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BURUNDI :

RWANDA :

Rwanda: ICTR Would Have Served Rwandans Better - Muhumuza

By Felly Kimenyi/allafrica.com/17 November 2014

This month, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda celebrated 20 years after its creation by the UN Security Council. Over the years, there have been mixed feelings among Rwandans in different circles over the work of the tribunal, that has so far consumed a staggering \$2 billion on the trials it has so far conducted. The New Times' Felly Kimenyi interviewed Prosecutor General Richard Muhumuza for an insight into the work of the Tanzania-based court. Excerpts:

A few days ago you attended, in Arusha, Tanzania, a session that discussed the legacy of the ICTR 20 years after it was established. What is your assessment of the tribunal?

The Tribunal succeeded in many ways, but also fell short in a number of areas. First, there was no room for victim participation in the trials. Victims could only participate as witnesses. Secondly, there were no reparations for victims, an essential part of providing justice.

Thirdly, the survivors and Rwandans in general did not "see justice done" because the ICTR was based in another country. Lastly, considering the resources at ICTR's disposal, I believe many more suspects could have been tried.

You stated in your keynote address that the tribunal's proximity to Rwandans, especially the survivors was an issue. What difference would it have made had it been on Rwandan soil?

I have no doubt that had the Tribunal been located in Rwanda, victims, perpetrators and Rwandans, in general, would have been able to see the masterminds of the Genocide against Tutsi on trial and this would have contributed toward reconciliation and served as a deterrent to anyone who may still harbour genocide ideology .

As the tribunal closes, issues have been raised over reparations to Genocide survivors. Is this something you have discussed with the UN? And do you think there should have been such?

I believe this is an issue Rwanda has been passionately advocating for in the recent past and still does. For true justice to exist, there must be compensation as well as punishment.

Heinous crimes leave survivors with no family support and they must, therefore, be provided with reparations to help rebuild their lives. However, I am cognisant of the fact that the ICTR Statute, unlike the one for the International Criminal Court, did not have this provision and it was, therefore, impossible to provide reparations to the survivors.

This lesson has, therefore, been learnt and will benefit future generations.

Key suspects, especially former senior government officials, have been acquitted by the tribunal over the years. What do you have to say about this? Do you think justice was satisfactorily dispensed?

It is true that some suspects we believe were key perpetrators of the Genocide were freed by the ICTR Appeals Chamber. But while we can criticise and disagree with the decisions, we must respect the decisions of the court.

For the victims and survivors, there will always be the concern that the persons they believe committed serious crimes against them are free and, therefore, whether justice was done will always depend on the individual concerned.

We would have preferred a different outcome, but we do respect the court's decision.

What is the progress on the cases that were transferred by the ICTR to Rwanda? Some say that the trail had run cold, given that the indictments were drawn probably over a decade ago and with no indication to where these fugitives could be. How optimistic are you that you will catch these people that the tribunal failed to apprehend?

First, ICTR transferred a total of 55 cases to us. Some of the suspects have been located in different countries and extradition processes are ongoing and are at different stages.

With regard to the nine high profile suspects still at large, six of whom are scheduled to be tried in

Rwanda upon arrest, Rwanda is engaged in different strategies to ensure that they are apprehended.

We are pursuing very good leads to where some of them may be located. As I have often stated, there is no time limit on justice for the crimes of which they are sought. They will be apprehended and put on trial.

During the ICTR anniversary event, different speakers lauded the Rwandan judicial system. However, when it got to completion strategy, the tribunal chose not to hand the so-called Big Fish (Kabuga et al) among the files they sent to your office. Is it that you were found deficient of capacity to ably conduct these trials?

There are nine so-called big fish still at large, of these, ICTR has chosen to keep three files and hand over six files to us. ICTR's Statute categorically states that it has primacy over national courts.

However, ICTR's work has always been complimentary to ours because we have always been prosecuting the same genocide (crimes) with the same key perpetrators.

In this regard, as the Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunal's (MICT) mandate is not indefinite, should it come to an end before the three suspects are apprehended, there is no doubt the decision to try them at MICT will be revisited and they would then be tried in Rwanda.

The tribunal's registry has been accused of double standards in the way they follow up on cases referred to national jurisdictions; the two suspects referred to Rwanda and the duo referred to France. Scrutiny has been put on those transferred to Rwanda, with little attention to the cases referred to France...

We have always emphasised that Rwanda is held to a much higher standard than other countries. In 2007, the ICTR transferred two suspects, namely Wineslas Munyensyhaka and Laurent Bucyibaruta, to France.

Seven years later, none of these men has been put on trial in France where they both live. On the other hand, the ICTR transferred two cases, namely, Jean Uwinkindi and Bernard Munyagishari in 2012 and 2013, respectively, to Rwanda.

Both men are currently on trial before the International Crimes Chamber of Rwanda's High Court. The ICTR always has the option of deferral, recalling cases transferred to national jurisdictions.

This option has never been used in the case of France. We are, however, still hopeful that France will do the right thing by putting the two transferred cases on trial or by extraditing them to Rwanda.

What is your opinion about the contentious issue of who should take custody of the archives the tribunal has accumulated over its 20 years of operation?

As I informed the participants at the ICTR Legacy Symposium, the Archives belong to Rwanda. They are part of Rwandan history which we must reclaim. We will not stop claiming them.

We do understand that while the MICT continues its work, the archives must be located with it. However, eventually, these archives must be transferred to Rwanda when MICT's work winds down.

When, in 1994, the UN Security Council was debating Resolution 955, Rwanda, among other

suggestions, sought to have representation at senior staff level (may be judges and prosecutors), at the ICTR, what difference do you think this would have made?

Rwanda's position was later found credible because hybrid tribunals such as the one in Sierra Leone and Cambodia were created instead of the purely international ones like the ICTR and the ICTY.

Having senior Rwandan staff at the Tribunal would definitely have served to allow Rwandans be part of the process of dispensing justice and contributed to reconciliation efforts.

What is your comment on the issue of the persons acquitted by the tribunal whom the tribunal is stuck with?

These persons are Rwandans. Rwanda has never denied them entry to Rwanda. However, they are former UN detainees and the UN has to take the lead in resolving this issue. Rwanda has always offered cooperation whenever requested.

Concerning other Genocide fugitives that your office is tracking, we have seen little effort by many Africans in facilitating the arrest of the people that were cited to be in African countries. Do you share the same opinion? Why the indifference?

It is true that we have sent many indictments to African countries but have not had much success. I should note that Uganda extradited two suspects.

However, the process of extradition is a very tedious and long process. We have more recently renewed our efforts of engaging our African counterparts and are hopeful that facilitation is and will be provided going forward.

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RDC CONGO :

UGANDA :

SOUTH AFRICA :

South Africa's Telkom SA H1 earnings drop 67 pct as restructuring bites

Mon Nov 17, 2014/Reuters

JOHANNESBURG (Reuters) - Telkom SA, South Africa's biggest landline provider, posted an expected 67 percent drop in first-half earnings on Monday, hit in part by restructuring costs after it had to let go hundreds of workers.

Telkom reported diluted headline earnings of 212.1 cents a share for the six months to Sept. 30, from a restated 649.8 cents a year earlier. Headline EPS, the main measure of profit in South Africa, excludes certain one-off items.

The company said it laid off more than 400 managers whose voluntary retrenchment and severance packages cost 325 million rand (\$29 million). Last year's results were also inflated by a one-time gain related to medical aid benefits for retired employees.

Telkom said total revenue declined slightly to 16.2 billion rand as fixed-line usage shrank by 12 percent. However, mobile revenue increased by 5 percent.

"Operating revenue decreased due to the continuous decline in fixed-line voice revenue and lower data leased line revenue resulting from self-provisioning by other licensed operators," Telkom said in a statement.

Telkom shares have more than double so far this year, augmenting a rise of nearly 70 percent in 2013.

(1 US dollar = 11.0700 South African rand)

TANZANIA :

Tanzania accused of backtracking over sale of Masai's ancestral land

David Smith, Africa correspondent/The Guardian /Sunday 16 November 2014

Masai told to leave historic homeland by end of the year so it can become a hunting reserve for the Dubai royal family

Tanzania has been accused of renegeing on its promise to 40,000 Masai pastoralists by going ahead with plans to evict them and turn their ancestral land into a reserve for the royal family of Dubai to hunt big game.

Activists celebrated last year when the government said it had backed down over a proposed 1,500 sq km "wildlife corridor" bordering the Serengeti national park that would serve a commercial hunting and safari company based in the United Arab Emirates.

Now the deal appears to be back on and the Masai have been ordered to quit their traditional lands by the end of the year. Masai representatives will meet the prime minister, Mizengo Pinda, in Dodoma on Tuesday to express their anger. They insist the sale of the land would rob them of their heritage and directly or indirectly affect the livelihoods of 80,000 people. The area is crucial for grazing livestock on which the nomadic Masai depend.

Unlike last year, the government is offering compensation of 1 billion shillings (£369,350), not to be paid directly but to be channelled into socio-economic development projects. The Masai have dismissed the offer.

"I feel betrayed," said Samwel Nangiria, co-ordinator of the local Ngonett civil society group. "One billion is very little and you cannot compare that with land. It's inherited. Their mothers and grandmothers are buried in that land. There's nothing you can compare with it."

Nangiria said he believes the government never truly intended to abandon the scheme in the Loliondo district but was wary of global attention. "They had to pretend they were dropping the agenda to fool the international press."

He said it had proved difficult to contact the Ortelo Business Corporation (OBC), a luxury safari company set up by a UAE official close to the royal family. The OBC has operated in Loliondo for more than 20 years with clients reportedly including Prince Andrew.

Activists opposing the hunting reserve have been killed by police in the past two years, according to Nangiria, who says he has received threatening calls and text messages. "For me it is dangerous on a personal level. They said: 'We discovered you are the mastermind, you want to stop the government using the land'. Another said: 'You have decided to shorten your life. The hands of the government are too long. Put your family ahead of the Masai.'"

Nangiria is undeterred. "I will fight for my community. I'm more energetic than I was. The Masai would like to ask the prime minister about the promise. What happened to the promise? Was it a one-year promise or forever? Perhaps he should put the promise in writing."

This will be the last time the Masai settle for talks, he added, before pursuing other methods including a court injunction. They could also be an influential voting bloc in next year's elections.

An international campaign against the hunting reserve was led last year by the online activism site Avaaz.org, whose Stop the Serengeti Sell-off petition attracted more than 1.7 million signatures and led to coordinated email and Twitter protests.

Alex Wilks, campaign director for Avaaz, said: "The Masai stare out from every tourism poster, but Tanzania's government wants to kick them off their land so foreign royalty can hunt elephants there. Two million people around the world have backed the Masai's call for president Jakaya Kikwete to fulfil his promise to let them stay where they've always lived. Treating the Masai as the great unwanted would be a disaster for Tanzania's reputation."

A spokesperson for Tanzania's natural resources and tourism ministry said: "It's the first I've heard of it. I'm currently out of the office and can't comment properly."

Tanzania's parliament receives report on graft claims in energy

Monday, 17 November 2014/nguardiannews.com

TANZANIA'S parliament has received a report on the findings of an investigation into corruption allegations in the energy sector, officials said yesterday, an issue that has led to donors delaying aid and weakened its currency.

A group of 12 international donors have given \$69 million of \$558 million pledged in budget support, saying the rest would be paid only if the findings of the investigation into the alleged scam were released and appropriate action taken.

Officials did not comment on what those findings were, Reuters reported.

Foreign grants and loans are a big source of hard currency in Tanzania, and the delay has hurt its currency, traders have said.

Tanzania has made big discoveries of natural gas, but its energy industry has been dogged by allegations of corruption in the past. Businesses have long complained graft is one of the main reasons for the high cost of doing business in Tanzania.

"The Controller and Auditor General's office has concluded its special audit into the allegations and has submitted its report to our committee," Deo Filikunjombe, vice-chairman of the parliamentary public accounts committee told Reuters.

"We are studying the report... and will present its findings to parliament on November 26."

The chairman of the committee, Zitto Kabwe, has also confirmed on his Twitter account that his committee had received the probe report.

It was not clear, however, what action parliament would then take.

The investigation, which the government ordered in May, followed claims by opposition MPs that senior government officials fraudulently authorised payment of at least \$122 million of public funds to a private company.

The opposition said the money came from an escrow account held jointly by state power company TANESCO and independent power producer IPTL and went to IPTL's owner, Pan Africa Power (PAP) in 2013. PAP said the transfer was legal.

The government has denied any wrongdoing by its officials. The government's anti-corruption watchdog is also investigating the fraud allegations.

Ashok Leyland bags \$79.2 mn project in Tanzania, Zimbabwe

Nov 17, 2014/Source: PTI

As part of the project, the company will supply trucks, buses, light commercial vehicles, spares and allied support services, includes training and developmental consultancy

Hinduja Group flagship firm Ashok Leyland Monday announced bagging of two large integrated transport projects in Tanzania and Zimbabwe worth a total of USD 79.2 million. As part of the project, the company will supply trucks, buses, light commercial vehicles, spares and allied support services, includes training and developmental consultancy, Ashok Leyland said in a statement. Besides, the company will also address a variety of mobility requirements in various tourism and economic development programmes, it added. Commenting on the development, Ashok Leyland Managing Director Vinod K Dasari said: "These projects are a continuation of the many pilot projects we have done across Africa to offer integrated solutions and these orders have been won in the face of stiff global competition." He said the company had made a conscious effort to provide thrust to its international operations and Africa was a very important part of this strategy. "It is very encouraging to see our efforts bear fruit. I am confident this is the beginning of a successful new area of enhanced cooperation between Ashok Leyland, Africa and our valued customers," he added. Exim Bank has financed these projects under their NEIA (National Export Insurance Account) scheme, that supports project exports from India, the company said. Shares of Ashok Leyland were trading at Rs 55.25 per scrip, in the morning trade, up 1.38 per cent from the previous close on the BSE. Ashok Leyland stock price On November 17, 2014, at 13:57 hrs Ashok Leyland was quoting at Rs 55.15, up Rs 0.65, or 1.19 percent. The 52-week high of the share was Rs 56.15 and the 52-week low was Rs 14.90. The company's trailing 12-month (TTM) EPS was at Rs 0.94 per share as per the quarter ended September 2014. The stock's price-to-earnings (P/E) ratio was 58.67. The latest book value of the company is Rs 15.69 per share. At current value, the price-to-book value of the company is 3.51.

KENYA :

Glut of tea threatens livelihood of small-scale farmers in Kenya

by Edith Honan/Reuters/novembre 17 2014

EMERALD-coloured tea bushes blanketing the rolling hills of Nandi County have long provided a livelihood for small-scale farmers, helping make Kenya one of the world's biggest tea exporters.

But ideal weather and bigger harvests, instead of producing bumper earnings, have led to a glut of Kenya's speciality black tea. Samuel Busienei, a 72-year-old tea farmer, says he earns 40% less for each kilogram of tea sold than he did three years ago and is considering tearing up his crop.

"It was a very good life," said Mr Busienei, who first planted the crop in the 1980s. "But if the price doesn't change, we will have to remove the tea."

The threat facing Mr Busienei and other smallholders, who produce about two-thirds of Kenya's tea output, could spell broader trouble for the east African nation's economy.

Tea exports are now one of Kenya's biggest sources of foreign exchange, alongside flowers and other horticultural exports, and generated \$1.3bn last year on a record output of 432-million kilograms.

In contrast, coffee exports earned just \$214m in 2012-13.

As Kenya's economic growth has slowed to below 6%, from 7% in 2007, tea has become a main driver of growth, overtaking tourism, which has been hit by attacks blamed on Somalia-based militants, including the 2013 attack on Nairobi's Westgate shopping mall. Tea revenues are also helping support the Kenyan shilling as it faces pressure from a dollar shortage.

"Kenya is at the top of the scale in terms of quality," said Ecobank's head of group research, Edward George, in London. "It should be looking to maintain its very powerful position as the key supplier of black tea to the global market."

Tea prices have been under pressure globally as other countries have increased output and exports. Top-grade Kenyan tea, which fetched a maximum price of \$3.78-\$4.38/kg in 2012, was sold at auction in Mombasa last week for \$2.10-\$3.40.

Kenya vies with China and Sri Lanka as the world's top tea exporter. But more small farmers in Kenya now produce tea, so even as export earnings rise the proceeds are spread more thinly.

To ensure small farmers do not switch away from the cash crop or sell land for real estate, analysts say Kenya must introduce a more effective mechanism to cushion price swings and find new export markets.

For now, 70% of output goes to five countries with a taste for Kenya's black tea. One of them is Britain, the former colonial power, which established tea-planting in Kenya on a large scale in the 1940s but whose domestic consumption has reached a plateau. The others are Egypt, Sudan, Afghanistan and Pakistan, where political turmoil frequently hits purchases.

Agriculture Minister Felix Koskei visited Nandi, about 300km northwest of Nairobi, last month to urge farmers to keep growing and promised help.

"The more we rely on these traditional markets, the more we lose," Mr Koskei said in Nairobi. Kenya was seeking to attract new buyers in eastern Europe and the Middle East, two big tea-drinking regions, he said.

He said the government planned to set up a price stabilisation fund, which would involve the state buying up some of Kenya's tea when prices were low and selling it to the global market once prices stabilised, to cushion farmers against fluctuations. The government was in the process of hiring a consultant, Mr Koskei said, adding it was too early to give details.

Most small-scale farmers are members of the Kenya Tea Development Agency (KTDA), a co-operative since the government sold it in 2000. Tea is also produced on big farms run by firms such as Williamson Tea Kenya and Unilever.

KTDA, which represents 560,000 farmers, offers a guaranteed sum for each kilogram of tea on delivery at tea-collecting stations, plus a sum paid annually linked to global prices. Overall, farmers received 31.61 shillings (35 US cents) per kilogram in the 2013-14 season, down from 50.01 shillings (55c) in 2011-12.

The system is set up to ensure growers get some income immediately on delivery, but do not get the full amount until a sale is made on the global market.

There are other pressures. Tea pickers are demanding higher pay. Many now earn just 10 shillings per kilogram, working from daybreak to pluck new leaves from the bushes.

"People really have been crying about the prices," said Leah Metto, who grows tea on a three-acre plot in Nandi to supplement her teacher's income.

KTDA chairman Peter Kanyago has urged the government to simplify 24 different taxes that he said affected producers. Kenya needs tax revenue from the tea sector as it seeks funds for development projects and aims to narrow its budget deficit, but agriculture minister Koskei said the government was studying KDTA's request.

Reuters

Kenya: UN Halves Kenya Refugees' Food After Aid Shortfall

Sabahi (Washington, DC)/14 November 2014

Food rations vital for half a million refugees in Kenya will be slashed in half due to an aid shortfall, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) announced Friday (November 14th).

"WFP has done everything it can to avoid reducing rations, using all means at our disposal to cover critical funding gaps," said WFP Deputy Country Director for Kenya Paul Turnbull, appealing for \$38 million to cover operations for the next six months, including an immediate \$15.5 million needed to feed refugees until January.

Most of the refugees affected reside in Dadaab and Kakuma camps in northern Kenya and come from Somalia and South Sudan.

Food rations, which include grains, legumes, cooking oil, sugar and salt, will be cut from around 2,100 to 1,050 kilocalories per person per day. Special fortified foods given to children and pregnant women will remain in place for now.

"Cutting rations is the last resort and we are doing it to eke out the limited food we currently have available over the next ten weeks, as we continue to appeal to the international community to assist," Turnbull said in a statement.

Rations are expected to be returned to full levels in January when fresh shipments arrive.

"With competing humanitarian needs around the world, we realise budgets are tight but nonetheless, we must call for more funding so that we can work with the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees to meet the urgent needs of these vulnerable people, who have no other means of support," said Valerie Guarnieri, WFP's East and Central Africa regional director.

It costs the WFP almost \$10 million a month to provide the 9,700 tonnes of food needed to feed about 500,000 refugees.

Kenya: ICC Slams Kenya Over New Request On Discussion of Judges, Prosecution Conduct At ASP December Meeting

By Felix Olick/allafrica.com/17 November 2014

Top ICC principals, including the court's president Sang-Hyun Song, have told off Kenya regarding a controversial agenda that the country wants discussed at an upcoming forum in New York.

In a clear signal that Kenyan Permanent Representative to the UN Macharia Kamau could be complicating the twin Hague cases, the three principals said what Kenya is seeking amounts to "interference with the independence of the court".

"The court notes with concern that many of the issues proposed to be discussed by the assembly in the context of the referred special session relate to matters that fall within the judicial and prosecutorial competence of the court," reads the ICC letter.

The letter was written by Song, Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda and Registrar of the Court Herman Von Hebel.

Kamau wants the Assembly of States Parties to discuss the conduct of the judges as well as the prosecutor during the ASP week-long meeting in the US.

The meeting takes place on December 8-17.

Kenya, through Macharia, has accused the court of incorrect interpretation of the Rome Statute, politicising the Kenyan cases and continuing to prosecute cases that do not meet evidentiary thresholds.

But speaking to the Star yesterday, human rights lawyer Njonjo Mue said Kamau has proved Bensouda's allegations that Uhuru is using the state to fight off his ICC charges.

"Macharia is abusing his diplomatic privileges. His statements are factually incorrect, utterly disrespectful and undiplomatic," the High Court advocate said.

"His attacks on the court support prosecution assertions that Uhuru controls all state organs and that even public officials work on his best interest, not that of the country or even victims of the violence."

Two weeks ago, Macharia unleashed a scathing attack on the ICC in the presence of the court's president.

Meanwhile, the case against Deputy President William Ruto and his co-accused Joshua arap Sang at The Hague enters the last leg as it resumes today.

There are only five prosecution witnesses left although there are indications two more may be compelled to testify.

Kenya to host Africa Travel Association world congress in 2015

November 17, 2014/kbc.co.ke

Kenya has won the bid to host the Africa of Travel Association (ATA) World Congress next year, 2015.

Announcing the news during the 39th ATA Congress in Kampala Uganda, East Africa Commerce and Tourism Cabinet Secretary Phylis Kandie said the conference will spur tourism business in the country.

She said the event, which will bring together close to 500 delegates from over 20 countries across the globe, is among a number of key international conferences that the country has lined up next year, a sign of expected growth in conference tourism.

“This is definitely good news for the country as we refocus on Meetings Incentives Conference and Exhibition (MICE) segment that is rapidly growing, especially in Nairobi and other major towns in the country,” said Mrs Kandie.

In addition to ATA, Kenya has also won the bid to host SKAL international Congress next year, in Mombasa. The conference will bring together about 1,500 travel and tourism professionals from around the world.

“We have also won another bid to host the World Public Relations Forum sometimes next year. All these international events are a show of confidence in the country that continues to leverage on its strategic position as the regional hub in hosting key international forums” said Mrs Kandie.

She lauded ATA for its effort in marketing Africa as a tourism destination and highlighting on the challenges that needed to be addressed by the member States for the growth of the tourism business.

Kenya Tourism Board (KTB) Managing Director Muriithi Ndegwa while delivering a paper on Marketing African destinations at the conference noted that insecurity, political instability, infrastructure and air connectivity were among the key challenges affecting Africa destination.

He said though intra-Africa tourism has prove a huge potential in growing tourism in line with market diversification, low air connectivity within the continent has dealt a blow to smooth travel.

“Movement within some of African countries from Africa, at most times require one to travel via Europe or Middle East, a major obstacle to access especially when research indicates that about 55% of global travel is by air,” said Mr Ndegwa.

He said the adoption of open sky policy, acquisition of more African carriers flying to Africa destinations and affordable air fares will reverse the current situation by improving propensity to travel.

Ebola scare dominated the one-week long ATA congress as a current major threat to the tourism business in the continent with member States rallying each other on a campaign to create awareness on foot print of Ebola epidemic.

ANGOLA :

Angola/Nigeria: Warning signal for oil producers

November 17 2014/By Bloomberg

AFRICA'S biggest oil producers had debt levels low enough to withstand slumping crude prices, while Ghana faced risks without an aid package and Zambia from an unexpected election, Fitch Ratings said. Nigeria and Angola were able to post budget deficits for the next year or two because of their low debt, enabling them to maintain spending with lower oil prices, Carmen Altenkirch, a director of the sovereign group at the agency, said last week. That space might narrow after a few years, she said. "Nigeria and Angola have the fiscal space to run deficits in the region of 4 to 5 percent of GDP [gross domestic product] for a few years without undermining fiscal stability," she said. "However, if oil prices remain lower for longer, fiscal policy may need to be tightened to avoid downward pressure on the rating." Slumping crude prices pushed the naira to a record low last week, prompting pledges from central bank officials that they will continue using foreign-exchange reserves to bolster the currency. Angola on Wednesday cut its estimate for 2015 oil output to 1.83 million barrels a day from 2 million. Fitch rates Nigeria and Angola BB-. – Bloomberg

AU/AFRICA :

Burkina: Michel Kafando, un diplomate chevronné devenu président intérimaire

le 17 novembre 2014/AFP

Ouagadougou (AFP)

Après une vie consacrée à la diplomatie, Michel Kafando, vient d'être propulsé au poste de président intérimaire du Burkina Faso, une charge qu'il occupera pendant un an, jusqu'aux élections prévues en novembre 2015.

"Plus qu'un honneur, c'est une redoutable responsabilité qui m'échoit, dont j'entrevois déjà les écueils et l'immensité de la tâche", a commenté M. Kafando, qui est resté impassible à l'annonce de sa désignation.

"J'ai naturellement accepté comme chaque fois lorsque que j'ai été sollicité par le devoir", a-t-il poursuivi, lisant devant la presse un court discours manuscrit.

Agé de 72 ans, cet homme de grande taille, aux cheveux noirs légèrement grisonnants, s'est présenté en costume-cravate, distingué et serein, pour son audition dimanche en début de soirée par le collège de désignation, composé de 23 membres, dont une majorité de civils.

Plus de six heures d'attente n'ont en rien entamé le flegme de Michel Kafando, né le 18 août 1942.

M. Kafando a fait toute sa carrière dans ce milieu, où ses études l'ont conduit. Droit public et sciences politiques, d'abord à Dakar jusqu'en 1968, quand les contrecoups du mois de mai parisien se sont faits sentir dans la capitale sénégalaise, puis Bordeaux et Paris.

Genève ensuite, où il obtient un diplôme de formation diplomatique au Centre européen de la dotation Carnegie.

A son retour en Haute-Volta, l'ancien nom du pays, il intègre évidemment le ministère des Affaires étrangères, où ils enchaînent les postes de direction : coopération internationale, relations

internationales, organisations internationales.

Cette dernière expérience le mène à l'ONU, où il devient une première fois ambassadeur de son pays (1981-1982). En 1982-83, Michel Kafando prend la charge de ministre des Affaires étrangères dans plusieurs gouvernements, le pays connaissant une forte instabilité.

- 'Exigeant dans le choix des hommes' -

L'avènement du président révolutionnaire Thomas Sankara (1983-1987), dont ce père de deux enfants n'est pas proche, selon plusieurs sources, le conduira sur les bancs de la Sorbonne, pour la rédaction d'une thèse en 1990 sur la diplomatie ouest-africaine face au bloc de l'Est.

Plusieurs années plus tard, Michel Kafando refait son entrée aux Nations unies. Après la Haute-Volta, il représente désormais le Burkina Faso à New York, où il passera treize ans, de 1998 à 2011.

Depuis sa retraite, M. Kafando s'est consacré à sa ferme, qui le "passionne", ainsi qu'à des travaux de consultant, expliquait-il à l'AFP avant son audition.

Le diplomate émérite s'est aussi distingué par une jolie passe d'arme récente avec son successeur à l'ONU au sujet de la vente, selon lui abusive, de la résidence du Burkina à New York.

"Vivement enfin que l'on soit plus exigeant dans le choix des hommes", écrivait-il à ce sujet le 27 octobre, soit quatre jours à peine avant la chute de Blaise Compaoré.

"Représenter le Burkina Faso à l'extérieur requiert, par-dessus tout, la rigueur morale, le courage et l'abnégation, l'honnêteté et la probité, une bonne dose de dignité et évidemment la compétence, toutes choses qui se résument en l'amour de la patrie", poursuivait-il.

Autant de qualités qu'il pourra à nouveau mettre en oeuvre au service de son pays durant l'année pendant laquelle il aura la charge de mener la transition. "Parfois, on a l'impression que quand on a décroché, on est plus occupé que quand on est en activité", ironisait-il quelques heures avant sa nomination.

Africa: AU Commission Chairperson Commends Equatorial Guinea's Acceptance to Host 2015 Afcon

Confederation of African Football (Giza)/16 November 2014

African Union (AU) Commission Chairperson, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma has commended the Government of Equatorial Guinea for its strong show of African Solidarity demonstrated by its acceptance to host the 2015 African Cup of Nations (AFCON) tournament in January 2015.

CAF President Issa Hayatou made the announcement on Friday, 14 November 2014, following a meeting with Equatorial Guinea President, Teodoro Obiang Nguema in Malabo. Initial host of 2015 AFCON, Morocco had requested CAF to postpone the coveted competition in 2015, amidst fears of the Ebola Virus Disease.

"The Executive Committee of CAF and President Issa Hayatou seize this opportunity to express their sincere thanks and deep appreciation to the people of Equatorial Guinea, its government, and particularly to His Excellency the Head of State and President of the Republic Equatorial Guinea, Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo," Hayatou said.

"The Ebola outbreak in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone should not paralyse continental programs and events. Like many other challenges the continent has faced in the past, the Ebola outbreak is being surmounted and is by no means a reason to stall the African Cup of Nations," African Union Commission Chair, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma said after receiving the announcement of Equatorial Guinea to host the much awaited continental and global event.

The AU and CAF share common Pan African values and are deeply aware that the common wellbeing and prosperity of the continent is paramount. Meeting with the AUC Chairperson in September in Addis Ababa, CAF Executive Committee, led by its President Issa Hayatou expressed its strong support to contribute to fight against the Ebola Virus Disease.

However, Africa cannot afford to be swayed by each and every challenge the continent faces and is at a point where it faces new and old challenges, like the Ebola crisis, the threat of terrorism and conflicts.

"Football is a unique unifying force of our continent and the world. We look forward to once again, coming together and celebrating Africa together in the exhilarating 2015 AFCON tournament in Equatorial Guinea," Dr. Dlamini Zuma said.

The AU reiterates its commitment to support CAF and the host in its preparations for the tournament, and calls upon Member States and the international community to avail Equatorial Guinea and all the participating nations all the necessary and adequate support and screening facilities.

"We should remember that we have fought and defeated many tragedies including HIV/AIDS whose spread has been significantly halted. We will defeat Ebola." Dr. Dlamini Zuma reassured.

The tournament will take place in four cities namely Malabo, Bata, Mongomo and Ebebiyin whilst the draw has been fixed for Wednesday, 3 December 2015 in Malabo.

UN/AFRICA :

US/AFRICA :

Texas National Guard troops deploying to West Africa for Ebola relief

By Michael Aaron/kxan.com/November 16, 2014

AUSTIN (KXAN) — Members of the Texas Army National Guard will deploy to western Africa to help in the fight against Ebola.

A team of engineers based in Angleton, which is south of Houston, will deploy in spring 2015 as part of Operation United Assistance. The Guardsmen will be part of a multi-state National Guard effort and return home within a year.

Operation United Assistance is a U.S. Department of Defense initiative helping fight Ebola in West Africa. On Thursday, U.S. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel signed an order authorizing the

deployment of about 2,100 Army Reserve and Army National Guard soldiers to support the operation.

“As the Defense Department’s most cost-effective force, the National Guard provides our country great versatility across the full spectrum of operations,” said Maj. Gen. John F. Nichols, The Adjutant General of Texas. “The citizen-Soldiers representing Texas are experienced professionals and will bring a wealth of knowledge to the mission. We are proud to serve our state and nation during this time of need and be a part of this larger effort.”

Members of the 272nd Engineer Company, 368th Engineer Battalion will make up the team. While in western Africa, they will build structures for operational and medical needs.

“The mission of these brave Texans is essential to controlling and containing the international threat to public health we face with Ebola,” said Gov. Rick Perry. “Their efforts to help end this outbreak in West Africa will mean greater safety for all of us back at home, and we commend each of them for their courage and dedication to their fellow man.”

The Texas Military Forces will provide more information on the deployment at a news conference Monday afternoon. We will be there and bring you the latest throughout the day on KXAN.com and on KXAN News at 5 & 6.

US to screen Mali travellers for Ebola

17 Nov 2014/aljazeera.com

Washington adds Mali to list of countries whose travellers get special Ebola screening when entering US.

The United States is adding Mali to the list of countries whose travellers get special Ebola screening after a number of cases in the West African nation, the government said.

Mali is not suffering a widespread Ebola outbreak. But federal officials are growing increasingly alarmed about a new cluster of seven illnesses in Mali that have left public health workers scrambling to track and monitor at least 450 other people who may have had contact with the infected and may be at risk.

"At this point we can't be confident that every exposed person has been identified, or that every identified person is being monitored daily," Dr Tom Frieden, director of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said on Sunday.

Starting Monday, anyone arriving in the US from Mali will undergo the same screening procedures that were ordered last month for travellers from Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea. That includes taking arriving travellers' temperatures, and questioning them about their health and possible exposure to the Ebola virus.

They will also be asked to provide contact information and to agree to have daily communications for 21 days with local health officials who will be asking them to take their temperatures twice each day and monitoring them to see if they develop symptoms.

West Africa is currently suffering the worst Ebola outbreak in world history, with at least 14,000 illnesses and more than 5,100 deaths so far.

Nearly all of the cases have been in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. About 75 people arrive from those three countries each day, on average. They are funnelled through five airports: two in New York and one each in Washington, Chicago and Atlanta.

In contrast, only about 15 to 20 passengers arrive from Mali to the United States on an average day. The majority end up arriving through the same five airports. But in the next few days, steps will be taken to make sure all funnel through those airports, Frieden said.

U.S. needs to fight Ebola in West Africa, senators say

Sunday, November 16, 2014/By Mike Persley Capital News Service/cecildaily.com

WASHINGTON — Lawmakers on Capitol Hill said Wednesday that with the threat of Ebola in the United States diminished for now, the government's resources should shift toward fighting the disease in West Africa.

"Here in the United States of America, there are currently no cases of Ebola. There was nine, now there's none," said Maryland Sen. Barbara Mikulski, who chairs the Senate Appropriations Committee. "Now we have to do this worldwide."

The committee convened to discuss the \$6.2 billion in emergency funding President Barack Obama is requesting to help shore up the government's domestic response to the disease and to build public health capabilities in countries where the threat is still great.

The hearing came three days after Dr. Craig Spencer, who contracted the disease in October after working with patients in Western Africa with Doctors Without Borders, was released from Bellevue Hospital Center in New York. Spencer's release means there are no confirmed cases of Ebola in the United States.

Mikulski pointed out that there still are more than 13,500 people who have contracted the disease in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, and more than 5,000 who have died. In order to prevent more cases from coming to the U.S., we have to combat them at their root source, she said.

Of the \$6.2 billion requested, \$2 billion would go to the State Department and the United States Agency for International Development to help train health officials and build up hospital resources within the countries most affected. The Department of Health and Human Resources would receive \$2.43 billion to speed up testing of vaccines and other therapeutics. Another \$1.54 billion would go into a contingency fund that would only be used if unplanned events occur.

"When I visited Liberia, I came to the conclusion that the Liberian government was doing all that it could with its limited resources," said Michael Lumpkin, assistant secretary of defense. "If we don't act now, our incremental responses will be outpaced by this dynamic epidemic."

CANADA/AFRICA :

U.S.'s quarantine-fighting nurse clubs Canada's Ebola policy

Waterloo Region Record/therecord.com/By Alexander Panetta/17/11/2014

WASHINGTON — She took on American politicians. Now a nurse who castigated what she

considered ignorant and electoralist Ebola policies in her own country has a few words for the Government of Canada.

Kaci Hickox had television crews parked outside the house last month as she defied quarantine orders, issued by certain state governors in the heat of U.S. election campaigns.

The woman who became known in news headlines as "The Ebola Nurse" is now free to move around, after clearing the 21-day virus-free period. She was interviewed this week as she packed a trailer for her move across the state of Maine, to Freeport.

And, yes, she'd heard about Canada's clampdown on travel from parts of West Africa. The federal government has imposed far more aggressive rules than most countries, banning visas from Ebola-affected Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia.

"I had this terrible gut reaction," Hickox said in an interview.

"Discriminating against these entire countries, and groups of people that really need our help more than ever and need our support and our compassion more than ever, is quite shameful, actually."

Hickox's return from Sierra Leone made her a cause celebre to some Americans, and a bete noir to others. The debate closely followed political lines, as her case landed in the middle of midterm elections.

Big majorities have told pollsters that they want severe travel restrictions, similar to the measures imposed in Canada. But the U.S. government has resisted, saying those measures would be more harmful than helpful.

Some state governors have taken measures into their own hands. In New Jersey, that's what got Hickox quarantined in a tent after she landed at the airport, thus setting off a public dispute between her and the Republican governors in two states — that state's Chris Christie, and then Maine's after she was sent home to complete her quarantine there.

Hickox was between jobs after completing a fellowship at the Centers for Disease Control. She decided to volunteer for a month in Sierra Leone, with Doctors Without Borders.

She counted 39 Ebola patients who walked out of her clinic, healed, during her time there. As for those who didn't make it out, Hickox says she didn't keep a list because it was too painful. The last one was a 10-year-old girl who suffered seizures, then died alone.

Hickox says she'd go back — despite what happened upon her return. Amid the kind letters she's received, there have been some hateful ones.

One letter-writer said he hoped she'd get Ebola and die. Hickox blamed politicians for fanning fear.

"It's just incredibly disappointing to be doing the work you love — and then to come back and because politicians want to gain some votes, they make this into a re-election campaign (issue) instead of what it should be: which is a real public-health debate," she said.

"We should be listening to public-health leaders. This should not be a political game. There was no reason for me to be put in a tent in New Jersey. There was no reason for me to be kept there for four days, except that Governor Christie was making a point. And that's really scary, I think."

Another American back from a volunteer stint in Africa chose, unlike Hanson, to willingly place herself in quarantine. Jessi Hanson said she was lucky to have a supportive employer, who let her work from home through the 21-day period.

But she was equally scathing, perhaps more so, toward the Canadian policy.

She characterized it as racist, saying Canada would never have considered banning visas from Europe, even though there were tens of thousands of measles cases and dozens of deaths a few years back.

"Shocked and appalled," Hanson said of the reaction she's heard from friends in the U.S., to Canada's Oct. 31 announcement. "As an American, we always look to Canada as being more open and more accepting and having better international relations.

"(But) you're limiting people based on the colour of their skin ... It becomes a racial issue, at that point. I think that because it's an impoverished African country, it was a lot easier to put that ban than it would have been to ban someone from England, France or America."

The Canadian government points out that its policy allows for some exceptions on a case-by-case basis, and because it doesn't apply to people with Canadian passports it wouldn't affect health workers heading to Africa. A number of poorer countries also have travel restrictions on the Ebola-affected areas.

Among the wealthiest nations, however, Canada and Australia are international outliers and their policy has drawn criticism from the World Health Organization.

Considering that nary one-10th of one per cent of Liberians are believed to have Ebola, and there's virtually no chance of transmission from someone who isn't obviously sick, Hanson called it an over-reaction with dangerous consequences.

It not only sends a signal to the rest of the world that these countries should be cut off, their economies further damaged, and their travel ability restricted, she said. It also risks a serious unintended consequence, she added: that of scaring other African countries to cover up evidence of Ebola on their soil, which would make it harder to track the disease.

"What does it say — how do we value that country and those people? I don't think Canada would have imposed such a ban on the United States, or on England, or on Belgium, and they've had outbreaks."

Hanson had challenges in her own country, upon returning to the U.S.

She'd just used her vacation time to spend a month volunteering in Liberia. She was working to set up an organization, Playing to Live, which provided therapy for children in interim-care centres, using art and education.

She worked with one survivor who had lost 27 family members and was given eight children to raise, as she was no longer contagious. She was 17 years old.

Hanson saw people dying, including a six-month-old baby.

But she also saw people get better — including one girl nicknamed "Mercy." Within a few hours, the nine-year-old had lost her mom and been kicked out of her community, for fear she might be

contagious. She arrived traumatized, with a blank expression. Hanson said she gradually made friends, and started to play again.

Survivors are often shunned, out of fear: "I met a survivor who said, 'I don't know why I bothered surviving — I've lost my friends, my family, my home. I went home and nobody would touch me, everyone thinks I'm a disease, no one will touch my children, I can't get a job and I was evicted.'"

Hanson would hug them to prove they were safe to touch.

But when she got back home authorities in the U.S. didn't quite know what to do with her. Hanson spent hours in limbo at the airport in Washington, D.C. One man in a military uniform ordered her to wear a mask. Later, a health worker told her to take it off, because Ebola isn't an airborne disease.

After hours of this, she started to worry. She cried a little, and called her mom.

Finally, six hours later, authorities decided she was safe enough to send home in a group vehicle. Hanson then spent the next few weeks working from home, after getting permission from her supervisors.

She now fears that some people might be discouraged from going to fight the disease in West Africa. She says there's a risk people might be dissuaded by the idea of quarantine and missing work.

"There is. Because some of the people who are going to work there are doing it voluntarily," she said. "I was very lucky that I had a supportive work environment."

The Canadian Press

AUSTRALIA/AFRICA :

EU/AFRICA :

CHINA/AFRICA :

Ebola: China sends medics to Liberia

November 17 2014/By Zoom Dosso/Sapa-AFP

Monrovia -

A large team of Chinese health workers arrived in Liberia to boost the Ebola fight as a US-based doctor infected in Sierra Leone was described as being "extremely ill".

The 160-strong Chinese deployment to the West African country worst hit by the virus came as the

world's most powerful economies vowed to “extinguish” the epidemic, which has claimed more than 5 100 lives.

The Chinese doctors, epidemiologists and nurses will staff a \$41-million Ebola treatment unit which will be up and running in 10 days, ambassador Zhang Yue said in a statement on Sunday.

The health workers have had previous experience in tackling SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) in Asia, Zhang said, adding that its total aid to Liberia would be \$46-million.

At least 2 812 people have so far died of Ebola in Liberia.

So far Beijing has promised Ebola-hit countries the equivalent of \$122-million to help fight the epidemic.

Since the beginning of the year, China has given West African countries a total of 234 million yuan (\$38.2-million) in emergency assistance, including disease prevention and control materials, grain and cash, according to the Chinese foreign ministry.

China is Africa's largest trading partner, and its diplomatic footprint across the continent has expanded hugely in recent years as it seeks resources to power its economy.

Still, it is a long way behind the European Union, whose leaders have boosted their Ebola aid to one billion euros (\$1.26-billion).

On Sunday, a Dutch aid ship, the “Karel Doorman”, docked at Dakar on its way to Freetown, Conakry and Monrovia. On board were vehicles and emergency equipment from nine European countries, The Netherlands' embassy in Senegal said.

Meanwhile, a doctor said to be “extremely ill” after being infected with Ebola in Sierra Leone was being treated in the United States.

Martin Salia, a US resident who was infected with the deadly haemorrhagic fever while treating patients in his home country, was flown to Nebraska for treatment.

“This is an hour-by-hour situation,” said Phil Smith, medical director of the biocontainment unit at the Nebraska hospital, one of a handful of medical facilities in the United States specially designated to treat Ebola patients.

“He is extremely ill,” Smith said. “We will do everything humanly possible to help him fight this disease.”

World leaders meeting at the Group of 20 summit in the Australian city of Brisbane said they were prepared “to do what is necessary to ensure the international effort can extinguish the outbreak”.

The Ebola outbreak which began earlier this year has been centred around Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

In London, musicians including boy band One Direction and Led Zeppelin's Robert Plant recorded a new Band Aid single to help raise funds combat the virus.

Other performers ranging from U2 frontman Bono, Coldplay's Chris Martin and Sinéad O'Connor recorded late into the night for a 30th anniversary version of the charity single Do They Know It's

Christmas?

“It's not just about what's happening in West Africa, it could happen here tomorrow,” said rocker-turned-activist Bob Geldof, one of the forces behind the original Band Aid.

Set to be officially released on Monday, the single will be the fourth incarnation of the song, which became one of the biggest-selling singles ever after its release in 1984 to raise funds for Ethiopian famine relief.

In Brisbane, G20 members welcomed an International Monetary Fund initiative to release \$300-million to combat Ebola and promised to share best practices on protecting health workers on the front line.

The G20 pledge came as Togo, whose president is co-ordinating the West African fight, warned that the world “cannot relax efforts” despite some encouraging signals.

There is no known cure for Ebola, one of the deadliest known pathogens, but trials for several possible treatments were announced this week in West Africa and Canada. The disease spreads through contact with bodily fluids.

The World Health Organisation said on Friday that 5 177 people are known to have died of Ebola across eight countries, out of a total 14 413 cases of infection since December 2013.

UN chief Ban Ki-moon urged “G20 countries to step up”, warning that Ebola's disruptive effect on farming could potentially spark a food crisis for a million people.

“Transmission continues to outpace the response from the international community,” Ban told reporters. - Sapa-AFP

Cooperation with China brings more 'made-in-Africa' goods

Xinhua/2014-11-17

Every morning, more than three thousand workers in uniform do morning exercises before taking their place on a leather shoe production line.

As the largest shoemaker and a sizable job creator in Ethiopia, the factory, with investment and management by a private Chinese company, is part of the next wave of Chinese investment in Africa.

"When the plant opened in 2012, hundreds of locals queued in long lines to apply for jobs there. The sight was indeed a spectacle," said Liu Guijin, former Special Representative of the Chinese Government on African Affairs on the Fifth Roundtable Conference on China-Africa Cooperation (FRCCC) held from Thursday to Saturday in south China's Hainan province.

China needs a new market to absorb its industrial overcapacity in the manufacturing sector, and Africa needs more labor-intensive projects to boost employment, Liu added.

JOB CREATION

China's investment in Africa is no longer limited to natural resource exploration and infrastructure construction. More labor-intensive manufacturing enterprises are looking to the vast continent,

which is eager for job opportunities.

Africa has a vast number of youth population, with over 200 million young people between the ages of 15 and 24 residing on the continent. However, about 60% of Africa's unemployed are young people.

"History has taught us that many 'tiger' and 'dragon' countries have achieved economic prosperity, and hence minimized unemployment problems through industrialization. I feel Africa has no need to invent the wheel. It should follow the same route that others have passed," said Amb. Seif Ali Iddi, the second vice president of Zanzibar, at the conference.

He added that he hopes China will shift more labor-intensive manufacturing industries to Africa to accelerate industrialization.

According to the Ministry of Commerce, there are over 2,500 Chinese firms operating in Africa. Hisense started manufacturing TVs and refrigerators in South Africa last year and Huawei and ZTE are rolling out base stations across Africa.

CAPACITY TRANSFER

The world's second-largest economy, under pressure to upgrade its industries and facilitate economic restructuring, is increasingly eyeing the overseas market for solutions. More and more firms attached to China's past three decades of growth will be looking to diversify into new markets such as Africa.

These construction companies, engineering firms, machinery exporters, and other Chinese firms that have built up scale and competitive advantages in building infrastructure will need to export capacity, find new opportunities, profits, and job creation. Africa is a key partner in this process, said Clive Tasker, CEO of the Standard Advisory (China) Ltd.

Tasker said that promoting the development of labor-intensive and manufacturing initiatives will be a key part of Sino-African ties over the next decade.

State-owned enterprises once led the wave of Chinese money flowing abroad, but now nearly half of China's total outbound foreign direct investment (FDI) into Africa is from smaller private sector players. Meanwhile, Chinese individuals are pursuing their own enterprises in wholesale and retail trade, restaurants and manufacturing.

NO EASY MONEY

Despite the lure of low labor costs, the efficiency of African labor often lags behind other developing countries. According to a World Bank report, a Chinese worker can produce 4.5 chairs per day and a Vietnamese worker produces 1.9 chairs, while an Ethiopian worker can only produce 0.3 chairs.

Meanwhile, an unstable political environment, poor infrastructure and unsound legal system may also hinder Chinese enterprises' ambitions to strike it rich in Africa, said Liu Guijin.

China Development Bank set up the China-Africa Development Fund (CAD fund) in 2007 to facilitate Chinese investments in Africa.

It is important that China-Africa Development Fund provisions be used diligently using a real

market-based approach, said Julio Morais, Ambassador of Cape Verde in China.

Investment should cater to different African countries' development priorities and focus more on technology transfer, local added-value and job creation, Morais added.

Africa: Is It Time for a China-Africa Command?

The Independent (Kampala)/By Haggai Matsiko/16 November 2014

analysis

On June 13 this year, three Chinese men carrying bulky backpacks disembarked from a plane at Juba International Airport in the capital of South Sudan.

At any other time, the Chinese might not have been conspicuous as they walked hurriedly towards the terminal building. But this was at the height of the civil that erupted in late 2013 when South Sudanese President Salva Kiir accused his sacked his vice president, Gen. Riek Machar of attempting a military coup.

For one of the South Sudanese officials attached to a contingent of Ugandan troops at the airport, the return of the Chinese was a sign that normalcy was being restored.

"You see," the official said excitedly, "the Chinese are back to carry on with business."

The Chinese can often be seen on the streets of Juba where they jostle for space on crowded narrow pavements as traffic, including heavily guarded convoys carrying government officials, roll along and dexterously dodge to try and avoid pond-sized potholes that dot the country's main roads.

"Looking at how busy this place is," a Ugandan soldier says, "one can't imagine that only a few months ago, these streets were littered with dead bodies."

The soldier is recalling the horrors of the war in which over 400 Chinese were caught up in and had to be evacuated to neighbouring Kenya. However, even before the smoke from the guns cleared, the Chinese were back, surprising even the Ugandan soldiers who had fought the battles on President Kiir's side to restore normalcy.

Sensing the pivotal role the Ugandan troops had in the evacuation and restoring order, the Chinese government has supported the continued stay of Ugandan troops in Juba even as international pressure piled on them to pull out. China is keen on securing its investment in the region.

Lucrative deals:

Until 2011, Sudan (before it split into two) was China's second largest provider of oil in Africa after Angola and supplied 5% of China's total crude oil imports.

In neighbouring DR Congo, a Chinese consortium Sicominex won a \$3 billion deal, in which the consortium will construct infrastructure for the government in exchange for mineral concessions with Congo's state mining agency, Gécamines.

Another Chinese consortium is among three top contenders for the construction of the Inga3 project--part of an even grandeur project--the US\$80 billion Grand Inga project, which could produce 40,000 MW--twice the capacity of the Three Gorges Dam, the world's largest.

In Kenya, another Chinese consortium has won the initial contracts for works on the \$ 26 billion Lamu Port South Sudan Ethiopia Transport (LAPSSET) corridor project.

In Kenya, Uganda and South Sudan, Chinese companies are winning all the contracts for the construction of the region's other biggest infrastructure project--the multibillion standard gauge railway that once completed will connect the three.

Last year, a Chinese company, Sinohydro won a US \$1.7 billion contract to construct Karuma power dam, Uganda's biggest.

These lucrative deals to Chinese companies have sparked a sentiment in Uganda's diplomatic circles that China seizes all the opportunities, often unfairly, even if it doesn't contribute as much to the region's priorities like peace and security.

In 2012 friction emerged between the European Union and the Uganda government over the award of the Karuma dam and even sparked speculation that the Europeans were contemplating withdrawing support to the Uganda army.

"We are saying that it should not only be the E.U, other stakeholders should also contribute," said then-Head of the EU Mission in Uganda, Roberto Ridolfi.

Brig. Gen. Gerald Aherne, the head of the European Union Training Mission-Somalia [EUTM], also chipped in: "All I can say is that the European Union is the single biggest contributor of peace and security in the region. It doesn't always get credit for it but it should."

Peace keeping roles:

China is changing its approach to Africa and expanding its security foot print; if only by deploying more peacekeepers to the region.

Following South Sudan's split from Khartoum, most of the fields remained in the south where the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) has invested over US\$7 billion and controls a 40% stake in the country's biggest oil consortium, the Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company (GNPOC).

The fighting had threatened to completely halt oil production. With this at stake, China mounted pressure at several other levels.

In Addis Ababa, three top Chinese diplomats--the Ambassador to Ethiopia, Xie Xiaoyan, the special representative on African Affairs, Zhong Jianhua and China's Foreign Affairs Minister, Wang Yi, pushed for talks between Kiir and Machar.

As the three engaged locally, China pushed the UN Security Council members to expand the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to include the protection of its oil installations, according to the online publication, Foreign Policy. The decision followed intense negotiations, and as a sweetener, China pledged a battalion of 850 soldiers to fortify UNMISS.

China initially had 343 peacekeepers in Wau, Bahr El-Ghazal State, under UNMISS. The latest deployment pushed to 1,193 the number of its blue-berets in South Sudan, and to 3,010 in the entire 16 UN missions world over--completely dwarfing the contribution of all the other five UNSC members combined.

The distribution of Beijing's blue-berets is telling.

Of the 3,010 peacekeepers, Africa hogs 88% or 2,661 peacekeepers, leaving only 12 percent or 349 for the other participating nations.

Even within Africa, it is Sudan, South Sudan and DR Congo--where China has the biggest oil and mining concessions--and these take the lion's share at 62.5% or 1,664 peacekeepers. Only 38% or 997 peacekeepers are left to cover Mali, Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, and Western Sahara.

China is touting the role of its blue-berets. In its China's 2013 white paper on the state of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) issued in April, it speaks of them as "tough, brave, and devoted" peacekeepers, who "accomplish all their tasks in an exemplary manner".

Security experts at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) in a June 2014 report, 'Protecting China's Overseas Interests', attribute this trend to the need to protect a growing number of Chinese nationals in international conflict zones--several of which are in Africa--and the expansion of Chinese energy interests overseas.

So far, South Africa has 300,000 of the over one million Chinese immigrants in Africa. The rest are scattered in Kenya, DR Congo, CAR, Zambia, Angola, Sudan and South Sudan among others where China has huge mining, construction and crude oil concessions.

These interests have put pressure and forced China increasingly to get involved in promoting security in the region even if that involvement has meant contradicting its non-interventionist policy.

The deployment of combat troops in Mali and the several efforts employed to solve the South Sudan crisis have pushed China's involvement a notch higher and even sparked predictions that going by this rate, China might in the near future even consider an African Command just like the U.S., which boasts of the AFRICOM and the Lemonnier military base in Djibouti.

"I think the most prominent shift in China's foreign policy in this regard has been putting boots on the ground through the auspices of the UN- both in Mali and now in South Sudan," Dr. Anthony Ross, the interim head for the Center for Chinese Studies (CSS) says.

Apart from its significant oil interests in the region, Ross says, China was significantly involved in facilitating the South-North peace process and purely in terms of reputational capital; China wants South Sudan to be a success story, as it increases its reputation in the region.

"This is possibly why China is encouraging military support from Uganda," Ross said, "This is marking a shift in Beijing's security role in Africa."

As for Mali where China does not have significant commercial interests, Ross says, Beijing might have realised that keeping the Sahel stable contributes toward more general stability within West Africa, where China does have significant investments.

"Additionally, there is more pressure on China to become a responsible world power," Ross says, "I think a key priority for China is to contribute toward stability in Africa so that it creates a better investment climate for them in Africa."

More needed from China:

But peacekeeping has evolved and is an increasingly risky venture. Six months after the first bullet was shot in the civil, signs of destruction were still vivid in Bor, the main town of Jonglei State. Amidst the rubble at Bor airfield--a stretch of cracked brown earth--was a group of Indian and South Korean peacekeepers.

These peacekeepers were involved in one of the worst fighting with a militia of youths, who broke into the UN base in Bor and opened fire on people who fled the fighting. By the time the peacekeepers overwhelmed the militia, 50 people were dead and over 100 injured.

There were no Chinese peacekeepers in Bor. China's only 343 peacekeepers at the time were in neighbouring Bahr El-Gazel.

These were mainly a small unit of combat troops meant to offer security to the bulk of the unit of medical experts, engineers, and logistical experts. It was typical Chinese deployment, as happened in the United Nations Mission in Congo (MUNUSCO) in neighbouring DR Congo.

In hot zones like the DR Congo, the Chinese peacekeepers are not amongst those seen patrolling the streets. Instead they are part of the peacekeepers manning checkpoints like the one at Ruzizi border between Burundi and DR Congo. This is enemy territory, home of the notorious M23 rebels opposed to the government in Kinshasa who have refused to disarm in spite of UN Security Council resolutions.

Occasionally, the other peacekeepers are seen mumbling a few things to the locals, but the Chinese only nod and smile.

"The Chinese are hardworking," one of the officials says, "their only challenge is that they do not speak any of the languages spoken here, which makes communication with them hard."

Apart from putting boots on the ground, Beijing has occasionally given money, including a US\$2.3 million cheque as support for the Ugandan army, which still has the largest number of troops in the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). In 2013, China also gave \$2.6 million worth of security communications equipment to Kenya, which also has troops with AMISOM. The rest of the assistance has gone directly to the AU.

But the growing sense that Beijing can do better is felt in several African capitals.

Compared to the U.S. and European Union, which are considered the key regional security partners, China has over the years also only offered small grants and often stuck to its non-interventionist policy.

In the Kenyan capital Nairobi, President Uhuru Kenyatta in May said China possesses substantial political, diplomatic and financial assets, which, if fully applied, amount to a game-changer in the region's peace and security.

Following the attack on a Kenyan shopping mall in 2013, Prof He Wenping of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences said China being a leading Foreign Direct Investment contributor to Kenya and other terrorist prone parts of Africa, needed to get involved in fighting terrorism in Africa to at least secure its investments.

Other experts argue that because most of China's engagements with Africa are managed largely through state-to-state relations, it is usually a loser as opponents of incumbent governments target it.

In Libya amidst the collapse of the Muammar Gaddafi's regime in 2011, for instance, Beijing suffered losses of about US\$20 billion, according to some Chinese media reports. China was also stuck with over 30,000 stranded citizens and had to borrow planes and ships to evacuate them.

In October 2007, the Defra oil field in Sudan run by the Chinese was attacked by the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) rebel group. Its commander, Mohamed Bahr Hamdeen, gave the oil companies in South Kordofan a week to leave Sudan, saying that the rebels consider all foreign oil companies killers because they help the government buy the weapons which they use to kill women and children.

Two months later, JEM attacked another Chinese-run oil field in South Kordofan--the Heglig oilfield--saying that China is trading petroleum for "our blood".

The following year, militants kidnapped some CNPC employees from an oil field in South Kordofan, and five of them were killed during the ordeal.

Four years later, another 29 Chinese construction workers were abducted in the same province and were released after almost two weeks of intense negotiations.

The lesson, observers say, is that as long as China is seen as a partner of host governments, those who oppose these governments will target its interests, either as a means to reduce its support for these governments or as a means of leverage.

Some critics, however, suggest that China has to take more interest in security matters in the region because its weapons are what fuel the wars. An October 2013 SIPRI report, China's exports of small arms and light weapons, named China the leading exporter of Small Arms and Lights Weapons (SALW) and a popular supplier among states looking for inexpensive or alternative sources of SALW.

The report showed that Chinese made arms have been found in conflict zones like Sudan, CAR, DRC, South Sudan and even Somalia.

Even as negotiations over the current South Sudan crisis continue, China which had initially pushed an arms deal with South Sudan off the table but went ahead and closed it.

However, CCS's Ross says that one has to keep in mind the fact that the US, Russia and European states are also large sellers of arms to African countries.

From the broader perspective, Ross says, as China puts more personnel and investments into Africa, it will have a growing stake in peace and security in the region.

"China will continue to try and be seen as a benevolent military presence in Africa," Ross says, but having a growing interest in securing its investments here will entail that, at some point, they may have to take sides."

INDIA/AFRICA :

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