



[Le président égyptien Abdel Fattah al-Sissi a estimé jeudi que l'Afrique est menacée par le terrorisme transfrontalier des groupes jihadistes et doit faire face avec force à ce fléau, au sommet de l'Union africaine (UA) à Malabo. Nous condamnons toute forme de terrorisme, a déclaré le maréchal Sissi]

BURUNDI :

Les étudiants marchois solidaires avec le Burundi

le vendredi 27 juin 2014/dhnet.be

Namur-Luxembourg Le 6 juillet, quinze élèves du secondaire s'envoleront pour la province de Muramvya

La ville de Marche et l'intercommunale Vivalia se sont associées à l'ONG Mémisa dans le cadre du projet Hôpital pour Hôpital, qui vise à renforcer l'accès de la population burundaise aux soins de santé. Quinze élèves de 5e secondaire s'apprêtent à partir pour l'Afrique.

Avec pour mission : la réhabilitation d'une source d'eau. Ils viennent de boucler leur 5e secondaire aux instituts Saint-Roch, Saint-Laurent et à l'Athénée Royal de Marche. Chacun de ces élèves a été sélectionné sur base d'un dossier de candidature comprenant CV, lettre de motivation et ébauche de projet.

Le 6 juillet prochain , ils s'envoleront tous pour le Burundi. Une fois sur place, ils œuvreront à la

réhabilitation d'une source afin d'améliorer l'approvisionnement en eau d'un centre de santé, dans la province de Muramvya. Là-bas, ils rencontreront quinze de leurs pairs burundais et partageront leur quotidien. Pour ces quinze étudiants marchois, ce voyage représente une opportunité exceptionnelle.

Lundi dernier, ils ont été reçus par les autorités communales de Marche, en présence de leurs trois accompagnateurs. C'est la première fois que les trois écoles sont associées au sein d'un même projet. De quoi tisser des liens par-delà les différents réseaux d'enseignement.

Un constat partagé par leur accompagnatrice, Béatrice Parfonry, par ailleurs professeur d'histoire à l'Institut Saint-Laurent. "Nous n'avons jamais fait la moindre distinction entre les élèves de telle ou telle école."

Depuis novembre 2013, les étudiants des trois établissements ont uni leurs forces pour rassembler une partie des fonds nécessaires au voyage, soit plus de 15.000 €, la commune ayant contribué à hauteur de 10.000 €. "Les élèves se sont vraiment investis", poursuit leur accompagnatrice. "Ils sont tous très motivés. Les voyages de solidarité tels que celui-là sont les plus enrichissants. Ils permettent de découvrir d'autres cultures, d'autres personnes, et de s'interroger sur notre propre mode de vie."

L'ambition de la ville de Marche est d'inscrire ce projet dans la continuité. À leur retour, les élèves partageront donc leur expérience avec les plus jeunes. Pour, peut-être, leur transmettre le flambeau du volontariat.

RWANDA :

RDC CONGO :

UGANDA :

SCHOLL: Battleground: Uganda

By Tom Scholl - Special to The Telegraph/macon.com/June 27, 2014

I found Uganda to be a beautiful country when I was there a couple summers ago. Winston Churchill called Uganda the "pearl of Africa." Indeed, it is. Outside the capital city of Kampala, the vast numbers of wild African animals run freely. As we reached a hilltop, we were overwhelmed by several huge extinct volcanoes before us. A spotted hyena studied us as we drove by; it is a rare sighting I'm told. Mountain gorillas occupy the edge of a jungle which begins in the far west of Uganda extending into the Congo. I've never seen a jungle during my several trips to the huge continent.

Though a land of incredible beauty, Uganda has fought ugliness. Idi Amin usually comes to mind when Uganda is mentioned. He was an incredibly barbaric tyrant. In recent times, Joseph Kony

competed with Amin for the title of “most barbaric” when he mustered an army of 20,000 stolen children who committed unspeakable acts of torture. Ugandan forces chased Kony, who left the country with a much smaller brigade of 200 children.

Ugandans recovered from both Amin and Kony to become one of the most open and democratic countries in Africa. Newspapers could praise or condemn anything. Politicians could speak their minds on any subject. Citizens freely voted.

But then democracy revealed its ugly side. Conservative, very conservative, American clergy brought a gospel of hate to the country. Having lost the battle against homosexuality in the U.S., they found their new battleground in today’s peaceful Uganda. Many African countries have laws against homosexuality, but they were not being enforced. Christian ministers rallied Christian citizens against a little understood sexuality in Africa, which the religious found sinful and repulsive.

In the U.S., ultra-conservative pastors have long since learned it is far easier to rally troops against something than for something. What better target than a “sin” most Ugandans do not commit. Even in the U.S., other people’s “sins” are far worse than one’s own lapse of morality. Bible-believing, but less educated, Ugandans lined up behind the American pastors.

A handful of politicians found a place in the line as well. As the Americans preached, voters listened and numbers swelled enough to catch the attention of politicians who albeit were less motivated to the cause. Finally, the swell of God-fearing Ugandans landed the issue at President Yoweri Museveni’s doorstep.

Museveni hadn’t made homosexuality his cause, but he and other political leaders chose to sacrifice gay Ugandans rather than risk a defeat at the polls. I think we have seen American political leaders employ these strategies a time or two. It’s one of the ugly uses/abuses of a democratic society.

At first, the newly posed law included a death penalty clause; the American Christian clergy remained silent on the idea of killing lawbreakers. Despite the clergy’s unspoken advocacy of death to gay men and women, the death penalty was removed. The final wording, still much too harsh in places, read like laws in the U.S. banning homosexual sex (in the U.S. “any” sex) with a minor, as well as sexual contact by someone infected by AIDS.

So now we have the war. The U.S. has reallocated millions of dollars in foreign aid, once earmarked to Uganda, now distributed to other African countries. A planned public health institution is being moved to South Africa.

Serious political interferences by conservative American Christian clergy versus serious political interferences from the American human rights policies protecting gay men and women everywhere, but today in Uganda. It is not exactly a war this African country needs -- serious penalties await Uganda no matter who wins. And it’s an American battle on Ugandan soil.

Of course, no matter the final decisions, we find pandering politics from all sides. Perhaps the cure for the “warring madness” will be the armies remembering “Blessed are the peacemakers.” This thought is found in the Bible, as well.

SOUTH AFRICA :

South Africa braces for major workers' strike

26 Jun 2014/aljazeera.com

Metal workers' union says it will bring industry to standstill, just days after longest strike in country ends.

South Africa's largest union has called for more than 200,000 engineering and metals workers to lay down tools for higher wages from July 1, just days after the mining sector ended a five-month strike.

The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) said on Thursday that it had "agreed to the decision from our members to embark on an indefinite strike action, beginning on July 1, 2014".

"We are going to strike, we are going to bring the industry to a standstill," said Karl Cloete, the deputy general secretary of the Numsa.

Cloete said wage negotiations in the sector were deadlocked, with workers demanding a 12-percent wage increase, reduced from an initial demand of 15 percent.

More than 220,000 workers of Numsa's 340,000-strong members will down tools in the key power generation, electrical engineering, telecommunications, steel and plastic fabrication industries.

Employees of the car-manufacturing industry, which already suffered serious stoppages last year, will not take part in the strike, but the sector is likely to be affected when component workers down tools.

Numsa also called for a stoppage at Eskom, the state-owned power utility, paying negotiations were deadlocked over the firm's proposed wage increase of 5.6 percent for its 10,000 staff.

South Africa's public utility workers are banned from striking because their industry is classified as essential service.

But Numsa dismissed the ban, saying its members there were not "intimidated by threats of the illegality of our actions".

"It's not our intention to plunge the country into darkness by embarking on a strike," said Cloete, referring to the impact the strike might have on Eskom, which supplies around 95 percent of South Africa's electricity.

The firm has struggled to keep the lights on in Africa's most developed country and is already behind schedule in the construction of key power plants to ease the problem.

The union said the strike call was "part of a tactic to exert organisational pressure on the bosses to return to the table and present an offer acceptable to our members".

Wage negotiations in the sector were started in March this year.

Numsa said workers in the sector were demanding a 12-percent wage increase, nearly double the inflation rate of 6.6 percent.

Cloete said the union will not accept a settlement of less than 10 percent.

The union is one of the biggest critics of the government's labour and economic policies, arguing that they do not benefit the poor.

The union has also severed ties with the ruling African National Congress (ANC), announcing plans this year of launching a workers' party.

Mid-year is known as "strike season" in South Africa, when several sectors negotiate wage contracts with employees.

TANZANIA :

KENYA :

Kenya's Bright Financial Future Clashes With a Grim Present

By JEFFREY GETTLEMAN/nytimes.com/JUNE 27, 2014

NAIROBI, Kenya — The line at the water tank in the Kibera slum is not as long as it used to be. It's not because of a sudden advent of indoor plumbing. It's because fewer people can afford a 10-cent jerrycan of water.

The cost of just about everything here is going up: rice, wood, rent, gas, minibuses. Hundreds of thousands of young men remain jobless, marooned in the muddy slums, selling garbage or hunting for casual work. And their ranks are only growing because a pillar of Kenya's economy — tourism — has been walloped by a wave of terrorist attacks, including a brazen raid on a coastal village last week that killed more than 40 people.

Adding to the woes are rising political tensions, with critics accusing the government of trying to snuff out dissent and Kenya's opposition leaders threatening to stage nationwide protests. The opposition has vowed to go ahead with a large rally on Friday, despite a police declaration that it is illegal.

"I'm not talking small protests," Raila Odinga, an opposition leader, said, his eyes glowing. "I'm talking massive."

But even as anxiety, fear, malaise and pessimism are spreading here, and many speak of a dark cloud settling over Kenya, the outside world still sees mostly clear skies.

Glass towers are rising across the capital, Nairobi, many financed by investors in Europe and the Middle East, and chugging bulldozers have become nearly as commonplace as minibuses. There are new roads everywhere, new bridges and huge new malls being dug out of red-earth hillsides. There is even a snazzy new Jaguar dealership.

Just this month, Kenya issued Africa's biggest debut Eurobond for an impressive \$2 billion, and the deal was so oversubscribed — Morgan Stanley was among the investors — that the cost of the loan

was substantially lower than expected.

But at 51 years old, Kenya, which just celebrated its anniversary of self-rule from Britain, is a bit like a classic car: beautiful on the outside and nice to look at. But under the hood, many Kenyans say, the wiring, and especially the steering, need serious work.

“There’s a pretty big bifurcation right now,” said Aly-Khan Satchu, a Nairobi investment adviser who bought more than \$10 million of the recent bond for overseas clients. “The capital markets are showing they can look through a lot of this noise. But there’s a great divergence between the markets and how people feel on the ground. It worries me.”

Pension funds and other institutional investors are attracted to Africa because of low yields in the more established markets. But Kenya’s bond issue was much bigger than a recent one in Rwanda — and many would argue that Kenya has more demons in its political closet than Rwanda, which is a tightly controlled autocracy. Kenya’s bond also had lower interest rates than a similar deal by Zambia, one of the world’s biggest copper producers.

One reason for this confidence is Kenya’s diversified economy. This is not a commodity country, like Nigeria or Ghana with their oil, or Zambia with its mountains of metal. There are agriculture, horticulture, tourism (usually), new discoveries of oil and gas, an expanding service sector, a far-reaching national airline and a major African port, with a second one under construction. Kenya’s ruling party prides itself on its commitment to infrastructure.

Continue reading the main story

While the terrorist attacks are worrisome, investors say, Kenya’s track record of business development, and the size of its middle class, indicate years of growth.

“Kenya is exceptional,” said Josh Ruxin, an American who has written about entrepreneurship in Africa and is investing in a multimillion-dollar pharmacy chain with plans to open more than a hundred Duane Reade-like stores across Kenya.

The biggest concern remains government rule. And it’s not only the recent moves by President Uhuru Kenyatta’s administration to solidify control, threatening to pass a punitive news media bill and to start a nationwide neighborhood watch program that critics say is tantamount to an internal spy network. It’s Kenya’s whole system, which can best be described as an ethnocracy; it’s a democracy, but politics are determined almost exclusively along ethnic lines and are often highly polarizing.

People vote for members of their own group, however sullied the politicians’ reputations are, and coalitions among the five or so major ethnic groups are held together, somewhat tenuously, by doling out posts, often to people grossly unqualified.

“Everybody knows the interior minister is an embarrassment, but the government can’t fire him because he’s Maasai and they need a Maasai,” said Boniface Mwangi, a young artist who had been leading protests until he said he received death threats — from the police.

He waved his hand dismissively.

“Tribal arithmetic.”

That tribal arithmetic can be explosive, as in 2008 when more than 1,000 Kenyans were slaughtered in ethnic clashes after a bungled election.

Not since then have Kenyans been so worried about the direction of their country. Public safety seems to be deteriorating rapidly. Five workers were recently bludgeoned to death at a gas station, a schoolgirl was decapitated this month and a recent newspaper headline blared: “Hyena unearths four bodies in secret graves.”

Kenya’s poorly paid and deeply corrupt security forces hardly inspire confidence. Last September, Islamist militants killed scores of people in a Nairobi shopping mall. While some of the terrorists may have been still lurking inside, Kenyan soldiers went on a shopping spree, looting suits, televisions, earrings, even Tusker beers. Then they blew up a grocery store. There have been a half-dozen bombings since then.

In the attack last week, two truckloads of militants roared into the coastal village with black flags, black scarves, AK-47s, bazookas, grenades and illumination flares. They shot dozens of people, slit throats, then burned down a good chunk of the town. It seemed more akin to an insurgency. Though the Shabab militant group from Somalia claimed responsibility, Mr. Kenyatta blamed “local political networks.” On Wednesday, his police services arrested the governor of that area in connection with murder.

All of this raises the question of how much more a business community, however talented, can accomplish in a place that is increasingly insecure.

African terrorist groups seem to have suddenly realized how vulnerable many states are at their core. Nigeria is a cautionary tale. It boasts one of the fastest-growing economies on the continent, but at the same time, Boko Haram, a Nigerian militant group, is growing even faster. Nearly every week it stages bold attacks, including the kidnapping of more than 200 girls, still missing. But Nigeria produces nearly two million barrels of crude oil per day. It does not live or die on outside investment.

Mr. Odinga, the opposition leader who handily lost Kenya’s last presidential election, remains the most potent shaper of the rising discontent. He holds no official government position, he is dismissed by many as having no clear plan, and he is 69. Still, he can instantly stir up the passions and loyalty of millions of fellow Luos, among others.

In a recent interview at a hotel cafe, while slurping the froth off a cappuccino and snacking on peanuts, he said the people were fed up — so much so that they were “willing to take the bullet.”

And you? he was asked.

Mr. Odinga tossed a few more peanuts into his mouth, paused, chewed and then grunted yes.

Kibera slum is his base. People there barely get by. Boys wheel battered carts up sloppy paths, and women fry sardines in a drop of oil in gummy, tarred skillets. Some men in recent days were moving from shack to shack, banging their fists on the flimsy, corrugated metal doors, warning people to send their kids upcountry, speaking excitedly about the coming “tsunami.”

Others were more sober. Not far from the water tank sat Peter Mutunga, vendor of secondhand pipe fittings. He wore a pair of old rubber boots and a peeling, gold-colored wedding band. He had carefully laid out his wares on a plastic tarp, but nobody was buying. Nairobi’s fancy new malls seemed a million miles away.

“There are really only two tribes in Kenya,” he said wistfully. “The poor and the rich.”

Correction: June 27, 2014

An earlier version of a picture caption with this article misstated the identity of the person on the poster and its location. It is a poster of President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya, not Raila Odinga, an opposition leader, and it is located in the outskirts of Nairobi, Kenya, not in the Kibera slum.

Emerging Kenya, Britain row on military training

By Cyrus Ombati and Geoffrey Mosoku/standardmedia.co.ke/Thursday, June 26th 2014

More than 1,000 British soldiers are stranded in Nairobi following a diplomatic row between Kenya and London. The row has been linked to the travel advisories issued by Britain over terror threats. Kenya has allegedly refused to sign a new Memorandum of Understanding with Britain to allow more soldiers to go to Nanyuki for training following the expiry of the previous one. Sources said the Government has demanded that the UK first withdraws travel advisories before allowing in a new contingent of British soldiers for training. The diplomatic stand-off has caused a delay in the arrival of a new group of personnel to replace those who have finished their six-week training in Nanyuki under the British Army Training Unit in Kenya (Batuk). Under the agreement, six infantry battalions per year carry out six-week exercises in Kenya. There are also three Royal Engineer Squadrons which carry out civil engineering projects and two medical group deployments which provide primary health care to the civilian community. See also: Tough outing: Batian View to run as power stage during KCB M-Benki Nanyuki Rally Yesterday, British Embassy Spokesperson Stephen Burns confirmed there is "a small diplomatic issue that he hoped will be resolved soon in regard to the soldiers' training". "The UK has a longstanding, mutually beneficial, defence relationship with Kenya and we hope that the delay in receipt of diplomatic clearances from the Kenyan authorities will be resolved shortly," he said. Other officials aware of the stand-off said Kenya wants Britain to lift its advisories first, which it said are affecting the tourism sector but Britain has stood its grounds regarding the advisories saying the threats are real. The military personnel were supposed to leave Kenya on Thursday aboard a military plane that was to arrive with another group from Britain but officials said Kenya has indicated it could not guarantee the new group's security. "The British soldiers have been moved to Kahawa Barracks as the UK embassy engages authorities who say the travel advisories are the main cause of this. We are waiting," said a source who asked not to be named. UK High Commissioner Christian Turner had said in the past the Kenyan economy earns more than Sh2.5 billion annually from the activities of Â Batuk. The economic boost is mainly through acquisition of supplies and services by the British Army, which are sourced locally.

Kenya and South Africa's mutually destructive visa race

Simon Allison/dailymaverick.co.za/27 Jun 2014

It's about to become a lot harder, and more expensive, for South Africans to travel to Kenya. Join the club, the Kenyans say – it's already a mission for them to come here. But the petty, tit-for-tat regulations don't seem to be in anyone's interest: surely we should be encouraging travel, tourism and trade between two of Africa's most important countries? By SIMON ALLISON.

For such a grand and pompous profession, diplomacy can at times be ridiculously petty – and the current visa spat between Kenya and South Africa is the perfect example.

Currently, South Africans can obtain a visa for Kenya on arrival, and free of charge. We can just book a ticket and rock up, and we will be welcomed with open arms. At Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in Nairobi, there's even a special, always shorter passport queue which South

Africans can use – the Kenyans have set up a fast-track for citizens of states belonging to regional body Comesa, of which South Africa is part.

As of September this year, this generous welcome will disappear, to be replaced with an expensive and onerous visa application system that will greatly complicate travel to and through Kenya. South Africans must now obtain a visa prior to arrival, and pay a fee of R750. Applicants must present a return air ticket (which, presumably, they must purchase with no guarantee that the visa will be issued); a letter of invitation from a host in Kenya; proof of funds in the form of a bank statement; and a letter from their South African employer or education institution.

Complicating things further is that would-be travellers to Kenya must appear in person at the High Commission in Pretoria, in order to submit biometric data. Sorry for you if you live in Cape Town, or Durban, or anywhere else in this huge country that is not within spitting distance of the capital.

The Kenyan High Commission in South Africa refused a request for a phone interview to discuss why they've implemented these supremely inconvenient changes, but did respond to several questions by email.

“In international relations and treaties, the principle of reciprocity states that favours, benefits, or penalties that are granted by one state to the citizens or legal entities of another, should be returned in kind. For example, reciprocity has been used in the reduction of tariffs, the grant of copyrights to foreign authors, the mutual recognition and enforcement of judgments, and the relaxation of travel restrictions and visa requirements. The same requirements apply to Kenyan Nationals travelling through OR Tambo International and the requirements have been in place for Kenyans since December 2013,” said Deputy High Commissioner Hellen Gichuhi.

In other words: tit for tat, an eye for an eye. Kenya did it because South Africa did it first.

So far, so childish. Especially because Kenya's adherence to the principle of reciprocity is haphazard at best. For instance, Americans can pick up a visa on arrival in Kenya; Kenyan citizens, meanwhile, must go through the laborious American visa application process before they depart. The same applies for the European Union. Deputy Commissioner Gichuhi did not respond to a question from the Daily Maverick pointing out this inconsistency.

It is true, however, that South Africa recently implemented similarly stringent restrictions on Kenyan citizens. Kenyans have always needed a visa to enter South Africa, and always required one in advance – South Africa does not issue visas on arrival to anyone.

In December 2013, the situation changed slightly. To cope with the sheer volume of visa application in Nairobi, South Africa hired the services of VFS, a global visa-processing behemoth that operates 1,259 visa application centres for 45 client governments in 113 countries. VFS also works for South Africa in Nigeria and India.

VFS's services don't come cheap, and it's the visa applicants who must pay. Kenyans applying for a South African visa must now pay a service charge to VFS. “It's a service charge not a charge from the visa itself. We don't raise any revenue from any visa issued to a Kenya,” said Jackie McKay, Deputy Director General for Immigration Services at Home Affairs – in other words, the man in charge of overseeing South Africa's visa regime. “The Kenyans are now seeing it as South Africa charging them for a visa, which is completely wrong.”

The VFS website seemed to indicate that, in fact, it is McKay who has the wrong end of this particular stick. It outlines the fees that Kenyan applicants must pay at their centre in Nairobi. There

are two separate charges, a “visa fee” and a “service charge”. The website states quite clearly: “There is a service charge of KSHS 5,850 (inclusive of VAT) levied per application over and above the visa fees.”

In total, the charges for one applicant come to approximately R1,267 - a lot more than Kenya is asking South Africans to pay. No wonder the Kenyan government is unhappy, and slapping down a few visa regulations of its own.

Contacted about the discrepancy between his comments and the fees listed on the VFS website, McKay apologised for making a mistake. “I confused it with India,” he said. Needless to say, this doesn’t fill us with confidence that South Africa’s visa regime has been carefully considered. And when asked about the cost of a South African visa for Kenyans, McKay said, “We don’t think it’s exorbitant”.

In this context, it’s easy to see where Kenya is coming from – and it is possible to have a sneaking admiration for a country that is not prepared to put up with expensive, arbitrary restrictions imposed by South Africa on the movement of its citizens.

Both countries, however, should be questioning the wisdom of their actions – in terms of trade, tourism and even just the pan-African idealism, which they espouse at every opportunity. Especially because the visa restrictions even apply to transiting through the two countries. In other words, if South Africans want to travel on Kenyan Airways to London, or Kigali, or any other destination, they must have a visa to transit through Jomo Kenyatta International Airport – even if they never leave airport, or even the transit lounge. The same applies to Kenyans transiting through South Africa.

Truth is, though, that there’s not a lot of pan-African love between Kenya and South Africa at the moment. The two countries are at loggerheads over the contentious issue of the International Criminal Court, at which Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta and his deputy William Ruto are currently on trial, charges with crimes against humanity committed during Kenya’s post-election violence in 2007-2008. Kenya is lobbying hard for African countries to pull out from the ICC; South Africa, until recently at least, has been steadfast in its commitment to the international court.

Another complicating factor is the mysterious case of Samantha Lewthwaite, aka “The White Widow”. Lewthwaite is a British woman with links to Somali Islamist militant group Al Shabaab. Lewthwaite was allegedly involved somehow in last year’s Westgate Mall attack in Nairobi, in which 72 people died. She had entered Kenya on a fraudulent South African passport, and Kenyan authorities were not impressed.

Whatever the real reasons behind the sudden escalation in visa tensions, it seems unlikely that either country will benefit from the new rules. For Africa to speed up its development, economists stress the values of regional integration; political scientists stress the importance of cultural ties and mutual understanding; and politicians stress the significance of pan-Africanism. Making this harder and more expensive for citizens of two of the continent’s most populous and politically significant countries is not going to further any of these ideals. DM

World Bank cuts growth forecast for Kenya citing insecurity, drought

BY James Anyanzwa/standardmedia.co.ke/Thursday, June 26th 2014

The World Bank has revised downwards its growth projections for Kenya this year, from 5.2 per cent to 4.7 per cent, even as the Jubilee administration maintained that the economy is on track. The

Bretton Woods institution said the Kenyan economy stands a risk of underperforming owing to deteriorating security and severe drought that has hit the bread basket areas of Rift Valley. The bank also revealed that the economy performed miserably in the first quarter (January –March) of this year, growing by 2.7 per cent compared to 5.7 per cent in a similar period last year. “We expect that the economy will grow by 4.7 per cent this year (2014),” said John Randa, the bank’s senior economist. Volatile security Mr Randa noted that the major downsides to the projected economic growth include the deteriorating security situation in the country, inadequate and erratic rainfall, volatile security situation in the Middle East vis-à-vis oil prices. Others include tightened global monetary conditions, which is feared to create volatility in the forex market and domestic interest rates. “If these risks persist, then we would not achieve the growth rate we have projected,” he said. Randa was speaking during the official launch of World Bank’s Economic Update Report for Kenya in Nairobi yesterday. The report dubbed Economic “Take off Delayed” paints a grim picture of the country’s economic outlook noting that Kenya’s economy is facing headwinds in 2014. “The World Bank projects that Kenya’s gross domestic product (GDP) will grow at 4.7 per cent in 2014 and 2015—0.5 percentage points lower than its earlier projections,” says report. According to the report, the extent of the effect of inadequate rainfall on agricultural and electricity generations remain unclear. Inflationary pressures from higher food and electricity prices could also threaten macroeconomic stability, private investment and projected growth. The report notes that escalating security concerns and the perceived lack of an effective government response may deter foreign investors from doing business, not only in certain counties perceived as dangerous but in Kenya as a whole. The report says the Government’s expansionary fiscal policy is weakening the country’s fiscal position, leaving it vulnerable to shocks. “Fiscal vulnerability has increased, driven by heavy infrastructure spending leaving Kenya with limited room to maneuver in the face of shocks,” says report. According to the report, the drought that began in the last quarter of last year and delayed rain in the first half of this year will increase food and electricity prices, causing inflation to rise. “The monetary authorities will come under pressure to anchor inflation expectations as inflationary pressure build up,” says report. The Economic “Take off Delayed” report says improvement in the ability of both national and county-level governments to execute the budget would be key to growth. “Annual growth of 4.7 per cent is predicated on continuation of a stable macroeconomic environment, uptick of investment in both public and private sectors and robust aggregate demand,” says report. The report says the Government’s reform programme to improve the ease of doing business in Kenya is also pivotal in achieving faster growth in the medium-term. However, on the positive side, the report notes that the economies of Kenya’s trading partners are improving with large investments being made in infrastructure and consumption that is projected to be strong. The report notes that the successful Eurobond issued this month would ease pressure on the Government’s domestic borrowing as more credit is made available to the private sector.

ANGOLA :

AU/AFRICA :

Somalia's al-Shabab kill AU soldiers in Buloburde
26 June 2014 /bbc.com

At least two soldiers with the African Union force have been killed in Somalia following an attack

on a military base by militant Islamist group al-Shabab.

Gunmen stormed the base in the central town of Bulo-burde, leading to a heavy exchange of gunfire, residents said.

The town has been under siege from al-Shabab since peacekeepers took control of it in March.

The African Union (AU) has a 22,000-strong force in Somalia to help the weak government fight al-Shabab.

The al-Qaeda-linked group wants to establish an Islamic state in Somalia.

Al-Shabab said its fighters had killed six soldiers after raiding the base, which is within a hotel complex in Bulo-burde, some 200km (125 miles) north of the capital, Mogadishu.

However, AU Bulo-burde commander Ibrahim Ali told the BBC Somali Service that the fighting had left five people dead - two soldiers, two militants and a civilian.

The AU soldiers killed were from Djibouti, he said.

Witnesses in Bulo-burde told the BBC Somali Service the battle lasted for about 30 minutes, before the combined force of the AU and Somali army managed to repel the attack.

The BBC's Abdullahi Abdi reports from neighbouring Kenya that al-Shabab has blocked off all roads leading to the town since losing control of it in March.

The AU force can only get its supplies by air and many residents have fled the town and are living on its outskirts, he says.

Bulo-burde is a strategic town, linking Somalia's Hiran and Middle Shabelle regions, and was an important base for al-Shabab for more than five years.

Somalia has seen clan-based warlords, rival politicians and Islamist militants battle for control since the fall of long-serving ruler Siad Barre in 1991.

After a UN-backed government was installed in 2012, a small measure of stability has returned to some areas of the country, but al-Shabab still controls many towns and rural areas of southern Somalia.

Sissi au sommet de l'UA: l'Afrique menacée par le terrorisme transfrontalier

AFP / 26 juin 2014

Malabo (Guinée équatoriale) - Le président égyptien Abdel Fattah al-Sissi a estimé jeudi que l'Afrique est menacée par le terrorisme transfrontalier des groupes jihadistes et doit faire face avec force à ce fléau, au sommet de l'Union africaine (UA) à Malabo.

Nous condamnons toute forme de terrorisme, a déclaré le maréchal Sissi, qui s'exprimait en arabe et dont les propos étaient traduits en français. Il détruit les Etats, les populations et porte atteinte à la religion.

Il a appelé ses pairs à n'avoir aucune forme d'excuse pour le terrorisme et à faire face avec force à

ce fléau pour préserver la dignité de nos populations et nos économies.

Ce danger commun nous impose de renforcer notre coopération en matière sécuritaire, a-t-il poursuivi. Evoquant dans son allocution la Libye, au bord du chaos, il a souligné l'importance pour ce pays de retrouver l'unité et l'intégrité de son territoire.

Très applaudi par l'assistance au moment de prendre la parole, le maréchal, par sa présence, a signé le grand retour de l'Égypte sur la scène continentale, après la suspension du pays de l'UA dans la foulée de son coup d'État en juillet 2013 contre son prédécesseur, Mohamed Morsi.

Le sommet de l'UA qui s'est ouvert jeudi est dominé par les inquiétudes que suscitent chez les dirigeants africains la progression des groupes jihadistes jusqu'au cœur d'un continent où attaques meurtrières et attentats sont désormais quasi-quotidiens.

Extremist terror threat dominates African talks in Malabo

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MALABO — African leaders gathered on Thursday for a summit dominated by fears of a rise in extremist groups sowing terror on the continent.

From the Sahel to Nigeria, central and east Africa, armed Islamist groups carry out attacks, kidnappings and massacres on a near-daily basis.

The threat was drifting across porous borders, heard the summit in Malabo, attended by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon who called for a "rapidly operational peace and security structure".

"Africa is threatened by cross-border terrorism," said Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, who took to the podium to applause as he marked his country's comeback to continental politics in his first foreign trip.

"This common threat demands that we reinforce our co-operation," said Mr Sisi, urging his peers to "firmly face up to this plague to preserve the dignity of our people and economies". Egypt was suspended from the AU bloc after Mr Sisi toppled Islamist president Mohamed Morsi while he was army chief last July.

The two-day summit in Equatorial Guinea, sub-Saharan Africa's third largest oil producer, has as its official theme "Agriculture and Food Security".

However it has been hard to ignore the barrage of extremist attacks, which threaten to overshadow civil wars in Sudan and the Central African Republic.

In Nigeria's capital, at least 21 people died in a bombing blamed on Islamist group Boko Haram on Wednesday, adding to over 2,000 killed this year in an insurgency which the government has been unable to curb.

Boko Haram's five-year terror campaign shot to worldwide attention after it kidnapped more than 200 schoolgirls in April.

It has also raised alarm in neighbouring Cameroon, where it kidnapped 10 Chinese road workers last month, prompting the government to send 3,000 troops to its border with Nigeria.

Somalia's Shebab rebels have launched attacks in Kenya, Uganda and Djibouti to punish them for sending troops to an AU force fighting its militants. Al-Qaeda-linked Shebab commandos on Thursday attacked an African Union military base in central Somalia dressed in stolen government army uniforms, killing at least two soldiers from Djibouti, the AU force said.

The Shebab said their gunmen stormed the compound of a hotel where Djiboutian troops with the AU force were based in Bulla Burde, 200km north of the capital Mogadishu, said their spokesman Abdulaziz Abu Musab.

"The area command headquarters (of the AU force) was attacked, these attacks will continue," Mr Musab said, boasting to have killed six AU troops.

However, Elio Yao, spokesman for the UN-backed AU mission in Somalia (AMISOM), said they failed to enter the compound but killed two Djiboutians in a firefight. The two Shebab fighters "dressed in military fatigues or uniform" were also killed.

The attack is the latest by the Shebab in retaliation for the AU offensive to root them out of areas of the war-torn country still under their control.

Residents reported a blast followed by gunfire and explosions for about an hour, beginning around dawn on Thursday.

The town was seized from the Shebab in March.

After withdrawing from fixed positions in the capital Mogadishu nearly three years ago, the Shebab have lost most large towns to the AU and government soldiers.

However, they still regularly launch guerrilla raids.

Recent Shebab attacks in Somalia have targeted key areas of government, or the security forces, in an apparent bid to discredit claims by the authorities and AU troops that they are winning the war.

The Islamists have also launched attacks against AU nations in the region who have contributed troops to the force.

In May, at least one person was killed and several wounded when two suicide bombers blew themselves up in a restaurant in Djibouti, the first attack claimed by the Shebab since Djibouti joined the AU force in 2011.

The Shebab have also claimed massacres on Kenya's coastal region in which over 60 people have been killed, although Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta has blamed "local political networks" for the attacks.

Survivors of the attacks last week in Kenya's Lamu district reported gunmen speaking Somali and carrying Shebab flags, executing non-Muslims and saying their actions were revenge for Kenya's military presence in Somalia as part of AMISOM.

In September last year the group carried out its most high-profile attack to date — a suicide commando assault on Nairobi's Westgate shopping mall that left at least 67 dead.

And in the Sahel, Mali is still recovering from the Islamist takeover of half the country.

Mr Ban has called on armed groups there to "negotiate a lasting peace". "These are new threats," a French diplomat said on the sidelines of the summit.

"Before African crises were linked to coups d'état, rebellions could be fought with conventional armies," he said. "The security apparatus is not complex enough to deal with terrorism." Leaders appear powerless in the face of the extremist juggernaut.

An African diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity, said despite these threats, security co-operation between states was still in its infancy.

"Co-ordination between states is slow because they aren't all on the same wavelength. Some countries don't realise that the security question affects them too, or prefer to avoid turning their back to jihadists," he said.

The 54-nation AU's chief, Mauritanian President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, has called on his peers to put in place "effective mechanisms" to ensure peace.

The bloc's peace and security council has long floated plans to create an African rapid response force to step in on erupting crises, which more often than not in recent years have been stamped out by western nations intervening on the continent.

But implementation of this force remains chaotic, mostly for financial reasons, and it is now expected to be in place by 2015.

France has sent thousands of troops to curb violence in former colonies Mali and Central African Republic.

AFP

UN/AFRICA :

WHO warns of Ebola deaths in Africa
presstv.ir/2014/06/26

The World Health Organization (WHO) has called for international efforts to help fight what it describes as the deadliest Ebola outbreak on record.

The UN health watchdog issued a warning on Thursday, highlighting the number of deaths and the growing trend of the deadly infection in countries such as Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia.

It also called for drastic measures to contain a looming crisis associated with the disease.

Luis Sambo, WHO's regional director for Africa, said the watchdog was now "gravely concerned ... [over] the on-going cross-border transmission into neighboring countries as well as the potential for further international spread."

The number of infections and deaths reported each day for the past three weeks have significantly increased despite the WHO's efforts alongside other international aid organizations.

The UN agency has also reported hundreds of infected cases across 60 different locations in West Africa.

The developments come as the health ministers from 11 countries will be meeting in Accra, Ghana on July 2 and 3 to exchange ideas and address the growing crisis, according to the WHO.

The WHO released figures show around 340 people have so far died as a result of the deadly outbreak, which is the largest ever in terms of fatalities.

The deadly virus was first discovered in Central Africa in 1976 and was named after a small river in what is now the Democratic Republic of Congo. There is still no treatment for Ebola

MOL/AB

US/AFRICA :

US boots Swaziland from trade pact

Author: Sapa/27 June 2014

Over workers' rights concerns.

The United States removed Swaziland from a lucrative trade pact Thursday due to concerns over workers' rights, as it allowed Madagascar back in after the island restored democracy.

President Barack Obama pointed to Swaziland's use of force against demonstrations and lack of recognition of labor unions as he removed the impoverished kingdom from the Africa Growth Opportunity Act, which offers preferential access to the US market for goods from some 40 sub-Saharan nations that meet political and economic standards.

US Trade Representative Michael Froman said Washington hoped to work with Swaziland on improving conditions so it could return to AGOA.

"The withdrawal of AGOA benefits is not a decision that is taken lightly," Froman said in a statement.

"We have made our concerns very clear to Swaziland over the last several years and we engaged extensively on concrete steps that Swaziland could take to address the concerns."

Obama restored Madagascar's AGOA eligibility in the wake of elections late last year. The United States had suspended the island from the trade deal after a military coup in 2009.

The United States already announced in May that it was lifting restrictions on assistance to Madagascar. Obama has invited President Hery Rajaonarimampianina to Washington for a US-Africa summit in August.

The United States established AGOA in 2000 in hopes of promoting democratic and economic standards by offering market access to the world's largest economy. AGOA has contributed to a sharp rise in Swaziland's textile industry, which employs 17 000 people.

Swaziland has banned political parties since 1973 and often detains pro-democracy activists and

charges them with terrorism. In May, government spokesman Percy Simelane said that Swaziland was doing everything possible to retain its AGOA status.

CANADA/AFRICA :

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