



[Malian soldiers have fired on Islamist fighters in the centre of the country, military sources say. It is the first significant fighting reported between the two sides since Islamist and Tuareg rebels seized control of the north of the country last April. The Islamists had reportedly tried to make an advance into the government-controlled south. It is not clear whether there were any casualties. The army used artillery against the Islamist fighters in the village of Gnimignama, 30km (19 miles) from army positions, according to army sources.]

BURUNDI :

Burundi : Exploitation anarchique des mines dans le parc de Kibira

Xinhua/Mardi 8 janvier 2013

BUJUMBURA (Xinhua) - Les mines du Parc national de la Kibira, situées dans le nord-ouest du Burundi, sont exploitées de manière anarchique, selon l'administration territoriale de la province Bubanza, citée lundi par la radio burundaise RSF/Bonesha- FM.

Une multitude d'exploitants creusent régulièrement et anarchiquement des fosses dans ce parc pour y extraire de l'or et du coltan sans se soucier de la restauration de l'environnement, a déploré l'administrateur de la commune Bubanza, Isaïe Niragira.

"Si rien n'est fait, cette partie de la forêt risque de disparaître", a-t-il insisté.

Il a invité les autorités territoriales et les forces de l'ordre à suivre de près les associations des exploitants miniers non agréées qui mènent ce genre d'activités dans l'illégalité et qui ne disposent pas d'autorisation du ministère de l'Energie et des Mines.

L'extraction de ces minerais intervient au moment où toutes les activités d'exploitation des mines dans les aires protégées, en l' occurrence dans la PNK, sont interdites par le ministère de l' Energie et des Mines.

Burundi : verdict aujourd'hui du procès de Hassan Ruvakuki, correspondant de RFI

Par RFI/mardi 08 janvier 2013

On attend ce mardi 8 janvier le verdict du procès dans lequel est impliqué Hassan Ruvakuki. Il y a un an, le 28 novembre 2011, notre confrère journaliste, correspondant de RFI en swahili était arrêté. Il venait tout juste de se rendre en Tanzanie pour couvrir, en tant que journaliste la naissance d'un nouveau groupe rebelle burundais. Condamné une première fois à la prison à vie, « pour actes de terrorisme », il avait de nouveau été jugé en appel.

RWANDA :

Rwanda: DRC Conflict Leaves Rwandan Fish Traders With Smelly Stock

By Eugene Kwibuka/The New Times/8 January 2013

TRADERS have wish lists, but for Rwanda traders in the Democratic Republic of Congo, it is not profits at the moment; the continued conflict in eastern parts of the country means they just cannot wait for the ink to dry on the peace accord, that is, if it is ever signed in Kampala in the interim period.

The Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda militia is made up of elements responsible for the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, in which more than one million lives were lost. It is one of many militia groups that continue to destabilise peace iEveryday that goes by without peace in DRC means losing money and they cannot wait to see the Kinshasa government strike a peace deal with the M23 rebels.

Emmanuel Muvunandida, a small scale fish trader, said his profits have dropped from a bi-monthly Rwf300,000 to Rwf50,000, because of recent fighting between M23 rebels and the Congolese government.

M23 captured Goma late last year, but pulled out after the Kinshasa government agreed to sit at the dais.

"My wish is for the war to stop for our business to resume with normalcy," Muvunandida said reflectively, last week, as he sat on a small chair by the open door of his store in Nyabugogo trading area in Kigali. "Our Congolese clients say they don't have money because of war."

Rwanda's exports to DRC are mostly agricultural products such as cows for meat, cassava flour, and silver fish locally called indagara, fruits, vegetables, and charcoal. The products make more than 60 per cent of the total transactions between Rwanda and its other neighbours of Kenya, Uganda, Burundi and Tanzania, according to a 2010 survey by the Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Central Bank.

While the survey had said trade between Rwanda and DRC boasted an annual volume of \$20m (Rwf12.6b) in 2010 when tensions eased in border provinces of North and South Kivu in DRC, recent fighting between the Congolese government and M23 rebel group has seen business crippling again.

Buyers displaced by war

A Rwandan woman, who sells food products to Congolese from Birere near the border with Rwanda, told The New Times yesterday that her business has almost halted since her clients who used to come from Congolese regions of Masisi and Sake were displaced by the war.

The woman, who only identified herself as Mamashaberi, is one of many traders who have not come to Kigali to buy silver fish for sale in DRC in the last few months.

"It's been a month or two without going to Kigali. We no longer buy, we no longer sell," she said. "Our clients (in DRC) have left and those who stayed don't seem to have money."

Mamashaberi said she remains with a few clients, mainly those who live in the North Kivu provincial capital Goma, a pool of whom she said are not interested in her products like the villagers from other regions of the North Kivu province.

As for Muvunandida, who has been supplying silver fish to Congolese importers for a decade now, is used to the routine of making money in peace times in Congo and registering losses during instability.

Despite the war, he said he would go to Tanzania to import more Indagara, because he might have clients in the future if the rebels do not attack Goma again.

"Business shoots up as soon as there is some peace in Congo and falls during war; it's always like that," he said.

His hope now is that the ongoing talks in Kampala, Uganda, between M23 and the Congolese government will yield some stability.

"There is no market right now. I hope the war will end soon and my clients will come back," he said.

Another businessman, who imports silver fish from Uganda, said his business has dropped 10 times in the last two months. Minega Shyaka imports the product from Uganda and sells it to traders from Gisenyi, who export it to Goma.

"Those who were buying 50 packs are now taking five," he said in a telephone interview as he travelled to Kampala for his business last week. "I wish President Kabila could initiate policies that bring back peace in Congo so that people can go on with their business."

M23, which is mainly composed of former government soldiers, mutinied in April, accusing Kinshasa of reneging on a 2009 peace deal. Despite talks in Kampala, fears remain that war may resume again in Eastern Congo.

Last week, the head of M23, Jean-Marie Runiga, accused the Kinshasa government of deliberately delaying the peace talks by not signing the cease-fire and acquiring military reinforcement from the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda militia group.

RDC CONGO :

RD Congo : Sassou-Nguesso invite Kinshasa et le M23 à poursuivre les négociations

7 jan. 2013/Source : Radio Okapi

Le président du Congo-Brazzaville, Denis Sassou Nguesso, salue aujourd'hui la poursuite des pourparlers entre Kinshasa et le M23 et appelle à ce que les négociations demeurent dans le cadre établi par la CIRGL. « Il est bon, comme cela se fait actuellement, de s'appuyer sur la CIRGL pour promouvoir un règlement qui préserve la paix et la sécurité dans la région ainsi que la souveraineté et l'intégrité territoriales de la RDC. Parmi les désirs communs [il y a] celui de voir ces situations et épreuves inacceptables être définitivement enraillées », déclare-t-il. M. Sassou Nguesso devrait accéder cette année à la présidence tournante de la CIRGL et remplacer le président ougandais,

Yoweri Museveni, dans son rôle de médiateur entre Kinshasa et le groupe rebelle du M23. (Source : Radio Okapi)

UGANDA :

Judge Weighing Dismissal of Uganda Gay Rights Suit

By BRIDGET MURPHY Associated Press/January 7, 2013

SPRINGFIELD, Mass. / (AP)

For Pepe Onziema, a transgender gay rights activist from Uganda, Monday's federal court hearing in Springfield was a chance to face the man he later called the devil.

For Scott Lively, a Massachusetts evangelical accused of persecuting gays in Uganda, the hearing was something he said he expected as a Christian.

"The Bible predicts that Christians would sit in seats like this and have to face these kinds of things," Lively said later. "I'm not surprised and I'm ready to do whatever the Lord has for me to do."

Following court arguments Monday, it is now up to U.S. District Judge Michael Ponsor to decide whether to grant Lively's motion to dismiss a civil action that Sexual Minorities Uganda filed against him last year. The Uganda-based group for which Onziema serves as program director alleges that Lively waged a long campaign of persecution of gays in the East African country.

Lively's lawyer, Horatio Mihet, called the case an attack on the U.S. Constitution and his client's First Amendment right to free speech. Plaintiff's attorney Pam Spees, from the Center for Constitutional Rights, said Lively conspired with others in Uganda to persecute gays.

With every courtroom seat filled, court officials broadcast the proceeding to two overflow rooms so spectators could watch the arguments live.

The judge said he would consider whether Lively's speech crossed the boundary from First Amendment-protected speech into activity intended to harm people, and that he was looking for more concrete examples of misbehavior on Lively's part to justify the continuation of the lawsuit.

"As I look at the complaint, I'm frankly struggling to see what the actionable behavior is here," Ponsor said of the plaintiff's filing.

Sexual Minorities Uganda sued under the Alien Tort Statute, filing the U.S. court action as non-citizens while alleging a violation of international law. Part of Lively's motion to dismiss called the court's jurisdiction under that statute into question. Ponsor said he wouldn't address that part of the claim since the U.S. Supreme Court already is considering the statute.

The defense argued there's no link between Lively and his alleged co-conspirators, and his criticism of homosexuality wasn't specific enough to constitute as conduct that persecuted gays.

The plaintiff argued that Lively met with Ugandan government leaders and headlined a 2009 conference from which an anti-gay bill emerged.

The proceeding comes as Uganda's Parliament could consider a bill in February that would punish those who promote gay culture, among other aims.

While the bill would include jail for some offenses, the lawmaker who authored the original bill told The Associated Press in November that a new version wouldn't punish some homosexual acts with death.

Parliamentarian David Bahati said the new bill concentrates on protecting children from gay pornography, banning gay marriage and counseling gays.

When introducing the original bill in 2009, Bahati said gays threatened family values and a colonial-era law against sodomy wasn't strong enough.

The first proposal called for the death penalty in cases where HIV-infected gays had sex, where gays had sex with minors or the disabled, and where gays were discovered having sex for the second time.

World leaders including President Barack Obama have condemned the legislation.

Lively told the AP after the lawsuit's filing in March 2012 that he never advocated violence against gays and advised therapy for them, not punishment.

He said in an earlier AP interview that he didn't oppose the criminalization of gays but that imprisonment and the death penalty are too harsh. He was among U.S. evangelicals who visited Uganda in 2009, after which debate began about the bill.

Uganda Government Rejects Petition to Recall Parliament

Peter Clotey/voanews.com/January 07, 2013

A spokesman for Uganda's government has dismissed a petition by legislators to call parliament back into session to discuss tensions between the presidency and the legislature over the death of a lawmaker.

Spokesman Fred Opolot said President Yoweri Museveni had already ordered an investigation into the death of Cerinah Nebanda, a member of parliament, and that calling parliament back into session was not necessary.

"President Museveni, himself is supervising this process," Opolot said. "Whereas he knows that his government has been accused of murdering the MP, which is totally wrong."

"This is absolutely ridiculous," said Opolot about the accusations.

His comments came after petitioners gathered the 125 signatures required to call parliament, which is in recess, back to work.

Some opposition parties have accused the government of causing Nebanda's death after she openly challenged President Museveni over the legality of oil contracts. But, Opolot disagreed.

"It is not a principle of the NRM [National Resistance Movement] government to kill its opponents," he said.

Uganda media have reported that some legislators who commented on the lawmaker's death have been arrested and charged with various crimes, which they say has created tension in the country.

The boyfriend of the deceased lawmaker was recently extradited back to Uganda after he allegedly fled to neighboring Kenya. He has since been charged with the lawmaker's death.

But the opposition says the administration is using the boyfriend as a cover up. The government, however, pointed at the preliminary autopsy report as proof of the boyfriend's complicity.

"The autopsy report that came from the independent investigations in the UK (Britain) have so far established that substances related to cocaine and heroin were found in the samples of the MP," said Opolot.

MTN to roll out LTE technology in Uganda

by Staff Writer/bdlive.co.za/janvier 08 2013

MTN Uganda plans to deploy long-term evolution (LTE) network technology in Uganda, the company said on Monday.

MTN would "over the next few months roll out the (LTE) network leading the way by introducing the latest technologies to Ugandans", the company said.

The move follows the commercial launch of the network in South Africa late last year. MTN customers will enjoy faster access to the internet and superior quality live streaming and video chatting, it said.

MTN Uganda CEO Mazen Mroué said the company "remains committed to the development of the information and communications technology sector and the Ugandan economy".

Over the past two years, MTN Uganda has made major investments in the country.

This year, MTN Uganda plans to invest \$70m, while last year it spent \$80m. This investment has been mainly in expanding the network infrastructure to support mobile subscriber growth as well as roll out innovative products and digital solutions, MTN said.

"The continuous capex (capital expenditure) investment by MTN is aimed at providing our customers with the best possible user experience across the country. We would like to ensure consistently reliable network quality for all existing customers and also to enable many more new subscribers to enjoy the mobile technology," said MTN Uganda chief technical officer Rami Farah.

Last year, MTN announced Benin had granted it a universal licence to provide mobile services using any technology. "This presents a great opportunity to improve business communication solutions," said MTN Benin CEO Eric Tronel.

Suspension of aid to Uganda will remain in place

MARY FITZGERALD, Foreign Affairs Correspondent, and JUDITH CROSBIE/The Irish Times/
Tuesday, January 8, 2013

Suspension of Ireland's bilateral aid to Uganda will remain in place until Irish officials are

confident controls have been put in place to prevent another misappropriation of funds, Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs Eamon Gilmore has said.

Mr Gilmore announced yesterday that the Ugandan government had returned the €4 million of Irish Aid funds which had been diverted without authorisation by personnel in the office of prime minister Patrick Amama Mbabazi.

He said the restitution followed “intensive high-level discussions with the government of Uganda over the last two months”.

A team from the evaluation and audit unit of the Department of Foreign Affairs concluded that the fraud was “very sophisticated [and] well-thought-out” and involved a high level of collusion at senior level.

In collusion

“The fraud was conceived and carried out by personnel in collusion who had an intimate knowledge of systems within ministry of finance, planning and economic development, [the] office of the prime minister and Bank of Uganda,” their findings noted.

The funds “were fraudulently transferred from the legitimate bank accounts into which the donors had properly deposited the money to fraudulent dormant accounts outside of the government system” they said, adding that it was “impossible to know who the ultimate beneficiaries of the funds were”.

Mr Gilmore said the €4 million would be put back into the health, education and Aids projects originally earmarked for the money but that it would not go through the government.

“We have suspended payment through the Ugandan government and that will remain suspended until we are satisfied that all of the necessary controls are put in place,” he said. Mr Gilmore has also demanded that the Ugandan government act against the officials who were implicated in the fraud. He added that the Ugandan government must manage aid in a way that is “absolutely transparent” so that there was “no misuse of taxpayers’ money”.

Misappropriated funds

Ireland’s bilateral aid to Uganda was due to amount to €16 million last year.

Uganda’s auditor general, whose office uncovered the fraud, is due to publish a report on the case. The misappropriated funds were intended for a “peace, recovery and development” programme in war-ravaged northern Uganda. “Looking to the future, we stand ready to continue to work with the auditor general of Uganda in his efforts to root out corruption, strengthen financial controls, and build robust and transparent systems of accountability,” Mr Gilmore said.

Fine Gael TD and chairman of the Oireachtas Committee on Foreign Affairs Pat Breen said those who are supposed to benefit from Irish Aid funds should “not suffer as a result of this corruption”.

SOUTH AFRICA :

South African Markets - Factors to watch on Jan 8

2013-01-08 /xe.com

The following company announcements, scheduled economic indicators, debt and currency market moves and political events may affect South African markets on Tuesday.

DIARY

For South Africa corporate diary, click on

For southern and South Africa diary, click on

SOUTH AFRICAN MARKETS

Stocks closed slightly lower on Monday with mining stocks including Harmony Gold pulling the market back from a record high set early in the session on concerns of fresh labour strife hurting the sector's earnings. The All-share index, the broadest measure of Johannesburg stock performance, closed 0.28 percent lower at 40,162.56 and the blue chip Top-40 index closed 0.38 percent down at 35,641.67. □ The rand fell slightly against the dollar but the prospect of renewed industrial action could put the currency under pressure in the coming days.

GLOBAL MARKETS

Asian shares fell on Tuesday as investors took a break from the new year's rallies, with caution setting in ahead of corporate earnings season for the last quarter of 2012 and the European Central Bank's policy meeting later in the week.

WALL STREET

U.S. stocks lost ground on Monday, as investors drew back from recent gains that lifted the S&P 500 to a five-year high, in anticipation of sluggish growth in corporate profits. The Dow Jones industrial average dropped 50.92 points, or 0.38 percent, to 13,384.29. The Standard & Poor's 500 Index fell 4.58 points, or 0.31 percent, to 1,461.89. The Nasdaq Composite Index lost 2.84 points, or 0.09 percent, to 3,098.81.

GOLD

Gold inched up on Tuesday as the euro held on to gains on expectations the European Central Bank will refrain from a rate cut this week, and with robust physical demand in Asia underpinning prices.

EMERGING MARKETS

For the top emerging markets news, double click on

- - - -

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

BUSINESS DAY

- MTN to roll out LTE technology in Uganda

- Hotel operators expecting higher occupancy rates

BUSINESS REPORT

- Swazi economy under control after R7.1 bln Sacu injection
 - Labour unrest hits cement demand

TANZANIA :

Tanzania: TBS Says Limited By Staff Shortage

By Marc Nkwame/Tanzania Daily News (Dar es Salaam)/8 January 2013

Arusha — POOR staffing at the Tanzania Bureau of Standards (TBS) makes it hard for the country to effectively control infiltration of counterfeit products and sub-standard goods from outside the borders.

"The TBS has a workforce of just 400 employees country-wide which is less than 50 per cent of people working for the Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS), in the neighbouring country, which has over 1000 workers despite it being relatively smaller than Tanzania," the Minister for Industry and Trade, Dr Abdallah Kigoda, pointed out.

He added, "We have now resolved to join forces through TBS, the Tanzania Food and Drugs Authority (TFDA), the Fair Competition Commission (FCC) and local security organs such as the Police in order to curb the problem." Dr Kigoda noted that the turbo-powered combined efforts will help to reduce counterfeits significantly.

According to Dr Kigoda, Tanzania also borders more countries than Kenya and has longest borderline perimeter than its immediate neighbour, that is why Kenya has managed to reduce the influx of fake goods by over 70 per cent. Local estimates place fake and sub-standard goods in Tanzania at over 20 per cent of the total imported merchandise in the country.

Globally, counterfeit goods account for up to 30 per cent of traded products world-wide. The highly permeable Tanzania borderlines are reportedly more susceptible to their infiltration here.

The minister was speaking shortly after opening a regional workshop on 'Life Cycle Assessment,' organized by the International Standards Organization (ISO), in conjunction with the TBS to address the issue of industrial production in respect to environment protection and global warming.

The event has brought together nearly 30 participants from 14 countries in Eastern Africa region as well as those from the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) trading bloc. The TBS Acting Director General, Mr Leandri Kinabo, said his authority was working towards establishing a system through which goods will be inspected right from their ports of origin.

"Because if we wait until shipments reach here, corruption and other dubious deals may affect the inspections," said Mr Kinabo.

Tanzania: Need to Bolster Tanzania's Industrial Development

8 January 2013/Tanzania Daily News (Dar es Salaam)

TANZANIA'S industry and trade development remains fundamental in the attainment of sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth.

Evidence shows that industrialization, the development of the manufacturing sector in particular, is not only linked to economic growth, but can also play a catalytic role in transforming the economic structure of agrarian societies.

Manufacturing accounts for the bulk of world exports to the tune of about 78 per cent and is less exposed to external shocks, price fluctuations, climatic conditions and unfair competition policies. The price of manufactured goods tends to be more stable than that of commodities.

However, unfair competition policies have distorted prices around the world, limiting the potential for export growth in some commodities. According to Industry and Trade Minister Abdallah Kigoda, the 2011/12 for example has seen fast growing manufacturing sector, which plays a key role in promoting intra-regional trade despite some infrastructural barriers that contribute to increased cost of doing business.

He challenged state and non state actors to participate actively in bolstering industry and trade development because it is through enhanced contribution of the manufacturing sector that poverty will be easily alleviated.

"The government has a strong political will to continue improving conducive and predictable investment environment to attract intensive capital into the industrial sector," said Dr Kigoda during the last year's African Industrialisation Day celebrations. Tanzania has performed quite well in capitalizing on the growth of the world's most dynamic products in the last year.

A high growth rate has been recorded for copper ores, plastic scrap and fertilizers, the products also have a significant export value to the country. Although relatively smaller, sugar, molasses and vegetable oils also displayed encouraging growth and a reasonable export base level.

This trend shows that Tanzania stands a good chance of having the fastest growing industrial sector in the years to come. Private-owned companies that dominate the manufacturing segment by 91 per cent, has ultimately seen the large public-owned enterprises dwindling to 56, which corresponds to around 8 per cent of all manufacturing ventures, with the remaining enterprises being mixed.

The industrial sector contributes enormously to job creation, with small and medium enterprises (SMEs) generating about 23.7 per cent of the jobs. The rate is estimated to grow to between 30 and 40 per cent by 2015. In 2011, the industrial sector contribution to the country's exports was 19 per cent while contribution to the gross domestic product stood at 9.7 per cent.

Findings by the Tanzania Industrial Competitive Report (TICR) 2012 show that 97 per cent of the country's manufacturing sector is based on small scale enterprises, with little emphasis put in value addition. TICR report is a significant input that inspires the government to help the industrial sector grow competitively and enhance its contribution to GDP.

The Manufacturing Value Added (MVA) as a share of GDP has mostly stagnated at roughly 9.5 per cent between 2000 and 2010, which is still below the average for the region, making Tanzania one of the least industrialized countries in the world.

In the ten years period, MVA increased from \$ 894 million to \$ 1,992 million. The growth rates in

the first and second half of the decade were above 8 per cent per year, outpaced only by China and Mozambique.

According to the report, Tanzania, Uganda, China and Mozambique had the highest GDP growth rates in the past decade of 7.0 per cent, 7.4 per cent, 10.5 per cent and 7.8 per cent respectively, implying that there is indeed a strong link between industrialization and economic development.

Despite this performance, the relevant question is whether Tanzania can sustain this growth trend, especially if it continues to focus on natural resource based activities. Accordingly, one sensible strategic option that the report suggests for the country is to upgrade within this important sector and thus move into higher value added activities.

This is in line with the idea that the structural change necessary for improving a country's economic development has to take into account the comparative and competitive advantages of the country. The MVA, according to the report, was highly concentrated in a few low-tech sectors, making the country's industry vulnerable to international competition and limiting its ability to improve through learning and innovation.

Food and beverages alone account for nearly half of the total MVA, followed by nonmetallic mineral products by 11 per cent, tobacco 7 per cent and textiles 5 per cent. Industrial activities, according to the report, are unevenly distributed where more than half of all large manufacturing establishments are concentrated in Dar es Salaam with a lesser extent in Arusha.

The remaining 14 per cent is spread out between Mwanza, Singida, Tanga, Kagera and Kilimanjaro. In his opening remarks, the Confederation of Tanzania Industries (CTI) Chairman, Mr Felix Masha, underscored for a swift need to address trade barriers which have been increasing the cost of doing business in the country.

He called upon the government to take stern measures to control the influx of substandard and counterfeit goods, saying that the malpractice would discourage potential investors in the industrial sector.

"Africa is good at exporting raw materials and importing end consumer goods," said Mr Emmanuel Kalenzi, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) Country Representative, adding that, "the practice will never foster efforts to realise the dream of alleviating abject poverty, unless the dialogue to boost intra-trade is bolstered."

He cited an example that Tanzania is third largest livestock producer in Africa and exports hides and skins to India, Italy and China. In Tanzania, a consumer buys a finished product like shoes and jacket by paying all production costs such as transport, labour and electricity to the foreign manufacturers. "How can the continent develop under such deals where a consumer pays for every cost?" he queried.

KENYA :

Poachers Kill 11 Elephants in Kenyan Park

By JEFFREY GETTLEMAN/nytimes.com/January 7, 2013

NAIROBI, Kenya — Eleven elephants were slaughtered by ivory poachers and their tusks were

chopped off, Kenyan officials said Monday, in one of the worst single episodes of poaching in Kenya in recent years.

Kenyan officials said they discovered the 11 carcasses in Tsavo East National Park, one of the country's tourism gems, underscoring the danger poaching presents not only to the species, but also to one of the cornerstones of the Kenyan economy.

"All the carcasses had bullet wounds," said a statement from the Kenya Wildlife Service.

Kenya — like just about every other country in Africa where elephants roam — has been besieged by increasingly wily and ruthless poachers, driven by the soaring demand for ivory in Asia. A pound of ivory can now fetch more than \$1,000 in Beijing, and as a result, tens of thousands of elephants are being slaughtered across Africa, more than at any other point in decades.

"We've seen nothing as bad as this since the 1980s," said Iain Douglas-Hamilton, a researcher in Kenya who has been studying elephants for decades. "We're right back to where we were."

Several African rebel groups are now using ivory to finance their mayhem, and some American-backed African militaries have also been implicated in wiping out elephants. Much of the ivory is turned into bookmarks, chopsticks and other trinkets.

In Kenya, official figures indicated that about 350 elephants were poached last year. That was the most in recent memory, though wildlife groups say the number was just a small fraction of the true figure, since the carcasses of most poached elephants are never found. Six wildlife rangers were also killed last year — again, more than in any other recent year. In some areas, local groups are arming themselves and wading into the bush to fight off poachers.

The price of elephant tusks has lured criminal organizations of every stripe into the poaching business, from impoverished hunters to sophisticated global syndicates. On Monday, Kenyan wildlife officials said "a gang of 10" was believed to be the culprits in the latest mass killing.

"The gang is being pursued in the adjacent areas by a strong team of foot, canine and aerial units," the Kenya Wildlife Service said.

Jihad Comes to Kenya

Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens/foreignaffairs.com/January 8, 2013

Interview with a Militant

In late October 2011, Elgiva Bwire Oliacha, a member of the militant group al Shabaab, killed six and injured dozens more in central Nairobi. The attack was significant not only because it was part of a sudden upswing in jihadist terrorism in Kenya but also because Oliacha is a native Muslim Kenyan. Until recently, experts assumed that al Shabaab's recruitment in Kenya was limited to the country's Somali minority, which numbers roughly a million people. But Oliacha's assault and others like it have forced a reassessment of the nature of militancy in Kenya.

Although jihadists have long been active in Kenya -- one of al Qaeda's first major strikes, in 1998, targeted the U.S. embassy in Nairobi -- for years native Muslim Kenyans almost never took part in terrorist attacks. Kenya, which is dominated by a large Christian majority, has a history of religious tolerance, and its Muslim population is no exception. In fact, native Kenyans were usually on the other side of terrorism: The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), a peacekeeping alliance

of East African militaries that was created in 2007 to help prop up Somalia's transitional government and fight al Shabaab, has had a significant Kenyan contingent.

But tensions between the Christian majority and the Muslim minority are building. There are many reasons for this, but they include the growth of confrontational Salafi groups and the economic and political marginalization of Muslims. Those problems have been exacerbated by attacks on churches that are specifically designed to provoke communal anxiety. Last November, Christian Kenyan youths rioted in response to a grenade explosion in the Nairobi slum of Eastleigh, attacking Muslims and their businesses. Al Shabaab immediately took to Twitter to capitalize on the sectarianism, claiming that Muslims in Kenya "must construe these attacks as a clear declaration of war against them and defend their properties and their honour." The escalation of these tensions over the past few years is certainly one reason why there are now an estimated 500 Kenyan Muslims currently in al Shabaab's ranks in Somalia.

In mid-2012, I met with six Kenyan ex-al Shabaab members to learn about their experiences. One of them, "Hassan," was recruited in 2008 by Kenya's Muslim Youth Center, an al Shabaab outpost in Nairobi's Muslim-majority slum of Majengo. Although religious, the 16-year-old was not ideologically committed to jihad. Instead, Hassan found a comforting companionship in the MYC's charismatic leader Ahmed Iman Ali and his followers. Promises of money -- 40,000 Kenyan shillings (\$470) a month -- also helped. "I needed money for high school and planned to do it for a bit, save money, and then go to college and also help my grandmother who I lived with," he told me.

Hassan underwent three months of indoctrination in another nearby jihadist mosque in Majengo before traveling blindfolded by car to Somalia with a group of friends. He recalls hearing the driver negotiating with suspicious Kenyan border guards, who eventually accepted a 50,000-shilling bribe (\$590) to wave them through. Once in Somalia, Hassan was quickly put to work raiding local villages. He was forced to maim, kill, and steal, helping both to fund al Shabaab and establish it as a force with which to be reckoned.

"We used to have to wake up very early in the morning and come back very late," Hassan recounted. "It was horrible, and what they preached was not what they did." He angrily recalled how he was misled: "They told us they were fighting for our [Muslim] brotherhood, but what they are doing there is killing Muslims, especially if anyone went against their orders." As Hassan described the tragic fate of one of his good friends, the depth of his trauma was revealed. "My friend refused orders to rape a villager, and he was slaughtered right in front of me," he explained, his voice beginning to break. "I was so afraid that they would soon do the same to me if I made any mistakes."

The killing was done on the orders of Ali, who by then had moved to Somalia to take charge of al Shabaab's Kenyan contingent and whose kindness during his time as a sheikh in Majengo had been one of the factors that convinced Hassan to join in the first place: "He used to give me money for my family. He was a person who never got mad," Hassan said. He also promised me that if I go to Somalia I will get money to study and for my family." But the brutal killing of his friend was the final straw, and Hassan escaped with another companion soon after, relying, like many others before him, on the kindness of locals for shelter and transport along the way.

TAKE IT TO THE STREETS

The story of how native Muslim Kenyans like Hassan came to join al Shabaab starts with Saudi Arabia's development of numerous Salafist religious institutions in eastern Africa in the middle of the last century. The outposts took off in Sudan and Somalia, where Muslim-majority populations

were languishing under dictatorships. In turn, those countries became hubs of Salafi teaching, with Sudan in particular becoming a popular destination for Kenyan Sufi sheikhs seeking training. Many returned home as Salafis.

With the fall of the Siad Barre regime in 1991 and the ensuing chaos in Somalia, dozens (according to some accounts) of high-level Salafis flooded into Kenya as refugees. Long before they started recruiting native Muslim Kenyans, they began to make their way to the halls of religious power and gain influence among the Somali diaspora. The Somali Salafis "came here and started taking over many existing mosques," said Saad Khairallah, a senior official in the Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims (SUPKEM), a primarily Sufi organization that represents many of the country's Muslims. "We told them, 'Build your own,' but they wanted to take our institutions and indoctrinate our members."

To be sure, Saudi Arabia funded some new Salafi institutions within Kenya, too. One of the first was the Kisauni Islamic center, in Mombasa, which was founded in the 1970s. It was there that an aspiring imam, Aboud Rogo, received his training in the 1980s. Over the next decade, he established himself as one of Kenya's foremost Salafi preachers and, by the 1990s, had forged ties with jihadis around the world. Even so, he had relatively few native followers.

One of Rogo's most charismatic students was a Kenyan named Ahmed Iman Ali, who trained with Rogo in the 1990s and early 2000s. In those years, Islamists in Somalia had started to make gains against the Western-backed transitional government there, and Rogo saw an opportunity: He could use the Islamists' successes to agitate for a violent pan-Islamic response to all Western subjugation of Muslims.

Ali thus took Rogo's fight to the streets of Majengo. Rather than build a new funding and recruitment network from scratch, he assumed control of an existing one. Ali set his sights on one of the oldest Islamic institutions in the country, the Pumwani Riyadhha Mosque Committee (PRMC), which did not have a Salafi or jihadist bent. This organization, with its vast land holdings and control of the largest second-hand clothes market in the country, was a lucrative target.

Ali soon engineered a coup against the mosque's steering committee by casting it as corrupt and anti-Islamic. He officially set up his own shop in the old PRMC by the end of 2008, naming it the Muslim Youth Center. Using his extensive connections with al Shabaab in Somalia, Rogo offered Ali's and the MYC's recruitment services to the militia, and it was at this point that Kenyans began to join in large numbers. This has not gone entirely unnoticed: A 2011 UN investigation into the MYC maintains that during this period that members of the group began to "openly engage in recruiting for al Shabaab in Kenya and facilitate travel to Somalia for individuals to train and fight jihad in Somalia."

The MYC conducted its recruitment efforts, including fiery lectures in Swahili and a slick weekly newsletter, *Al-Misbah*, in plain view of local and national security services. In addition to spreading Salafi ideology, MYC also took advantage of the economic difficulties faced by Kenya's Muslims. Kenya has a serious unemployment problem -- around 40 percent of the population is unemployed. According to USAID, unemployment among out-of-school youth is about 75 percent, and the number is thought to be even higher among Muslims, who generally live in the northeast, one of the country's most deprived regions. In Garissa, a Muslim-majority town that borders Somalia, youth unemployment is at a staggering 90 percent. MYC and al Shabaab have drawn in many of the disenfranchised with offers of a regular wage of 40,000 Kenyan shillings per month (\$500, about four times the average national pay).

For years, the Kenyan government did nothing about the MYC's recruitment of Muslim youth,

despite desperate protests by parents whose children were taken in by Ali. Local sheikhs insist that the authorities turned a blind eye because they were paid handsomely to do so. That is difficult to prove, however, and Kenyan officials strenuously deny it. It may also be the case that the authorities saw al Shabaab as primarily a Somali problem, since there was still little terrorist activity among Kenyans within the country's own borders.

Soon after locals began to agitate, Ali travelled to Somalia to take command of a force of East African al Shabaab members. From Somalia, he has continued to produce videos urging East Africans, and especially Kenyans, to join him. In one of the most recent, released in early 2012, Ali followed the standard al Qaeda script, painting Western and African efforts against terrorism as a guise for extinguishing Islam. His focus this time, though, was Kenya, whose military had by then entered Somalia to assist AMISOM's efforts to fight al Shabaab. "So many of our brothers suffered, and others were oppressed by the Kenyan government," Ali said. "Their recent invasion of Somalia is clear evidence of their enmity towards Islam and Muslims." He went on to call for jihad in Kenya itself.

THE HIGHEST HONOR

My interviews with six native Kenyans who had joined al Shabaab and then deserted confirmed the complicated relationship among ideology, economics, and recruitment. Two of the men claimed that they had joined for purely ideological purposes, having been convinced by either Rogo or Ali; three claimed that they joined for mainly financial reasons; one said he was kidnapped.

Of the ideologically committed group, "Mohammed," a native of Majengo, was the first to speak to me. He attended the MYC for some time while it was under Ali's control and became a devoted student. "It was like he was feeding us," he told me. "We were totally convinced by him, I can't lie." Day and night, Ali taught them the virtues of jihad -- the "highest honor in Islam" -- and described in great detail the suffering of Muslims in neighboring Somalia at the hands of Western-backed AMISOM troops. As an able-bodied Muslim standing by and watching as his brothers and sisters were killed, Mohammed felt a heavy burden of guilt.

One night in late June 2009, Mohammed received a call: It was Ali asking to meet him at the MYC. "He told me there was a man taking members somewhere, and also offering money for their families." Intrigued, Mohammed went. For agreeing to go with the man, he was given 40,000 Kenyan shillings (\$470) in cash for his family, a huge sum of money for a resident of Majengo. The next day, he and a few others were taken to Mombasa and from there to Kikambala, which is just outside Mombasa, where they were handed over to Rogo for a week of ideological training. After that, they were taken to the island of Lamu, just off the coast of the mainland, and put into a speedboat bound for Somalia. The next thing Mohammed saw was an al Shabaab camp with countless recruits from all over the world -- "white, black, brown, even people like you," he recalled.

For two weeks, he underwent yet more ideological training, which was followed by judo, karate, and shooting practice. During this time, he began to notice trucks leaving in the morning with a load of fighters and returning at night almost empty. Told to keep quiet by his superiors, he instead sought out those fighters who did return. Al Shabaab was busy consolidating its power in Somalia, and most of its activities centered on raiding villages and terrorizing local populations. Mohammed was shocked to learn from the fighters that most of al Shabaab's victims were Muslims -- including many al Shabaab fighters themselves.

As his time to enter battle drew near, Mohammed decided to escape. He and four of the Kenyans with whom he had travelled to the camp ran away one night, encountering a sympathetic truck

driver who helped them on their long journey back to Nairobi. Mohammed is among the lucky ones; many others tried to do the same, he said, but were caught and executed almost immediately.

Now back in their home country, all of the men I interviewed are stuck in a terrifying limbo. Al Shabaab has issued a fatwa calling for the murder of any deserters, and a number of them have been shot and killed in the Majengo slum.

GUNS, GRENADES, AND IDEAS

Kenyan authorities have finally started to take the militant threat seriously. Their response has been brutal: Security forces have been accused of relying on torture and extra-judicial killings. In May 2012, men dressed as police officers arrested Samir Khan, a known deputy of Rogo, and his mutilated body was found days later in a national park. Rogo met a similar fate in August, when unknown assailants killed him in a drive-by shooting. All the men I spoke to are as afraid of the government as they are of al Shabaab. "Anyone who has been a member of al Shabaab," said one, with sad resignation, "he is hunted by both sides."

Considering that many other Kenyans who are still with al Shabaab in Somalia are disillusioned with the group, SUPKEM sheikhs wholeheartedly support setting up an amnesty program that would guarantee al Shabaab deserters safety and perhaps employment upon their return. Still, they do not believe that there is sufficient will among government ministers to carry out such a plan. "From whose pocket is the money for this going to come?" asks SUPKEM's director general, Latif Shabaan. "The system now is to kill them [returning al Shabaab members], not to rehabilitate."

Not all of those who left Somalia to return home have rejected al Shabaab. In fact, many fighters are being pushed out of Somalia into Kenya as al-Shabaab loses control of its territories there to AMISOM. They are bringing with them their guns, grenades, and ideas. In July 2012, Kenyan police issued a number of warnings about individuals who they believe have returned to Kenya under instructions from Ali to carry out attacks on civilian and military targets. It is likely, therefore, that in the coming months Kenyans will suffer more homegrown violence.

The government could still respond before the situation spirals out of its control, and the amnesty that SUPKEM supports would be a good start. It is likely that many Kenyan al Shabaab fighters would pounce on the opportunity to put down their arms and return safely home. They would need assurances from the government that security forces would not target them, likely in return for valuable intelligence. But SUPKEM and other Kenyan Muslim groups are not holding their breath. As the situation currently stands, they can do little more than wait for the next attack in this new front of jihad.

ANGOLA :

Angola: Maldives Parliament Speaker Jets in
7 January 2013/AngolaPress

Luanda — The speaker of the Maldives Parliament, Abdulla Shahid, arrived this afternoon in Luanda for his first official visit to Angola meant to relaunch the co-operation relations at inter-parliamentary level, Angop has learnt.

At Luanda's 4 de Fevereiro International Airport, the visiting official was welcomed by the second

vice chairwoman of the Angolan Parliament, the MP Joana Lina Cristiano, that was accompanied by high rank officials.

His agenda comprises a meeting with the Angolan colleague, Fernando da Piedade Dias dos Santos, and later will be received by the heads of the parliamentary groups.

Officials talks between parliamentary teams of Angola and of Maldives, as well as dinner that will be hosted by the head of the Angolan parliament are also on the agenda.

Meanwhile Abudlla Shadid and his team will see the new town of Kilamba, a residential area located at the south of Luanda province, in the newly created Belas Municipality.

The official will pay a homage to the first Angolan President, António Agostinho Neto, in a Memorial with his name, in Luanda.

Angola: Communities Told to Participate in Preservation of Heritage

7 January 2013/AngolaPress

Sumbe — Angolan minister of Culture Rosa Cruz e Silva urged the communities to actively take part in the actions focussed on preservation, enhancing and protection of cultural assets and heritage of the country.

The Cabinet minister was speaking at the opening ceremony of seminar on management, promotion of theatre and dance, held in Sumbe, coastal Kwanza Sul province, ahead of celebration of National Culture Day, on January 8.

The official considered the participation of communities in management actions essential, as its the communities who are the main beneficiaries of the referred assets.

During the eight-day training, the participants agents linked to different fields of culture will have the opportunity to upgrade their knowledge.

The National Culture Day, instituted in 1986, following a speech delivered by the then president of Angola, António Agostinho Neto, in 1979, during the swearing-in of the board of the Angolan Writers Association (UEA), will be celebrated on Tuesday, January 8.

The date was later on approved by the Decree 21 and printed in the Republic Gazette 87, series I of November 1986, in homage to the speech on the National Culture delivered by the founder of the Angolan nation.

During the above mentioned ceremony in 1979, Agostinho Neto delivered a speech focusing on the National Culture, which became an essential reference in all discussions on the issue in the country.

Meanwhile, the central Kwanza Sul province will be the home for the main event of the celebrations of the National Culture Day, on January 8, with various cultural activities.

46 people killed in Angola's festive season road accidents

Source: XINHUA/ 2013-1-8

LUANDA, Jan. 7 (Xinhua) -- Forty-six people were killed and 219 others injured in 230 road

accidents in Angola during the Christmas and New Year festive season, police announced on Monday.

The information was released Monday in Luanda by Second Commander General of the National Police Paulo de Almeida when assessing the police operation aimed at securing the festive season, the official news agency Angop reported.

The officer said the accidents included 73 run-over that caused 22 deaths and 74 wounded, 52 collisions between vehicles which resulted in one death and 36 wounded, and 45 collision between vehicles and motorcycles that caused 14 deaths and 43 wounded.

The capital city of Luanda topped the list of the accidents with 50 which killed 21 people and injured 42, followed by the provinces of Benguela with 26, Huíla with 12, Moxico and Bengo with 14 and 10 respectively.

Road accidents were the second killer next to malaria in the African country, and police blamed the accidents on poor road or vehicle conditions, speeding, driving under the influence of alcohol and disrespect for traffic rules.

Angola: National Training Plan Seeks Development

7 January 2013/AngolaPress

Luanda — The Angolan minister of Higher Education, Adão do Nascimento, said Monday in Luanda that the National Personnel Training Plan (PNFQ) is designed to turn the sector into a factor of development in partnership with other sectors that participate in the process.

The official was speaking during the presentation of the PNFQ and the programme of activities for 2013/2014.

He on the occasion explained that the (PNFQ) is a Government- designed programme and must therefore be implemented with the involvement of various sectors.

To this end, Adão do Nascimento added, an inter-ministerial commission has been appointed.

According to the source, currently the PNFQ is being publicised, seeking the involvement of all sectors and partners and a good knowledge of it and involved tasks.

He said as well preparations are underway for the implementation of the PNFQ, which involves the main activities contained on the sector's agenda, before they are incorporated onto the agenda of all institutions of the Higher Education Department.

The minister stated that the general goal is to make of the Angolan Higher Education sector a factor of the country's development, at pace with other sectors, through the preparation of the technicians of various specialties and diversified levels of qualification.

AU/AFRICA :

Sudan: AU Vows New Support for Durable Peace Between the Two Sudans

By Tesfa-Alem Tekle/SudanTribune/6 January 2013

Addis Ababa — The African Union (AU) on Sunday freshly committed itself to end differences and bring a just and lasting peace between former civil war rivals Sudan and South Sudan.

The announcement by AU chairperson, Nkosazana Diamini-Zuma, follows a summit between the leaders from the two countries in Addis Ababa on Saturday, in which they agreed to implement a deal signed in September to establish a buffer zone along their disputed border and resume oil exports.

In a statement issued on Sunday, Diamini-Zuma, assured of the continental body's commitment to put better coordinated efforts to realise a situation where the two nation's coexist side by side peacefully.

The AU chief underscored the importance of the progress gained during the presidential summit held in the Ethiopian capital on January 4 and 5 with respect to Abyei, border issues and the implementation of agreements signed last September.

The two presidents agreed to implement the existing agreement, but a separate future summit will be held over Abyei. On January 13, the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) led by Thabo Mbeki will lay out the time-frames in which the deal of three months ago would be implemented.

The September deal stalled due to Khartoum's insistence that resolving security issues preclude implementing any other part of the nine-point deal. Sudan accuses South Sudan of backing rebels in its South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, while Juba accuses Khartoum of backing rebels in its territory. Both sides deny the allegations.

It was reported that Kiir told Bashir that his armed forces are not supporting their former comrades north of the border, but such assurances have in the past not been enough for Khartoum. Kiir has described Sudan's demands that South Sudan's army (SPLA) play a role in disarming the SPLA-North as "impossible".

However, Diamini-Zuma expressed hope that the leaders of Sudan and South Sudan would continue to demonstrate the statesmanship and political courage to find robust solutions to the challenges that remain dividing the two neighbours.

Landlocked South Sudan became independent state in July 2011 taking with it 75% of Sudan's oil resources. A year ago, South Sudan stopped oil production over a transit fee dispute with Khartoum and despite agreeing on how much South Sudan should pay to export it oil through the north in the September deal, production has not resumed due to the stalemate over security issues.

The two countries badly need the resumption of Southern oil exports to revive their struggling economies. Presidents Bashir and Kiir recommitted to the setting up a demilitarized border zone and resolving other security issues to allow oil exports to resume.

Dlamini Zuma called on both leaders to cooperate and work together to establish friendship and good neighborliness to bring prosperity to benefit the peoples of the two nations.

AU and US commend Ghana for being the pride of Africa
gbcghana.com/08012013

The African Union has described Ghana as a model of political maturity, whose democratic values remain a pride of Africa.

The AU Chairman, Thomas Yayi Boni congratulated Ghanaians on the peaceful elections, and said it is important to maintain the country's peace.

The United States has also congratulated John Mahama on his swearing-in as President of Ghana.

A statement from the US Embassy says once again, Ghana has demonstrated its leadership as one of Africa's most stable democracies.

It says the people of Ghana merit much commendation for turning out in their numbers to exercise their right to vote and maintaining calm and order throughout the process.

It expects that under the new administration, Ghana will continue to grow and prosper to the benefit of all its citizens.

GBC NEWS

Centrafrique: les délégations du pouvoir et de l'opposition partent à Libreville
08/01/2013/lepoint.fr

Les délégations du pouvoir, de l'opposition et de la société civile devant participer aux négociations de Libreville sur la crise causée par la rébellion en Centrafrique ont décollé mardi matin peu avant 08H00 (07H00 GMT) de Bangui, a indiqué à l'AFP le chef de la délégation du pouvoir.

Elles devraient arriver à Libreville en milieu de matinée.

"Nous avons fini d'embarquer. Nous allons bientôt décoller", a déclaré Jean Willybero-Sako, le chef de la délégation du pouvoir.

Le vol qui devait partir lundi a été retardé en raison d'intempéries.

La délégation rebelle est arrivée lundi soir à Libreville, après un crochet par N'Djamena.

Lundi, M. Willybero-Sako avait confié être "serein", estimant que les concessions du président François Bozizé (qui a proposé un gouvernement d'union nationale et assuré qu'il ne se représenterait pas), "avaient débloqué beaucoup de choses". "Cela a montré une certaine volonté d'aller de l'avant, de tenir compte des préoccupations des uns et des autres".

Interrogé sur l'exigence des rebelles que M. Bozizé quitte le pouvoir, il avait mis en avant l'importance de respecter la Constitution.

Me Nicolas Tiangaye, le chef de délégation de l'opposition, n'a pas voulu dévoiler l'argumentaire de l'opposition pour les négociations mais a souligné: "Nous ne pouvons pas nous limiter uniquement au programme DDR" (désarmement, démobilisation réinsertion des combattants - programme décidé par des accords de paix en 2008 mais jamais vraiment appliqué). "L'évolution de la situation actuelle fait que nous serons appelés à discuter d'autres questions qui concernent les institutions".

Le président François Bozizé se rendra à Libreville cette semaine mais ne fait pas partie de la

délégation du pouvoir.

L'alliance rebelle Séléka, qui a lancé son offensive le 10 décembre, contrôle plusieurs villes de la Centrafrique et se trouve à quelques dizaines de kilomètres de la capitale Bangui.

CENTRAFRIQUE. Négociations en pointillé

le 08-01-2013 /Par Sarah Diffalah/tempsreel.nouvelobs.com

Chaque partie campe pour l'instant sur ses positions. Les rebelles exigent le départ du président, ce que ce dernier refuse.

Prévues pour débiter ce mardi 8 janvier, les négociations entre les rebelles du Séléka et le président centrafricain, François Bozizé, semblent mal engagées. Après un mois de crise, les deux parties ont promis de s'asseoir à la table des négociations, sous l'égide des organisations régionales et internationales, afin de parvenir à un cessez-le-feu durable.

Sur le principe seulement. Car aucun cadre, ni calendrier, n'ont été défini et sur le terrain la situation semble pouvoir s'embraser à tout moment. Les démonstrations de force d'un côté comme de l'autre se multiplient, la tenue même des négociations a été retardée et les rôles que jouent les uns et les autres restent confus. Lundi, une délégation représentant les rebelles venue de Bria est arrivée au Gabon où doivent avoir lieu les discussions, alors même que la veille le porte-parole du Séléka, Eric Massi, basé à Paris, a dit souhaiter un report pour mieux se préparer. De son côté, le président centrafricain s'est rendu à Brazzaville pour discuter avec le président et médiateur congolais Sassou Denis Nguesso. Selon une source citée par l'AFP, François Bozizé ne devrait rejoindre Libreville que "plus tard", une fois les négociations entamées. S'il décide de s'y rendre...

Pour l'instant chaque partie campe sur ses positions. Les rebelles exigent le départ du président, ce que ce dernier refuse. Les débats s'ils ont lieu s'annoncent tendus, voire impossibles. Et la reprise des hostilités pas exclue.

Négocier ou entrer dans Bangui ?

Hétéroclites avec des intérêts divergents, la coalition rebelle constituée des mécontents du régime de Bozizé joue sa crédibilité. Elle n'a accepté l'idée d'installer le dialogue que sous la pression des renforts militaires de pays voisins réunis par Bangui. Elle est aussi affaiblie par ses divisions internes. Pour ne pas paraître en désaccord sur le plan politique, ses différentes composantes se sont fédérées en maintenant la pression autour des enjeux militaires et en poursuivant leurs opérations. Samedi, deux villes, Alindo et Kouango, sont d'ailleurs tombées entre leurs mains.

Faire tomber le pouvoir est pour les rebelles toujours une option : ils ne sont qu'à quelques dizaines de kilomètres de la capitale Bangui et leurs succès militaires ont révélé des moyens qui ont surpris bon nombre d'observateurs. Ils ont conquis plus de la moitié du territoire et ont même osé s'approcher de la ville de Damara, à 75 km au nord de Bangui, désignée par les forces fidèles au président comme la ligne rouge à ne pas franchir.

Bozizé peut-il sauver sa tête ?

De son côté, le président centrafricain, à l'initiative de la médiation du président du Bénin et de l'Union africaine, Thomas Boni Yayi, a fait de véritables concessions : il a annoncé qu'il ne se représenterait pas à la prochaine élection présidentielle, qu'il ne changerait pas la Constitution et qu'il souhaitait nommer un gouvernement d'union nationale. Mais le pouvoir reste méfiant. Au moins 200 soldats sud-africains –l'armée sud-africaine figure parmi les plus performantes d'Afrique-

se sont positionnés près de la résidence du président. Officiellement pour protéger leurs ressortissants, mais certaines sources ont laissé entendre à l'AFP qu'il s'agissait de protéger la capitale en cas d'attaque. Jusqu'à 400 soldats sud-africains pourraient être déployés au total, a indiqué à l'AFP la présidence sud-africaine.

Ces hommes, qui font pencher le rapport de force en faveur du pouvoir centrafricain, s'ajoutent aux 800 hommes, dont 400 Tchadiens, de la Force multinationale d'Afrique centrale qui contrôlent le verrou de la ville de Damara. Six cents soldats français sont également déployés à Bangui, officiellement pour protéger et éventuellement évacuer les ressortissants français.

Interrogé par le "Nouvel Observateur", le spécialiste de la Centrafrique et chercheur au CNRS, Roland Marchal, exprimait son doute de voir "le président préparer ses dossiers pour aller à la négociation". Il suggérait que Bozizé réfléchissait peut-être "aux moyens de remonter son armée et de préparer un nouveau dispositif militaire pour une contre-offensive significative".

Mali army 'fire on Islamists' in response to incursion

7 January 2013/bbc.co.uk

Malian soldiers have fired on Islamist fighters in the centre of the country, military sources say.

It is the first significant fighting reported between the two sides since Islamist and Tuareg rebels seized control of the north of the country last April.

The Islamists had reportedly tried to make an advance into the government-controlled south.

It is not clear whether there were any casualties.

The army used artillery against the Islamist fighters in the village of Gnimignama, 30km (19 miles) from army positions, according to army sources.

"Jihadist elements" are now deployed on several points along the frontier between the two sides, from the Mauritanian border in the west to the Douentza region in the east, Malian Defence Minister Col Yamoussa Camara told Radio France International.

Representatives of the Malian government and Islamist and Tuareg rebels are due to hold talks in neighbouring Burkina Faso on 10 January.

The rebels seized power in the north in the chaos following an army coup in March.

The alliance between the Islamists and Tuareg quickly collapsed, with the Islamists taking the region's main urban centres.

The Islamist groups have since destroyed ancient shrines in Timbuktu and imposed a strict interpretation of Islamic law, sparking international outrage.

Last month the UN Security Council gave its backing for an African-led military operation to help Mali's government retake the north if no peaceful solution could be found in the coming months.

Regional bloc Ecowas says it has 3,300 troops ready to go to Mali - although an operation is not expected to begin before September 2013.

A day after the UN resolution, the Islamist Ansar Dine group and the Azawad National Liberation Movement (MNLA), a Tuareg separatist group, said they were committed to finding a negotiated solution.

African Markets - Factors to watch on Jan. 8

2013-01-08/xe.com

The following company announcements, scheduled economic indicators, debt and currency market moves and political events may affect African markets on Tuesday.

EVENTS:

BOTSWANA - The central bank auctions 14-day certificate Treasury bills.

MAURITIUS - Expecting inflation data for December. Annual average inflation fell to 4 percent in November from 4.3 percent in October.

SEYCHELLES- Also expecting December inflation data for the island nation. Year-on-year inflation fell to 6.2 percent in November from 7.6 percent.

GLOBAL MARKETS

Asian shares fell on Tuesday as investors took a break from the new year's rallies, with caution setting in ahead of corporate earnings season for the last quarter of 2012 and the European Central Bank's policy meeting later in the week.

WORLD OIL PRICES

Brent crude futures steadied above \$111 per barrel on Tuesday, trading in a tight range, as investors opted for caution ahead of key data from China and a European Central

Bank meeting this week.

EMERGING MARKETS

For the top emerging markets news, double click on

AFRICA STOCKS

For the latest news on African stocks, click on

AFRICA CONFLICTS

Africa's emerging nations have become a driving force for world economic growth, International Monetary Fund chief Christine Lagarde said on Monday, but armed conflicts pose the principal threat to the continent's future development.

SOUTH AFRICA CURRENCY, BONDS

South Africa's rand fell slightly against the dollar on Monday but the prospect of renewed industrial action could put the currency under pressure in the coming days.

SOUTH AFRICA SHARES

South African stocks closed slightly lower on Monday with mining stocks including Harmony Gold pulling the market back from a record high set early in the session on concerns of fresh labour strife hurting the sector's earnings.

NIGERIA MARKETS

Nigeria's naira currency firmed against the U.S dollar on the interbank market on Monday, supported by dollar flows from offshore investors buying local debt, but held steady at the first official foreign exchange auction in the year.

* The index of Nigeria's Top-10 banks closed up 4.7 percent on Monday.

NIGERIA STATE OIL FIRM

Nigerian state oil firm NNPC has obtained a \$1.5 billion syndicated loan to help it pay debts to international fuel traders, a senior banking source with knowledge of the deal said on Monday.

KENYA MARKETS

The Kenyan shilling fell against the dollar on Monday due to energy sector importers buying the U.S. currency, while shares gained for the fifth straight session, helped by mobile firm Safaricom whose shares hit a 28-month high.

GHANA POLITICS

Ghana's opposition boycotted the inauguration of President John Dramani Mahama on Monday, ignoring his appeals to end a dispute over last month's election in the West African state seen as a model democracy in the coup-prone region.

SOUTH SUDAN BORDER

South Sudan hopes to establish a demilitarized zone along its border with arch-rival Sudan within a month, paving the way for vital oil exports to resume, a southern official said.

ZAMBIA MAIZE

Zambian President Michael Sata said on Monday he feared riots if the price of the staple maize meal remained unaffordable for the majority of people in Africa's top

copper producer.

C. AFRICAN REPUBLIC REBELLION

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UN/AFRICA :

Use of child soldiers in Central Africa on increase, says UNICEF
womennewsnetwork.net/2013/01/07

(WNN) Bangui/Dakar, AFRICA/GENEVA, UNITED NATIONS: The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) said today that it had received credible reports that rebel groups and pro-government militias are increasingly recruiting and involving children in armed conflict in the Central African Republic (CAR).

UNICEF calls for the immediate cessation of child recruitment by all armed groups in the CAR and urges all parties to protect children against the harmful impact of, and their involvement in, armed conflict in the country.

"A number of rebel groups and various pro-government militias have become more active in recent weeks in the capital city of Bangui and across the country," said Souleymane Diabate, UNICEF Representative for CAR. "Reliable sources have informed us that children are newly being recruited among their ranks. These reports are of serious concern."

The recruitment and use of children under the age of 18 by armed forces and armed groups is prohibited by international law, and constitutes a war crime and crime against humanity if the children who are recruited and used are under the age of 15.

As a signatory to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, the Central African Republic is accountable to ensure that no child is used by armed forces or armed groups in any way.

"Our team on the ground is working with partners to monitor, verify, and respond to grave violations of child rights, including recruitment into armed groups. Those at greater risk are children who have lost their homes, are separated from their families or were formerly associated with armed groups," added Mr. Diabate.

As part of its reporting obligations to the United Nations Secretary-General and the Security Council, UNICEF is currently working with other UN agencies to monitor grave violations against children in CAR. This may include recruitment or use of children in armed forces and groups,

sexual violence against children, attacks against schools or hospitals, killing or maiming of children, child abduction and denial of humanitarian access.

Even before conflict erupted in December 2012, about 2,500 children – both girls and boys – were associated with multiple armed groups, including self-defence groups, in CAR. While it is impossible to give a precise figure, reports indicate that this number will rise because of the recent and escalating conflict.

UNICEF is highly concerned about the harmful impact of conflict on children in the country and condemns the involvement of boys and girls below the age of 18 who may be forced to fight, carry supplies, perform other support roles and be abused as sex slaves by armed groups.

Since 2007, UNICEF has worked in CAR with both the government and rebel factions, in collaboration with non-governmental organizations, to secure the release of more than 1,000 girls and boys from armed groups and self-defence groups and support their reintegration into families and communities.

“Recent commitments under international law by the Government and some rebel groups to keep children out of the fighting must be respected,” said Mr. Diabate in Yaounde, Cameroon. “All violations must stop. It is critical that everything is done to protect these children and keep their families safe.”

The highly volatile security situation is also hampering the delivery of humanitarian assistance to affected communities and has led UNICEF to relocate 14 international staff and consultants last week. UNICEF has established an operational crisis centre for CAR in Yaounde, Cameroon. Through a team of national experts, UNICEF maintains a critical staff presence in the CAR and collaborates with a network of partners to continue emergency activities.

According to UNICEF, more than 300,000 children have already been affected by the violence in CAR and its consequences, including through recruitment, family separation, sexual violence, forced displacement and having no or limited access to education and health facilities.

UNICEF’s Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) appeal for emergency response in 2013 has so far only received US\$500,000 out of a total request of US\$11 million. Aside from emergencies, the UNICEF regular program for 2013 is only about 60% funded or US\$7 million out of a planned amount of US\$12 million.

Working in 190 countries and territories to help children survive and thrive, from early childhood through adolescence UNICEF is the world’s largest provider of vaccines for developing countries. The agency’s campaigns include child health and nutrition, good water and sanitation, quality basic education for all boys and girls, and the protection of children from violence, exploitation, and AIDS. Funded entirely by the voluntary contributions of individuals, businesses, foundations and governments, UNICEF continues to work at a level that is bringing impact to regions where children’s needs are ongoing.

US/AFRICA :

CANADA/AFRICA :

Fowler condemns Tories for saying Canada hasn't been asked to join Mali mission

MIKE BLANCHFIELD/The Canadian Press/theglobeandmail.com/Monday, Jan. 07 2013

OTTAWA —

Robert Fowler, the retired Canadian diplomat who was kidnapped by terrorists in Africa, blasted the Harper government Monday for saying it has not been asked to contribute to the international military mission to Mali.

Mr. Fowler condemned the government for advancing that position on the eve of a meeting between Prime Minister Stephen and the head of the African Union in Ottawa, where a request for a Canadian troop contribution was widely expected.

Mr. Fowler, a former Canadian ambassador to the United Nations, accused the government of ignoring last month's resolution by the UN Security Council that called on all countries to contribute to halt the spread of terrorism that has taken root in Mali.

"The government has been asked. In the Security Council resolution 2085 of 20 December, the Security Council urges member states – of which I believe Canada is still one – to provide a whole set of things, including military training, provision of equipment, intelligence, logistics support and any necessary assistance to reduce the threat posed by terrorist organizations," Mr. Fowler told The Canadian Press.

"Therefore, we have been asked."

Earlier in the day, a government official who spoke only on condition of anonymity offered the exact opposite view.

"Nothing has been asked of us as yet," the official told The Canadian Press.

Mr. Harper plays host to African Union president Thomas Boni Yayi on Tuesday on Parliament Hill, where the chaos and violence that have gripped Mali for much of the last year will be high on their agenda.

Mali was struck by a military coup in March and now has a group linked to al-Qaeda controlling its north.

Defence Minister Peter MacKay stoked speculation about the mission last week when he said Canada would be willing to send military trainers.

The office of Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird countered that Canada was not contemplating a military mission to Mali. This was same position the government official put forth again on Monday.

"We will wait to hear what people are requesting, if they are requesting anything," the official said.

“As Minister Baird has said, we’re not contemplating a military mission, and Minister Baird is on the record with that. It’s the government’s position.”

Mr. Fowler denounced that position, saying Canada does not need a special invitation after the passage of the recent UN resolution.

“This is how one asks. It’s a way that enables some people to pretend they haven’t been asked. But they’ve been asked. All member states have been asked,” Mr. Fowler said. “It is a clear invitation to anybody that can, and anybody that cares, to play.”

Mr. Fowler urged Mr. Harper to answer the renewed personal request he expects he will receive in Tuesday’s meeting with a resounding yes.

Mr. Fowler came face-to-face with the threat that is currently destabilizing Mali and its West African neighbours when he and a fellow Canadian diplomat, Louis Guay, were kidnapped in 2008 and held for 130 days by al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb.

At the time, Mr. Fowler was the UN special envoy to Niger, where he and Mr. Guay were abducted.

“We’re going to have to intervene now or later. And it will be a lot more expensive and a lot bloodier later,” Mr. Fowler said.

“Quite often I’m asked, ‘How are you doing?’ And my usual answer is: ‘I’m doing fine, and so too is al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb.’ They now have a country. They have a base, and they are doing what they told me they would do.

“They told us that their objective was to spread the chaos and anarchy of Somalia across the Sahel region from the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic, and in that chaos their jihad would thrive. And that’s what they’re doing.”

The official said Mr. Harper is well aware that Mr. Boni Yayi is an advocate of military intervention in Mali, but that the government doesn’t want to get involved in a military mission there.

Mr. Harper is expecting a full briefing on the latest developments in Mali, but the official would not say whether the Prime Minister was expecting an “ask” from Mr. Boni Yayi.

Mali was a stable recipient of Canadian aid and one of the continent’s best partners before its democratically elected government was toppled by a military coup in March.

That enabled al-Qaeda’s African affiliate to swoop into the north and capture the largest piece of land that the terrorist network has ever held.

Two analysts agreed Monday that Canada had a duty to contribute to the international military force, to stop the spread of terrorism across Africa.

But they offered sharply different views on what could be in store for the Canadian Forces.

“We should also be under no illusion that such a training mission will be easy or can be undertaken without making substantial investments on the ground,” said Fen Hampson, head of the global security program at the Centre for International Governance Innovation in Waterloo, Ont.

“There is no quick fix here and we should not be doing something just to feel good about ourselves.

We either get serious or we don't do it at all."

Andrew Grant, an Africa expert at Queen's University, said that the government needs to help a country with which it has had a stable 40-year relationship.

"I think they will contribute, but it's not going to be an overly robust contribution. You're not going to see active engagement by Canadian troops out in the field."

AUSTRALIA/AFRICA :

EU/AFRICA :

Anglo names AngloGold's Cutifani as new CEO

by Staff Writer/With Reuters/janvier 08 2013

MARK Cutifani has been appointed as the new CEO of Anglo American, with effect from April 3, the global resources group said on Tuesday.

He joins Anglo at a challenging time as it tackles restive unions in South Africa, restructures its platinum arm and tries to recover from delays that have driven up the cost of a flagship iron-ore project in Brazil.

Mr Cutifani has been CEO of AngloGold Ashanti, the South Africa-based gold producer, since 2007 and led its successful restructuring and development across operations in 10 countries on four continents.

His relative lack of experience in some of Anglo's major commodities and geographies such as Brazil — key for the recovery of the group's share price — had prompted some analysts to question his potential appointment. But his South African credentials — he is also head of the Chamber of Mines — appear to have outweighed other shortcomings.

Prior to his current role, he served as chief operating officer of CVRD Inco, the Canadian nickel company.

Mr Cutifani, who holds a degree in mining engineering and started his career in Australia's coal and gold mining industries, has experience across a range of commodities.

Commenting on Mr Cutifani's appointment to what analysts and investors see as one of the toughest jobs in the business, Anglo American chairman Sir John Parker said on Tuesday: "Cutifani is an experienced listed company chief executive with a focus on creating value. He is a seasoned miner, with broad experience of mining operations and projects across a wide range of commodities and geographies, including South Africa and the Americas."

Mr Parker also said Mr Cutifani was a "highly respected leader in the global mining industry, with values strongly aligned to those of Anglo American".

Commenting on his appointment, Mr Cutifani said: "Anglo American has some of the highest-quality mining operations and projects among its diversified peer group, bound together within a company with a deep sense of responsibility. I am delighted to have the opportunity to lead Anglo American at this important stage in its journey, to unlock the company's considerable value potential."

Anglo American's current CEO, Cynthia Carroll, will step down from the board at the group's annual general meeting in April and leave at the end of that month.

She announced in October that she would step down after more than five years at the helm, under pressure from investors unhappy with Anglo's lagging share price and its dependence on strike-hit South Africa.

Paying tribute to Ms Carroll's leadership, Mr Parker said: "Cynthia Carroll is an inspirational leader who has had a transformational impact on Anglo American. Among many other things, her legacy will include a step change improvement in safety, sustainability and the quality of our engagement with stakeholders.

"She will be leaving Anglo American with our thanks for everything she has achieved and with our best wishes for the future."

Mr Cutifani's remuneration package will comprise a basic salary and variable incentive arrangements that Anglo American said were "entirely in line" with its current remuneration policy and practice.

With Reuters

Turkey aims to more than double trade with Africa by 2015

By: Reuters/8th January 2013

Turkey aims to more than double its trade with Africa to \$50-billion over the next two years and ratchet up its fast-growing diplomatic presence on the continent, Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan said on Monday.

Speaking in Gabon's capital Libreville on the first leg of a West African tour, Erdogan said Turkish firms from transport and construction to energy and tourism were eager to do more business across the continent.

"Our trade volume target for Turkey (with Africa) in 2015 is \$50-billion and we are determined to reach this target," he said in a speech to Turkish and Gabonese business leaders.

Turkish trade with Africa stood at \$17.7-billion in the first 11 months of 2012. Its exports to the continent were \$12.2-billion in that period, more than five times the level of a decade ago.

Turkey has rapidly increased its business and diplomatic presence in Africa, following in the footsteps of China, India and Brazil, as its companies look to diversify away from the slowdown in their traditional European export markets.

Business and diplomacy have gone hand in hand.

Erdogan, who is due to travel to Niger and Senegal on his trip, said Turkey would open three new

embassies in Africa in the coming months, bringing its total on the continent to 34.

Turkish Airlines, 49 percent state-owned and a "soft power" tool of diplomacy, has rapidly expanded its African network in recent years, flying to 33 destinations and opening routes to Burkina Faso, Cameroon and Niger last month alone.

Edited by: Reuters

CHINA/AFRICA :

Yellow Fever: China Plans to Scan Travelers From Sudan

By DONALD G. McNEIL Jr./nytimes.com/January 7, 2013

In a move that underlines how many Chinese citizens now work in Africa, China's quarantine officials recently urged greater efforts to make sure that a yellow fever epidemic now raging in Sudan does not come back to China.

Local health authorities were asked to scan all travelers arriving from Sudan for fevers. Chinese citizens planning travel to Sudan were advised to get yellow fever shots. Customs officers were told that containers arriving from Sudan might have stray infected mosquitoes inside.

Sudan's epidemic is considered the world's worst in 20 years. Sweden, Britain and other donors have paid for vaccinations. The United States Navy's laboratory in Egypt has helped with diagnoses.

Estimates of the number of Chinese working in Africa, many in the oil and mining industries or on major construction projects, range from 500,000 to 1 million. Experts on AIDS have previously warned that the workers could become a new means of bringing that disease to China, which has a low H.I.V.-infection rate.

ProMED-mail, a Web site that follows emerging diseases, has tracked reports about the Sudan outbreak, with its moderators adding valuable context. China's mosquito-killing winters make a large yellow fever outbreak there unlikely, moderators said. But Sudan's containment efforts are troubled. For example, vaccinated people cannot get cards proving they have had shots, but the cards are reported to be for sale at police checkpoints.

Australia's now-endemic dengue fever, according to ProMED moderators, may have come from mosquitoes arriving in containers from East Timor.

INDIA/AFRICA :

BRAZIL/AFRICA :

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