Rwandans remain as forward-looking as they were 25 years ago.

The President reiterated the broad line of the ruling party yesterday at the National Stadium Amahoro while marking a new chapter in Rwandans' history by celebrating the 25th anniversary of the RPF- Inkotanyi that has been serving Rwandans over the last 18 years.

Thousands of Rwandans and friends of Rwanda gathered to celebrate significant progress they attained under the leadership of the party. It was also attended by Uganda's President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni and Prime Minister of Ethiopia Hailemariam Desalegn as well as delegates from Eritrea, South Africa, South Sudan, Burundi, Tanzania and China among others.

The colorful event was also entertained by local musicians such as Samputu, Masamba Intore, Kitoko and Tom Close among others as well as traditional dances who all reflected conducive

environment gained under the RPF leadership.

The Head of State, who is also the chairman of the party, noted that the RPF has been and remain doing significant progress in resolving many of the complex challenges facing Rwanda against overwhelming odds; the efforts, he said, made the country better than ever.

"For sure, the country is much better off today than it has ever been," he said.

A unified nation through citizen participation is said to be the main achievement that has led to the strong foundation for the country, according to the President.

He noted that major efforts have been invested in creating and making available equal opportunities to all Rwandans in education, healthcare and employment, empowering women and youth and giving people living with disabilities their rightful value and improving the business environment and promoting entrepreneurship.

"Even in the most hostile environments, the RPF did not lose focus and, together with the people of Rwanda, continued to make enduring contributions to the improvement of their livelihoods," he noted.

He added that the RPF will always follow that ideological line which places the country, institutions and systems above any individual or other interests.

Though there has been tremendous progress, he remarked, the road to travel is still very long; the reason why he urged young generations to take responsibility and go on with the foundation established.

"This generation, the youth of RPF and Rwanda, must now be prepared to assume their responsibility and take our country to the next level," he urged youth. "The foundation for true transformation has been laid and the opportunity to build on it must be seized."

Along the struggle to enable all Rwandans get decent lives; Kagame said that the focus turns to the old and new partnerships with other African movements and political organizations that are working to make Africa a significant global player.

"Let our celebrations today remind us of how far our country and our continent have come," he urged Rwandans. "Let this important milestone re-invigorate us for what lies ahead because the struggle for dignity and prosperity of Rwandans and Africans as a whole is not yet over."

During the event, the President also praised priceless contribution of RPF members such as late Major General Fred Gisa Rwigema, Colonel Alexis Kanyarengwe, Major Peter Bayingana, Aloysia Inyumba and Rutabayiru Modeste among others for their heroic actions during the liberation struggle.

Tito Rutaremara, Protais Musoni and Joseph Karemera were also among others recognized for their contribution to their nation since the creation of RPF.

RDC CONGO :

UGANDA :

### I felt mugged over €4m Uganda aid, says official

Friday, December 21, 2012/irisht Examiner.com/By Noel Baker

The secretary general of the Department of Foreign Affairs said he felt “mugged” over the misappropriation of €4m of Irish taxpayers’ money in Uganda.

He is to meet Irish ambassadors in February to ensure similar controversy cannot happen elsewhere.

David Cooney told the Dáil’s Public Accounts Committee he was “put-ting my hands up” over the Ugandan situation.

Mr Cooney said he was seeking to appoint a chief financial officer and Brendan Rogers, director general of the development co-operation directorate at Irish Aid, said there was a “skills shortage” when it came to accounting and finance in the department.

The Uganda money is being returned and several people have been arrested following involvement in a fraud Mr Cooney said involved “high levels of collusion at senior level”.

“We ... maybe were not as alert to this kind of fraud as we should have been and certainly will be in future. It [the money] was not transferred into the account that it should have been and frankly that should not have happened. We should have tracked it through to its destination.”

Irish ambassadors have been told of the need to check similar problems have not occurred and Mr Cooney said he was checking the responses.

### Uganda: Police Have Messed Up Nebanda Probe

By Editorial/The Observer (Kampala)/20 December 2012

editorial

Consultant pathologist Dr Sylvester Onzivua of Mulago hospital had by yesterday afternoon spent two nights in police custody.

His known crime - until the police state otherwise - is accepting an assignment by Members of Parliament and members of the family of the late Cerinah Nebanda, Butaleja Woman MP, to carry specimens of her body for further toxicological examination in South Africa.

With an atmosphere already poisoned by allegations that Nebanda was murdered, the last thing anyone should have done was to act suspiciously. But that is exactly what the police are doing.

It has been said that police officers were part of the decision to have Parliament commission a parallel investigation to the official one, and they have not denied that. In fact, Dr Onzivua says the bottle in which the specimen he was taking was packed was given by the police. They have not denied that either. So why did they turn around and arrest him?

Strangely, the police themselves don't seem to know why they are holding Dr Onzivua. It appears

they wanted to stop him and his mission first, and then find an explanation for their action later. It is, therefore, not surprising that some of their assertions have been contradicted.

For instance, at first they said he was a civil servant who was travelling without permission. Now it turns out he actually got permission from the Director General of Health Services. Then there have been reports that the police intend to charge Dr Onzivua with abuse of office.

Yet no one has explained what wrong he committed, leaving the door open for speculation. Now it gets worse with the revelation that the family did not sanction one Ronald Wandera, a relative of the deceased, to be part of the police medical team that took the official samples to the United Kingdom for further analysis!

The mismanagement of this matter does little to instill confidence amongst Ugandans that the government is willing and capable of resolving such cases.

SOUTH AFRICA :

**South Africa's ANC vetoes plan to nationalize mining**

GEOFFREY YORK/The Globe and Mail/Thursday, Dec. 20 2012

BLOEMFONTEIN, SOUTH AFRICA —

After years of damaging debate, South Africa's ruling party has finally vetoed the idea of nationalizing its mining sector.

The announcement is part of a broad defeat for the left-wing factions in the African National Congress, reassuring investors and allowing more influence for pro-business leaders in the party.

But in a compromise with the left-wingers, the ANC agreed to impose some form of higher taxes on the mining sector, and it promised a bigger role for a state-controlled mining company.

As the world's biggest platinum producer and the fifth-biggest gold producer, South Africa should be attracting interest from mining investors from around the world. But many companies are scared away by its poor labour relations, heavy government involvement in the sector, and the continuing talk of nationalization.

Many Canadian mining companies have avoided South Africa, preferring to invest in other places, especially West Africa, where governments are seen as friendlier. Canadian mining companies are among the biggest investors in West African countries such as Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Senegal.

South African government ministers have often expressed opposition to nationalization, but the issue remained on the table for years because the ANC did not take an official stand, and the supporters of nationalization have remained vocal and active.

The ANC, which has ruled South Africa since the defeat of apartheid in 1994, finally recognized that its mining industry was being severely damaged by the persistent talk of nationalization, and it took steps to kill the issue this week at a major elective conference in the provincial city of Bloemfontein.

“The issue of nationalization ... is off the table,” South Africa’s public enterprises minister, Malusi Gigaba, said in a media briefing at the end of the five-day conference, the biggest ANC decision-making event since 2007.

“We are providing final clarity. There shouldn’t be any expectation that from here we will come out and say we are going to nationalize.”

On the issue of state ownership, Mr. Gigaba said: “The ANC affirms its historical position on this topic – strategic ownership where deemed necessary.”

But senior ANC officials were unable to give any details on the level of state ownership or the increase in mining taxes. The new tax could be a “windfall” tax on “super-profits.” Another idea floated by ANC officials is an export tax on “strategic minerals” to encourage companies to do more processing and manufacturing within South Africa.

“Yes, there will be a tax,” said Enoch Godongwana, head of the ANC’s economic transformation committee. “What form it will take is a matter for the administration.”

The vagueness of the tax and ownership proposals will leave a shadow of doubt over South Africa’s mining policies, despite the clear defeat for the left-wing forces at the ANC conference. South African mining companies have expressed deep concerns about the tax proposals, and they will be only partly placated by the announcement that nationalization is off the table.

Most of the conference’s decisions were bad news for the supporters of mining nationalization. The biggest proponent of state control, former ANC youth league president Julius Malema, was barred from the conference and failed in his bid to be reinstated to the ANC after being expelled earlier this year.

Mr. Malema and the youth league have campaigned for nationalization for the past three years, and until now the ANC had always failed to stamp out the campaign, causing nervousness among South African mining companies and foreign investors.

The ANC youth league members were strong supporters of the “forces of change” – a faction that challenged President Jacob Zuma at the conference. But the anti-Zuma forces were soundly defeated, gaining only 25 per cent of the delegate votes. And a wealthy businessman, Cyril Ramaphosa, was elected as deputy president of the party, signalling a more pragmatic approach to economic policy.

**REFILE-South African Markets - Factors to watch on Dec 21**  
2012-12-21/xe.com

(Corrects date) The following company announcements, scheduled economic indicators, debt and currency market moves and political events may affect South African markets on Friday.

DIARY

For South Africa corporate diary, click on

For southern and South Africa diary, click on

## SOUTH AFRICAN MARKETS

South African stocks booked a record close again on Thursday, as investors returned to shares of banks such as FirstRand, which have fallen behind in recent sessions.

South Africa government bonds rallied to multi-month highs on Thursday, partly because of expectations that December coupon payments would be reinvested back into the market.

## GLOBAL MARKETS

Asian shares slid on Friday after a Republican proposal to fend off a U.S. fiscal crunch failed to get enough support, deepening uncertainty over prospects for the negotiations to avert automatic spending cuts and tax increases set to start in January.

## WALL STREET

U.S. stock index futures fell sharply after a Republican proposal on how to avert the 'fiscal cliff' failed to muster enough support on Thursday, raising concerns a deadlock could cause the world's largest economy to slip into recession.

## GOLD

Gold fell more than half a percent on Friday and moved towards its weakest level in four months as the euro slipped against the dollar and talks to avoid a fiscal crisis in the United States seemed to stall again, turning away investors.

## EMERGING MARKETS

For the top emerging markets news, double click on

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Some of the main stories out in the South African press:

## BUSINESS DAY

- How Zuma persuaded ANC to drop the 'N' word
- Miners breathe sigh of relief with nationalisation debate 'off table'

## BUSINESS REPORT

- Local mergers top \$11bn
- ANC backs youth wage plans

## Mandela recovering, says S. Africa leader

Christopher Torchia, Associated Press/Thursday, December 20, 2012

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa - Nelson Mandela was seriously ill but has steadily improved over the last few days after being diagnosed with a lung infection and undergoing gallstone surgery,



South African President Jacob Zuma said Thursday.

It was the first official acknowledgment that Mandela's condition had been grave, and came 13 days after the anti-apartheid icon was brought to a hospital in the capital, Pretoria. The government initially said that Mandela, 94, was undergoing medical tests, and the information that followed was terse and sometimes contradictory.

"His condition was serious but he is responding well to treatment and he steadily improved over the last few days," Zuma said at the close of a conference of the African National Congress, the governing political party.

"I've been informed that, at his age, doctors need to intervene in a very gradual and sensitive way in order to maximize the chances of a full recovery," Zuma said. "The medical team has our full confidence, and he is receiving the best care possible."

Zuma referred to Mandela's treatment in a statement several days ago, but his comments on Thursday were the most expansive by any South African official to date. Some commentators have criticized the government for failing to be more transparent about the condition of a man revered at home and abroad.

Mandela was a leader of the struggle against racist white rule in South Africa, serving 27 years in prison for his beliefs. He served one five-year term as president before retiring.

Following intrusions and a media throng at a public hospital where Mandela stayed in 2011, the South African military took charge of his care and the government assumed control of the information about his health.

The Nobel laureate has a history of lung problems, after falling ill with tuberculosis in 1988 toward the end of his prison years.

### S. Africa's ruling party endorses Israel boycott

By JPOST.COM STAFF/12/21/2012

ANC approves resolutions endorsing Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign to "pressure Israel."

South Africa's ruling party, the African National Congress (ANC), endorsed the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign against Israel on Thursday.

Adopted a series of resolutions blasting the Jewish state at its 53rd National Conference, the ANC adopted policies urging South Africans to support any Palestinian campaigns that "pressure Israel to end its violations of international law, respect Palestinian human rights and engage in fair negotiations for a just peace."

Another resolution affirmed that "The ANC is unequivocal in its support for the Palestinian people in their struggle for self-determination, and unapologetic in its view that the Palestinians are the victims and the oppressed in the conflict with Israel."

The ANC also strongly condemned the Israeli "state-sponsored xenophobic attacks and deportation" of African migrants. The resolution cites comments from Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, Interior Minister Eli Yishai and MK Miri Regev as examples to Israeli racism.

In August, the South African cabinet approved a plan to require special labels on products coming from the settlements so that they do not read "Made in Israel."

The government's approval came some three months after the plan was first made public, and despite a flood of protest from South African Jews and other pro-Israel supporters in the country.

The cabinet issued a statement saying it "approved that a notice in terms of the Consumer Protection Act, 2008 be issued by the Minister of Trade and Industry requiring the labeling of goods or products emanating from IOTs (Israel Occupied Territories) to prevent consumers being led to believe that such goods come from Israel. This is in line with South Africa's stance that recognizes the 1948 borders delineated by the United Nations and does not recognize occupied territories beyond these borders as being part of the state of Israel."

Hebr Keinon contributed to this report.

TANZANIA :

KENYA :

#### **Six Killed in Kenya Tribal Violence**

by Naharnet Newsdesk/21122012

At least six people were killed and several wounded Friday in an attack on a village in southeast Kenya, where deadly tribal violence erupted last summer, police said.

"Unknown people raided Kipao village at dawn and unleashed terror," a police officer told Agence France Presse on condition of anonymity.

"There are six people from one of the communities who have been killed after they were shot," added another police source. "For now we are sure of the six, because we have seen the bodie. We have been told there are 12 others but it has not been verified."

Coast Provincial Police Chief Aggrey Adoli confirmed the attack but declined to give a death toll.

"There was an attack in Tana River, the exact number of the dead or injured people is not yet clear," he said.

In August and September more than 100 people were killed in violence between rival communities along the Tana river -- the Orma who are herders and the Pokomo who are mainly farmers.

According to police sources, tensions between the two communities have risen in the past few days during a disarmament operation.

"There has been tension in the last two days over an order to have communities surrender arms, some were feeling the government was lenient on one side," a police source said.

## Kenya: Mudavadi Can Go, Says Ruto

20 December 2012/The Star

DEPUTY Prime Minister Musalia Mudavadi is free to quit the Jubilee coalition, his erstwhile partner Eldoret North MP William Ruto said yesterday.

Ruto's URP party and Uhuru Kenyatta's TNA cannot "hold a gun" to Mudavadi's head to force him to remain in the troubled Jubilee coalition, said the pugnacious politician from Rift Valley.

TNA this week wrote to the Registrar of Political Parties informing her that the deal signed with Mudavadi's UDF on December 4 was not legally binding as it had not been ratified by the party's delegates.

The TNA petition seeks to immediately terminate the coalition with UDF without waiting for the three-month notice period stipulated by the law.

To further complicate the situation, Mudavadi's party has issued a four-day ultimatum to TNA and URP -- implement the agreement in which Uhuru steps down as presidential candidate in favour of Mudavadi, or UDF quits the coalition.

Mudavadi's party also wants to amend the exit clause that requires him to give three months notice. Speaking during Citizen TV's Cheche morning talk show, Ruto insisted that Mudavadi should abide by the coalition agreement signed between URP, TNA and agreement signed between URP, TNA and UDF and which was deposited with the Registrar of Political Parties on the afternoon of December 4.

According to Ruto, this agreement stipulated that the presidential candidate would be picked through a nomination process.

"The coalition document was very clear on how the presidential flag bearer is to be nominated. It says there will be a nomination process that will guide the whole process, and I think that is what is going to guide us now. We are doing nothing new other than what we deposited at the Registrar of Political parties," Ruto said.

According to the agreement, Ruto will be the running mate of whoever is the presidential candidate. Whoever loses the presidential nomination would have the choice of becoming Leader of the Majority in Parliament or Speaker of the Senate.

However on the morning of December 4, Mudavadi had signed a memorandum of understanding with Ruto and Uhuru where it was agreed that he would be the Jubilee presidential candidate.

On Tuesday, Mudavadi claimed he had been betrayed by Uhuru and Ruto over the method for choosing the coalition's presidential candidate.

Uhuru admitted signing the MoU but said he was forced to do so "by dark forces," widely believed to refer to State House and the NSIS.

TNA delegates and MPs have rejected the deal with Mudavadi and insisted that the delegates pick the coalition presidential candidate.

"We are not doing anything that is outside the original agreement," Ruto said yesterday. "It is clear that the agreement was between URP and TNA, we will share the positions on a 50-50 basis and all of us will have equal say in the running of the coalition government. Others will have to be incooperated through other means," Ruto said yesterday.

He said that Mudavadi should negotiate with Uhuru on how to share TNA's 50 percent. Mudavadi and his team said that their agreement with TNA and URP was that UDF would get 25 percent of government positions and the presidency, Ruto would get 33 percent and Uhuru's TNA gets 41 percent of positions. One per cent was reserved for other 'friendly' parties.

Ruto said that the Jubilee coalition would consider working with the Chinese government if they win the election and Western countries do not want to work with Kenya.

Uhuru and Ruto are facing charges of crimes against humanity at the International Criminal Court. Their trials start on April 10 and 11 respectively while the likely second round run-off of the election will be on April 11.

"It is only Kenyans who will decide if we are fit to hold the office, not The Hague. If they will vote for us, then it shows that they have faith in us. Let me tell you, that we will manage to run this country regardless of the Hague process. Uhuru can attend the court proceedings while I am running the government and when it is my turn, Uhuru will be in control," he said.

"The court does not operate in space but in real world, we are capable of running the country even at The Hague," he said.

The Registrar of Political Parties Lucy Ndung'u yesterday confirmed receiving the letter from TNA requesting the removal of the clause including Mudavadi's UDF in their coalition.

"There is a letter we have received but our legal officers are going through it before we can respond to them," Ndung'u told The Star yesterday.

The Jubilee Coalition had earlier requested the registrar for a seven-day extension of the nomination period for its presidential candidate to December 24.

A lawyer in the technical committee said that amending the exit clause in the coalition agreement would make it easier for Mudavadi to leave. However he said that TNA, URP and UDF were still committed to finding a solution to the impasse inside Jubilee.

The December 4 coalition agreement states, "It may determine that the Agreement is irreparably frustrated, in which case the aggrieved Party shall be at liberty to withdraw from the Coalition upon service of a three (3) months written notice."

### Kenya blames terror attacks on Somali militants

Source: XINHUA/ 2012-12-21

NAIROBI, Dec. 20 (Xinhua) -- The Kenyan government on Thursday blamed a spate of bomb and grenade attacks in Nairobi in Eastleigh residential estate on Al-Shabaaab militants from Somalia.

Nairobi Provincial Commissioner Njoroge Ndirangu told a news conference in Nairobi that so far the police are holding 23 suspects in connection with Wednesday night's attack and will be arraigned in court after investigations are completed.

"We have the capacity, will and ability to secure the city and eliminate criminal elements," Ndirangu vowed, adding that during the festive season the police will be on standby to provide security to party-goers.

Eastleigh has been the scene of frequent terror attacks but the police have warned residents and travelers to be extra vigilant and volunteer any information that may assist in the investigations.

Kenya has blamed Somalia's Al-Qaida-linked Al-Shabaab militants for a spate of attacks in Kenya in recent years especially in Nairobi, Mombasa and northern regions.

However, the insurgents have not publicly claimed responsibility for the recent spate of bomb and grenade attacks which have left more than 20 people dead and dozens of others injured in the past three months.

The East African nation has experienced a string of attacks on churches and public places in the recent past, blaming them on Al-Qaida allied militants from Somalia who have vowed to attack Kenya because Kenyan military forces entered Somalia last year to fight against the group.

But Ndirangu warned those planning to cause violence in Nairobi on notice saying that a massive crackdown to mop up grenades, illegal guns and arrest Al-Shabaab sympathizers is underway.

Ndirangu assured Nairobi residents of security, saying in addition to the swoop in Eastleigh and its environs police patrols have been intensified in Nairobi to ensure residents celebrate the festive season in peace.

The regional government administrator asked the public to co-operate with the police in ensuring their safety.

"It is not the sole responsibility of the government to provide security, Kenyans have a role to play to safeguard peace and security," Ndirangu said in Nairobi.

He called on those planning to organize parties during the festive season to inform the authorities for security arrangements to be put in place.

Analysts say the grenade and landmine explosions come as the biggest warning to Kenya so far that the insurgents are keen to orchestrate devastating terror attacks in the country after the capture of their strategic port city of Kismayo which served as the revenue collection center. The trend of the attacks particularly in northern Kenya, Nairobi and Mombasa which seemingly are well coordinated since several suspects have been arrested, has heightened worries among Kenyans.

### **Gang kills officer, injures two others**

Thursday, December 20 2012/By Cyrus Ombati/standardmedia.co.ke

NAIROBI, KENYA: A policeman was Wednesday night shot dead and two others injured in an ambush by suspected thugs in Nairobi's Sunlight Estate in Imara Daima.

One suspected thug was shot dead by the injured officers as the gang tried to escape on foot and stolen property that included laptops, mobile phones and bags recovered, police said.

Police authorities say the officers were on patrol in that area when they were ambushed by

suspected robbers who had been waylaying passers-by and robbing them of valuables.

The officers were aboard a car and were disembarking when they were ambushed.

A hunt for the other gunmen is ongoing, police say.

Nairobi area police boss Moses Ombati said the gang had been attacking locals and robbing them of their valuables when police arrived.

"They fired at the police patrol car upon seeing it making it difficult for the police to respond fast," said Ombati

The injured policemen are admitted at the Kenyatta National Hospital in a stable condition.

Police said a licensed gun holder was shot and robbed of his weapon in South C area in the city on Wednesday evening.

The man had been visiting his business property when a lone gunman confronted him and shot him in the hand before grabbing his Ceska pistol that had 15 bullets.

"It seems the gunman knew him well but we will get him," said a police officer aware of the incident.

The gunman later escaped on foot leaving the man groaning and screaming in pain and no arrest has been made so far.

Police say they are investigating the incident with a motive of knowing who is behind it.

In Kayole estate, police killed a suspected thug and recovered a homemade gun from him in a botched robbery.

Police said a gang of three had been robbing residents when an alarm was raised on Wednesday night and that two others managed to escape on foot.

Deputy police spokesman Charles Owino has warned of an increase in criminal activities this festive season but assured of adequate security especially in urban areas.

Owino said police have enhanced security in the city and other areas as part of efforts to address the problem and urged for public help with information.

### Kenya tribal violence kills 28: police

21/12/2012 /bangkokpost.com

At least 28 people were killed Friday in an attack on a village in southeast Kenya, where deadly tribal violence erupted last summer, police said.

"The total number of people dead in these attacks are 28," Anthony Kamitu, head of special police forces in the region, told AFP.

"The raids occurred at night, 19 of those dead are members of one of the communities here, while the nine others are attackers from the other community who were shot dead in the confrontation," he

added.

According to police sources, the raid took place in Kipao village and "unleashed terror" on the inhabitants.

In August and September more than 100 people were killed in violence between rival communities living along the Tana river -- the Orma who are herders and the Pokomo who are mainly farmers.

Tensions between the two communities have resurfaced in the past few days during a disarmament operation.

"There has been tension in the last two days over an order to have communities surrender arms, some were feeling the government was lenient on one side," a police source said.

ANGOLA :

#### Angola: Luanda Governor Guarantees Better Public Lighting in 2013

19 December 2012/AngolaPress

Luanda — The provincial governor of Luanda, Bento Bento, on Wednesday here secured the improvement of power supply in 2013, Angop has learnt.

The official said so when speaking at the traditional ceremony of year end greetings, in the presence of members of his staff, municipal administrators, religious entities and MP's.

He said that the provincial government will create more air pedestrian bridges, so as to improve sanitation works and waste collecting activities.

AU/AFRICA :

#### Egypt's Christians fear going to polls amid Islamist intimidation campaign

December 19, 2012/Associated Press

ASSIUT, Egypt – A campaign of intimidation by Islamists left most Christians in this southern Egyptian province too afraid to participate in last week's referendum on an Islamist-drafted constitution they deeply oppose, residents say. The disenfranchisement is hiking Christians' worries over their future under empowered Muslim conservatives.

Around a week before the vote, some 50,000 Islamists marched through the provincial capital, Assiut, chanting that Egypt will be "Islamic, Islamic, despite the Christians." At their head rode several bearded men on horseback with swords in scabbards on their hips, evoking images of early Muslims conquering Christian Egypt in the 7th Century.

They made sure to go through mainly Christian districts of the city, where residents, fearing attacks, shuttered down their stores and stayed in their homes, witnesses said.

The day of the voting itself on Saturday, Christian voting was minimal — as low as seven percent in some areas, according to church officials. Some of those who did try to head to polling stations in some villages were pelted by stones, forcing them to turn back without casting ballots, Christian activists and residents told The Associated Press this week.

The activists now see what happened in Assuit as a barometer for what Christians' status will be under a constitution that enshrines a greater role for Shariah, or Islamic law, in government and daily life. Even under the secular regime of autocrat Hosni Mubarak, Egypt's Christians complained of discrimination and government failure to protect them and their rights. They fear it will be worse with the Islamists who have dominated Egypt's political landscape since Mubarak's ouster in February 2011.

"When all issues become religious and all the talk is about championing Islam and its prophet, then, as a Christian, I am excluded from societal participation," said Shady Magdy Tobia, a Christian activist in Assiut. "If this does not change, things will only get worse for Christians."

But some of the Christians of Assiut are pushing back against the emboldened Islamists. In recent weeks, young Christians joined growing street protests to demand that the charter is shelved, casting aside decades of political apathy.

Assiut province is significant because it is home to one of Egypt's largest Christian communities — they make up about 35 percent of the population of 4.5 million, perhaps three times the nationwide percentage. At the same time, it is a major stronghold of Egypt's Islamists, who now dominate its local government. The province was the birthplace of some of the country's most radical Islamist groups and was the main battlefield of an insurgency by Muslim militants in the 1990s.

It was one of 10 provinces that voted in the first round of Egypt's referendum. Nationwide, around 56 percent voted in favor of the draft charter, according to preliminary results. Assiut had one of the strongest "yes" votes at more than 77 percent. It also had a turnout of only 28 percent — one of the lowest in a round marred by a low participation of only 32 percent nationwide.

The second and final round will be held the coming Saturday in 17 provinces, including in Minya, which has the country's highest proportion of Christians, at 36 percent.

Rights groups reported attempts at suppression of the "no" vote in many parts of the country. But Christians say intimidation and suppression are more effective in this smaller, largely rural province.

"In Assiut, we face more danger than in Cairo," said businessman Emad Awany Ramzy, a key organizer of local protests against Islamist President Mohammed Morsi and his ruling Muslim Brotherhood. "Here they can easily identify, monitor and attack us."

A senior figure of the Gamaa Islamiya — which was once one of the main groups waging the Islamic militant insurgency in Assiut but has since renounced violence and is allied to Morsi's government — dismissed the Christians' allegations of intimidation in the province.

The claims are "just lies and rumors that surface every time we have an election," Assem Abdel-Magued said. The Brotherhood and officials in Morsi's government have similarly dismissed claims of violations around the country.

The draft constitution, finalized by Islamists on a Constituent Assembly despite a boycott by liberals and Christians, has polarized Egypt, bringing out huge rival street rallies by both camps in



the past four weeks. Opponents of Morsi accuse him of ramming the document through and, more broadly, of imposing a Brotherhood domination of power. Morsi supporters, in turn, accuse his opponents of seeking to thwart a right to bring Islamic law they say they earned with election victories the past year.

Egypt's main Coptic Orthodox Church and smaller ones have taken an uncharacteristically assertive approach in the constitutional struggle. They withdrew their six members from the Constituent Assembly to protest Islamist domination of the process and later refused to send representatives to a "national dialogue" called for by Morsi.

The new Coptic pope, Tawadros II, enthroned last month, publicly called some of the charter's articles "disastrous."

In response, the Muslim Brotherhood — which usually keeps a moderate tone toward Christians — has turned toward more inflammatory rhetoric.

Senior Brotherhood figure Mohammed el-Beltagi in a newspaper interview this week depicted mass anti-Morsi rallies outside the presidential palace in Cairo this month as mainly made up of Christians, hinting at a Christian conspiracy against the president.

In a recent speech, Safwat Hegazi, a famous Islamist preacher linked to the Brotherhood, warned Christians against joining forces with former Mubarak regime figures to topple Morsi.

"I tell the church, yes, you are our brothers in Egypt, but there are red lines. Our red line is Morsi's legitimacy. Whoever dares splash it with water, we will splash him with blood," he said, using an Arabic saying.

In Assiut, Tobia, Ramzy and other Christian activists spoke of an atmosphere of intimidation ahead of the vote, including the large Islamist march.

They said threatening messages were sent on mobile phones and on social networking sites. During an opposition demonstration on Dec. 7 outside the offices of the Brotherhood's political party in Assiut, suspected Morsi supporters seized six protesters — five Muslims and one Christian — beating them and shaving the head of one.

With tension building up over the last four weeks, many Christian voters registered at polling centers located in predominantly Muslim areas did not vote, fearing violence, they said.

Those who made it to polling centers in districts with significant Christian populations were soon frustrated by the long lines or delays, which activists said was intentional. In some cases, they said, Islamists who had voted elsewhere then went to stand in lines in mainly Christian areas to make them longer, increase delays and prompt Christians to give up and leave.

Two Christian clerics said that outside the province's main cities, only about 12 percent of registered Christian voters left their homes on Saturday to vote and that no more than seven percent were able to cast their ballots. They based the figures on statistics gathered by members of the Coptic Church's youth group who monitored voting across the province. The two clerics spoke on condition of anonymity because of sensitivities over the church role in political issues.

In the Christian village of el-Aziah, only 2,350 of the village's 12,100 registered voters cast ballots on Saturday, according to acting mayor Montaser Malek Yacoub.

Yacoub is among the growing number of Christians who are pushing back against persecution.

He has taken advantage of the tenuous security situation of the past two years and built two churches without permits and reclaimed a large area of state-owned desert that lies outside the village's boundaries toward a rock mountain. Under Mubarak's rule, Christians rarely received permits to build or renovate churches.

"Let me just tell you this: As far as I am concerned, this is our country and everyone else are guests," he said. But "we're ready to cooperate with anyone who shares Egypt with us."

### African Markets - Factors to watch on Dec 21

Fri Dec 21, 2012 /Reuters

NAIROBI, Dec 21 (Reuters) - The following company announcements, scheduled economic indicators, debt and currency market moves and political events may affect African markets on Friday.

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#### EVENTS:

\*Mauritius - The Stats office to announce 2012 and 2013 GDP forecasts.

#### GLOBAL MARKETS

Asian shares slid on Friday after a Republican proposal to fend off a U.S. fiscal crunch failed to get enough support, deepening uncertainty over prospects for the negotiations to avert automatic spending cuts and tax increases set to start in January.

#### WORLD OIL PRICES

Brent crude fell toward \$109 a barrel on Friday after talks in Washington to avert a "fiscal cliff" before year-end stalled, stoking worries about demand from the world's biggest oil consumer.

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#### AFRICA STOCKS

For the latest news on African stocks, click on

#### SOUTH AFRICA MARKETS

\*South Africa government bonds rallied to multi-month highs on Thursday, partly because of expectations that December coupon payments would be reinvested back into the market.

\*South African stocks booked a record close again on Thursday, as investors returned to shares of banks such as FirstRand, which have fallen behind in recent sessions.

#### KENYA MARKETS

The Kenyan shilling firmed slightly against the dollar on Thursday, helped by offshore investors seeking to buy government securities. Shares inched up driven by banking stocks.

#### COMOROS IMF DEAL

The World Bank and International Monetary Fund said on Thursday that they had decided to support a \$176 million debt relief package for the Comoros that would significantly reduce the Indian Ocean island nation's future external debt burden.

#### NIGERIA BUDGET

Nigeria's parliament approved a 4.9 trillion naira (\$31.6 billion) 2013 budget on Thursday, increasing planned spending above levels recommended by President Goodluck Jonathan and reducing the amount of oil revenue put into savings.

#### NIGERIA WEALTH FUND

Nigeria will begin investing the initial \$1 billion allocated to a new sovereign wealth fund by March, a finance ministry statement showed on Thursday, pushing back the launch previously proposed for this year.

#### ZIMBABWE POWER PLANT

Zimbabwe's state power utility on Thursday signed a \$400 million deal with China's Sinohydro to expand its Kariba hydroelectric plant by 300 megawatts in a bid to ease the country's electricity shortage.

#### MALI CONFLICT

The 15-nation U.N. Security Council on Thursday unanimously authorized the deployment for at least one year of an African-led military force to help defeat al Qaeda and other Islamist militants in northern Mali.

For the latest precious metals report click on

For the latest base metals report click on

For the latest crude oil report click on

#### 55 feared killed in Somali boat tragedy

Friday 21 December 2012/Reuters

Fifty-five people were drowned, or missing and presumed to have drowned, after an overcrowded boat capsized off the Somali coast, the UN said yesterday.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees quoted five of the survivors, all young Somali men, as saying the boat was overcrowded and ran into trouble almost immediately after leaving Bosasso in the northern Somali breakaway region of Puntland.

So far, 23 bodies have been recovered, including those of 14 women, eight men, and a boy said to be less than four years of age.

UN/AFRICA :

#### UN Security Council authorizes African-led intervention force in Mali

20 December 2012/un.org

– The Security Council today authorized the deployment of an African-led International Support Mission in Mali, to be known as AFISMA, for an initial period of one year to assist the authorities in recovering rebel-held regions in the north and restoring the unity of the country.

Northern Mali has been occupied by radical Islamists after fighting broke out in January between Government forces and Tuareg rebels – just one of several security, political and humanitarian problems the West African nation has been dealing with this year.

Acting under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, which allows the Council to use force in the face of a threat to peace or aggression, the 15-member body tasked the Mission with contributing to the rebuilding of the Malian Defence and Security Forces, as well as supporting the Malian authorities in “recovering the areas in the north under the control of terrorist, extremist and armed groups and in reducing the threat posed by terrorist groups.”

By the unanimously adopted resolution, the Mission will also be responsible for, among other tasks, supporting the Malian authorities in their primary responsibility to protect the population and to create a secure environment for the civilian-led delivery of humanitarian assistance and the voluntary return of internally displaced persons and refugees.

The renewed clashes in the north, as well as the proliferation of armed groups in the region, drought and political instability in the wake of a military coup d’état in March have uprooted hundreds of thousands of civilians this year. Over 412,000 people have been forced to flee northern Mali, and an estimated five million people have been affected by the conflict.

The Council also urged the transitional authorities of Mali to finalize a transitional roadmap through broad-based and inclusive political dialogue, to fully restore constitutional order and national unity, including through the holding of peaceful, inclusive and credible elections by April 2013 or as soon as technically possible.

It demanded that Malian rebel groups cut off all ties to terrorist organizations, and urged the transitional authorities to expeditiously put in place a credible framework for negotiations with all parties in the north who cut off such ties.

UN military and police planners have worked closely with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union, in consultation with Malian authorities, for many months in developing a framework for the new force.

Addressing the meeting on behalf of the Chairman of ECOWAS, Youssoufou Bamba, the Permanent Representative of Côte d’Ivoire to the United Nations, said the commendable goals that this “timely” resolution seeks, will not be fully achieved without a strong and consequent mobilization and international support.

“The African Union and ECOWAS require a logistical support package, funded by assessed contributions of the United Nations, which should be quickly endorsed by the Security Council,” he stated.

In its resolution, the Council called on Member States and international organizations to provide financial support and contributions in kind to AFISMA to enable its deployment and implementation of its mandate.

It also expressed its intention to consider the provision of a voluntary and a UN-funded logistics

support package to AFISMA, and requested Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to further develop and refine options within 30 days in this regard.

It was previously announced that Mr. Ban intends to establish a full-time UN political presence in the Malian capital, Bamako, which will be responsible for interacting with key stakeholders and report to both the Special Representative for West Africa, Said Djinnit, and his Special Envoy for the Sahel, Romano Prodi.

The Council requested him to submit specific and detailed proposals on establishing this presence as soon as possible for further consideration.

### UN backs Mali intervention force to oust rebels

20 December 2012/bbc.co.uk

The UN Security Council has authorised an African-led military force to try to oust Islamists from northern Mali.

The council unanimously voted to give the force an initial one-year mandate.

The resolution also sets "benchmarks" for Mali, including political reconciliation and improved training for the military.

Armed groups, some linked to al-Qaeda, took control of northern Mali after a military coup in March and established a harsh form of Islamic law.

The Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas) says it has 3,300 troops ready to go to Mali - although an operation is not expected to begin before September 2013.

The resolution, drafted by France, sets out a multi-stage process for reunifying Mali.

EU and other UN member states are tasked with helping to rebuild Mali's army, which collapsed when Tuareg nationalists and Islamist rebels overran the north.

The BBC's Barbara Plett at the UN says the idea is to get the army into shape for a joint military operation with the Ecowas force.

The UN also wants political progress to be made before the military operation, including holding elections by April "or as soon as technically possible."

Map

The resolution emphasises that further military planning is needed and asks Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to "confirm in advance the council's satisfaction with the planned military offensive operation".

It said the military force - which would be known as the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (Afisma) - should use "all necessary measures" to help recover the north of the country from "terrorist, extremist and armed groups".

Mali's Foreign Minister Tieman Coulibaly welcomed the resolution as "an historic step".

France's UN ambassador Gerard Araud said: "Nobody is ignoring the complexity of the task that

awaits the international community to restore the territorial integrity of Mali and to end the terrorist activities in the north of the country."

After the Islamists and Tuaregs seized northern Mali, their alliance quickly collapsed, with the Islamists taking the region's main urban centres.

The Islamists have since destroyed ancient shrines in Timbuktu and imposed a brutal version of Islamic law, sparking international outrage.

Thousands of people fled the north after the fighting, many of them ending up in neighbouring Mauritania.

A recent leaked UN report warned that about 400,000 more people could be made homeless if the military operation to oust the militants goes ahead.

US/AFRICA :

CANADA/AFRICA :

AUSTRALIA/AFRICA :

EU/AFRICA :

**ALGERIE. La leçon d'Histoire du professeur Hollande**  
le 20-12-2012/Sylvain Courage/Le Nouvel Observateur

Devant les parlementaires algériens, le président n'a pas fait repentance mais dénoncé l'injustice et la violence de l'ère coloniale. De notre envoyé spécial à Alger.

En se rendant au Palais des Nations où le président français devait prononcer, jeudi 20 décembre, un discours très attendu devant les deux chambres du parlement algérien, les suiveurs s'étaient munis de leur détecteur de mensonge historique. La machine, un rien poussiéreuse, n'avait guère servi depuis les déclarations de Jacques Chirac puis de Jospin sur la responsabilité de l'Etat français dans la rafle du Vel d'hiv. A vrai dire, l'engin d'une rare puissance de calcul avait implosé après le discours de Nicolas Sarkozy à Dakar sur l'homme africain qui n'était pas entré dans l'Histoire et le bilan "globalement positif" de la colonisation...

Après l'alternance du 6 mai, l'appareil entièrement révisé allait-il à nouveau permettre d'apprécier la pertinence des discours ? Oui ! Branché sur la sortie son de Hollande, l'aiguille de ce capteur n'a pas frémi. Le président français n'a donc pas menti ! Loin de présenter les excuses attendues et

réclamées depuis tant d'années par le régime algérien, le septième président de la Cinquième République s'est dit tenu par un "devoir de vérité sur la violence, sur l'injustice, sur les souffrances et sur la torture".

Pas de déni, pas de repentance

Et puisque "rien ne se construit dans le déni", il a bel et bien incriminé la colonisation comme « un système profondément injuste et brutal et destructeur ». "Je reconnais ici les souffrances que le système colonial français a infligé au peuple algérien", a-t-il poursuivi en décernant une mention spéciale de l'horreur aux massacres de Setif – "le 8 mai 1945, la France a manqué à ses valeurs universelles", mais aussi les exactions infligés aux populations civiles de Guelma et de Kherrata.

Fidèle à son esprit de synthèse, François Hollande a ratissé large en appelant au "respect de toutes les mémoires". Que les archives, y compris celles de l'armée française, s'ouvrent aux chercheurs français comme algériens ! "La paix des mémoires à laquelle j'aspire repose sur la connaissance et la divulgation de l'Histoire." Autrement dit : plus les peuples connaîtront leurs histoires complexes et fracturées, plus ils seront enclin à la tempérance. Hollande n'a pas voulu haranguer l'assemblée algérienne. Mais tel l'instituteur d'Albert Camus, éveiller les esprits.

Numéro d'équilibriste

Hommage fut rendu aux "grandes consciences françaises qui ont su s'élever contre l'injustice de l'ordre colonial", de Georges Clémenceau à François Mauriac en passant par Germaine Tillon et André Mandouze. Autrement dit, il y eut du bon et du moins bon dans chaque camp. Raisonnable, François Hollande a fait sienne la conception défendue par le président Bouteflika d'une "lecture objective de l'Histoire". On comprend donc que ce travail savant doit être entrepris des deux côtés de la Méditerranée.

Rien à voir donc avec les revirements de Nicolas Sarkozy en 2007 qui, après avoir qualifié le système colonial de "profondément injuste" avait, le soir même, reçu des représentants de la communauté harki. Tollé à Alger ! Les parlementaires algériens qui ont attentivement écouté François Hollande ne s'y sont pas trompés. Ils ont applaudi debout le discours présidentiel. Mais sans débordement d'enthousiasme. Toute leçon d'histoire n'est pas de nature à soulever les passions. "Il ne pouvait rien dire d'autre. Et ce qu'il a dit était juste", tranchait Patrick Mennucci, membre de la délégation française. A quoi bon, dans ces conditions, utiliser un détecteur de propos historiques ?

Sylvain Courage - Le Nouvel Observateur

CHINA/AFRICA :

INDIA/AFRICA :

[India eases visa rules for South Africans](http://PTI/thehindubusinessline.com/Dec 21)

PTI/thehindubusinessline.com/Dec 21

Johannesburg, Dec 21:

India has eased some visa restrictions on South Africans to facilitate tourist and business arrivals including a much-resented curb on returning to the country within a period of two months.

The earlier restriction in terms of which a tourist to India could not return within a period of two months has been lifted, Indian High Commissioner Virendra Gupta told a gathering of travel agents and airlines at a Tourism Seminar organised by the High Commission in Sandton.

“I think this is right because a lot of tourists use India as an entry point and from there they make short side trips. We have always been facing this difficulty and we have had to grant exemptions, so fortunately that will not be required any longer,” Gupta said.

Gupta also confirmed that the Indian missions in South Africa would soon be outsourcing the issuing of visas, which have been issued free of charge from offices in Pretoria, Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town until now.

There will be a service fee attached to this when the service starts at a date still to be announced.

“We have already selected a company which will open four visa collection centres in Pretoria, Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town. We will start the services in Cape Town and our endeavour would be to streamline visa issuance and make it as easy as possible so that anyone who applies for a visa should be able to get it within three or four days,” Gupta said.

“Tourists will typically get a three-month visa, but for those who are travelling to India for business purposes, we have an agreement with the government of South Africa that bona fide business travellers who are verified by our missions or recommended by the Chambers of Commerce will get one-year visas.”

Gupta also said he was unhappy that Jet Airways had withdrawn its daily direct flights between Johannesburg and Mumbai a few months ago.

“That was the only Indian airline offering this service and I very much hope and pray that Jet Airways will reconsider their decision and come back into the market, because there is a fair amount of travel both ways. They should also consider the number of people who are using Johannesburg as a transit point into Southern Africa,” he said.

Johannesburg travel agent R.C. Naik supported the call by Gupta: “It would definitely be good to have an Indian carrier back in the country as travel between India and South Africa is growing fast in the wake of the BRICS (Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa) initiative.”

BRAZIL/AFRICA :

EN BREF, CE 21 Décembre 2012... AGNEWS/DAM ,NY, 21/12/2012