



(The U.N. Ebola chief said Thursday it will take several more months before the outbreak in West Africa is under control, an assessment that makes clear the U.N.'s goal of isolating 100 per cent of Ebola cases by Jan. 1 won't be met.)

BURUNDI :

Burundi: l'opposition fait bloc

bbc.co.uk/12/12/2014

Au Burundi, huit partis politiques ont annoncé la formation prochaine d'une coalition de l'opposition.

« Nous avons choisi d'unir nos forces pour avoir suffisamment de poids et peser dans la balance lors des prochaines élections », a expliqué à la BBC Agathon Rwasa, le président des Forces Nationales de Libération indépendant, qui fera partie de la future coalition.

Certaines de ces formations ne sont pas reconnues par le pouvoir et ne pourront donc probablement pas participer aux élections.

Selon la Constitution burundaise, le président Pierre Nkuruziza, qui a déjà fait deux mandats, ne peut pas se représenter à la présidentielle en 2015.

La bataille pour la présidentielle risque d'apporter son lot de tensions : mercredi déjà, 18 partis d'opposition avait demandé à la Commission électorale l'annulation des opérations d'inscription sur les listes électorales, accusant le parti au pouvoir de « fraude massive ».

Burundi : la Banque mondiale augmentera de près de 40% ses engagements

déc 12, 2014/afriqueinside.com

Le Groupe de la Banque Mondiale compte augmenter de près de 40% ses engagements au Burundi au cours des trois prochaines années, a annoncé jeudi à Bujumbura M. Rachidi Radji, Représentant Résident de la Banque Mondiale.

« Cet accroissement important reflète principalement la priorité accordée aux pays post-conflits par l'Association Internationale pour le Développement (IDA) », a précisé M. Radji dans son intervention à l'ouverture d'une table ronde entre le gouvernement burundais et les partenaires au développement sur l'évaluation de la mise en oeuvre des engagements faits pour le financement du CSLP II (deuxième Cadre Stratégique de Croissance et de Lutte contre la Pauvreté).

Dans ce cadre, a-t-il ajouté, les consultations en cours avec le gouvernement et les autres acteurs de la société burundaise visent à identifier comment effectivement utiliser ses ressources additionnelles pour renforcer la stabilité macro-économique en vue du développement à moyen et long terme du Burundi. Toutefois, a-t-il souligné, cela nécessitera des efforts additionnels dans la mise en oeuvre des réformes dans les domaines tels que la gouvernance et la gestion des affaires publiques, l'efficacité des politiques fiscales, la gestion et la restructuration des affaires publiques, l'efficacité des politiques fiscales, la gestion et la restructuration de la Régie des Eaux et de l'Electricité (REGIDESO), la transparence du secteur des mines et le climat des affaires.

M. Radji a saisi l'occasion pour signaler qu'à ce jour, la Banque Mondiale a déjà mobilisé un total de 328 millions USD sur le programme d'interventions de 400 millions USD au titre d'appuis

financiers additionnels substantiels en appui à la mise en oeuvre du CSLP II. Il a souligné que les deux tiers de ces dons sont allés en faveur du secteur de l'énergie (Centrales hydroélectriques de Rusumo Falls et de Jiji-Mulembwe), qui constituent une contrainte forte pour le Développement du Burundi. Pour rappel, le dernier rapport de la Banque Mondiale sur la situation économique et financière du Burundi indique que ce pays connaît une croissance continue de l'ordre de 4,2% par an au cours de la décennie et une stabilité accrue du cadre macro-économique « qui demeure, toutefois, fragile et vulnérable aux chocs internes et externes ».

(Xinhua)

RWANDA :

RDC CONGO :

UGANDA :

SOUTH AFRICA :

South Africa: Does South Africa Face an Electricity Grid Collapse?

By Kate Wilkinson/Africa Check (Johannesburg)/11 December 2014

Will South Africa's electricity grid collapse, plunging the country into weeks of darkness? Experts say it is possible, but unlikely.

South Africa is facing its worst power crisis since 2008. As the country's struggling power utility, Eskom, battles to cope with demand for electricity, millions face the prospect of years of "load-shedding".

Eskom's CEO Tshediso Matona has said that these planned outages are here to stay. "Over the years, in an environment of strained capacity, we have delayed critical maintenance because we wanted to keep the lights on," he told reporters.

On social networks, rumours have begun circulating that the electricity grid will collapse, plunging the country into weeks of darkness. In this scenario there is no schedule, only waiting to see if - or when - the power comes back on.

Would a grid collapse plunge South Africa in darkness for weeks? And is it something South Africans need to worry about?

What is a grid collapse?

Thava Govender, Eskom's group executive, touched on the possibility of a blackout at a recent media briefing. "A blackout is where... you lose all power in one province and the whole grid collapses. So, you basically blackout Gauteng or Mpumalanga [provinces]. A national blackout is when you don't supply anything in the country. There's no power at all," he said.

Terry Mackenzie-Hoy, a consulting electrical engineer, told Africa Check that "[t]he [load] shedding is due to power shortages but is a planned event. Grid collapse is unplanned."

What causes a grid collapse?

Khulu Phasiwe, a spokesman for Eskom, told Africa Check that if a grid collapse were to occur it would be caused by a combination of factors.

"As you know we have had issues around coal and issues around diesel... For [a grid collapse] to happen it would be a combination of all sorts of things including the failure of our systems," he said.

Mike Rycroft, an energy analyst and features editor of Energize magazine, explained that a "grid collapse would result from an overload on the whole grid or any section of the grid".

"In other words the power demand would exceed the capability of the generating sources to supply power."

Can't SA just turn the power back on?

Unfortunately it's not that easy. Phasiwe compared the situation to having a cell phone with a dead battery. If you want to turn it back on you first have to find another power source to charge it.

"With a power system, especially a constrained system like ours, for you to even start bringing it back you need electricity to run your own power stations before you can put power out," said Phasiwe.

Rycroft said that a significant amount of energy is required to start-up a power station - what is known as a "black start".

Andrew Kenny, an engineering consultant who previously worked at Eskom, said that finding power to kickstart power stations would only be a first step: "When the power stations do eventually start, they would have to be carefully synchronised to each other at the right voltage, frequency and phase, and loads would have to be carefully brought on line to match them. All of this is difficult, exact and time-consuming."

How long would the country be in darkness?

Claims about how long South Africa would be in the dark vary. Eskom's estimates have ranged from one week to weeks. Other estimates have suggested that South Africa would experience rolling blackouts.

Eskom's estimates are based on blackouts that have occurred in other countries, says Phasiwe: "Fortunately [a blackout] has never happened to us. In other places where it has happened the maximum time it took was three weeks".

"If there ever was a complete grid collapse, it would indeed take days if not longer to restore the grid," said Kenny.

Rycroft thought that estimates of "more than a week" were realistic although he didn't think that the examples of blackouts in other countries could be used as a benchmark.

Can SA rely on its neighbours for help?

When grid collapses have occurred in other countries they have called on their neighbours for temporary assistance. But South Africa is a "power island" and imports very little power, according to Rycroft. We therefore would not be able to rely on neighbouring countries to assist us.

A 2014 Eskom report shows that the utility imports electricity from Namibia, Lesotho, and Mozambique. It sells electricity to Lesotho, Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Swaziland and Zambia.

Phasiwe said that these countries would not be able to assist us in the event of a blackout.

"If our system were to collapse we could not get 40,000 MW from anyone on the continent," he said. "We are the only country within the continent that is producing the kind of electricity we are producing."

Avoiding a grid collapse

For South Africans currently dealing with load shedding, the prospect of a blackout lasting weeks is frightening. But it seems that a total grid collapse is unlikely at this stage.

"A grid collapse in South Africa now is very unlikely," said Kenny. "Load shedding prevents it..."

[U]nfortunately we are going to have load shedding for three years at least."

According to Rycroft: "Eskom has a very advanced network management centre in operation which I am confident will, barring any catastrophic failure not due to grid overload, enable them to avoid grid collapse by using controlled load shedding."

Conclusion - A grid collapse is unlikely at this stage

If there is a grid collapse in South Africa it is possible that the country will be in the dark for anything ranging from a few days to weeks. Restarting the power stations will take considerable time and effort. However, it seems unlikely for now.

South Africa has a plan for electricity

12 December 2014/southafrica.info

A war room has been set up to oversee the implementation of a five-point plan to address South Africa's electricity challenges following Cabinet concerns about the disruptive effects of the recent power outages on the daily lives of citizens and their impact on households and businesses.

"The lack of sufficient capacity to meet the country's energy needs remains a challenge and all attempts are being made to ensure that we overcome the tight energy situation," the Cabinet said yesterday in its statement following its regular fortnightly briefing on Wednesday. It was the last briefing of the year.

"The Cabinet adopted a five-point plan to address the electricity challenges facing the country," Minister in the Presidency: Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Jeff Radebe said in Pretoria after the briefing. "The lack of sufficient capacity to meet the country's energy needs remains a challenge and all attempts are being made to ensure that we overcome the tight energy situation."

Minister of Energy Tina Joemat-Pettersson said the war room would be made up of the departments of Energy, Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Public Enterprises, National Treasury, Economic Development, Water and Sanitation and Eskom, as well as technical officials.

"We bring together a team that [will] drive the implementation of the interventions in the five-point plan. A core focus will be to monitor the implementation, assess the costs."

She said the war room would be housed at Eskom to ensure the optimal co-ordination of all parties.

Five-point plan

The plan covers:

- The interventions that Eskom will undertake over the next 30 days;
- Harnessing cogeneration opportunities through the extension of existing contracts with the private sector;
- Accelerating the programme for substitution of diesel with gas to fire up the diesel power plants;
- Launching a coal-independent power producer programme; and,
- Managing demand through specific interventions within residential dwellings, public and commercial buildings and municipalities through retrofitting energy efficient technologies.

To meet the country's future energy requirements, the government is implementing an energy mix

comprising coal, solar, wind, hydro, gas and nuclear energy. In future biomass, wind power, solar power and hydro power will contribute 11.4 gigawatts of renewable energy to the grid.

Radebe said that since 1994, five million more households had been connected to the grid. In 2004, this increased to 12 million households. "This happened without additional power stations being built. This increase of households was set off the existing grid."

State power utility Eskom signed a memorandum of understanding yesterday with the Strategic Fuel Fund and Transnet Ports Authority to ensure a regular supply of diesel.

A focus will be placed on improving the strategic maintenance and operational efficiency to ensure that the level of efficiency is increased from the 72% currently to the target of 80%.

Eskom would present a detailed finance plan to manage its cash flow beyond 2015. This plan would be presented later this month. Simultaneously, the government would finance the funding model, Radebe said.

Options for cogeneration – the generation of electricity and useful heat jointly, especially the use of the steam left over from electricity generation for heating – would be pursued with the sugar, paper and pulp industries to harness waste energy to produce 1 000 megawatts, he said, adding that there were significant opportunities for the importation of gas.

Also, a coal-independent power producer programme would be launched by the end of January 2015 with a generation capacity of 2 500 megawatts.

Public Enterprises Minister Lynn Brown said there was a need to look at the ongoing financial security of Eskom, although that did not mean there would a bail out.

"This could mean guarantees, providing the space for Eskom to raise its own money – a combination of financial processes."

She said while there was a cash flow problem, there was enough money to provide diesel. "As we speak, I am comfortable that until January, Eskom's cash flow will be fine."

Kristof: U.S. imprisons blacks at rates higher than South Africa during apartheid

By Jon Greenberg/politifact.com/Thursday, December 11th, 2014

The primary debate over race in this country seems to be whether the country needs to have a debate at all. Polls show white and black Americans have markedly different views of where the problems lie.

New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof has written a series of articles called "When whites just don't get it." Kristof applauded the progress in race equality America has achieved, but he basically argued that whites don't know what life is like for blacks, and he presented many stats to show that great inequality remains.

Comedy Central's The Daily Show aired video of Kristof making his case Dec. 4.

"The United States right now incarcerates more African-Americans as a percentage than apartheid South Africa did," Kristof said in the clip.

Numbers on the American side are easier to come by and are straightforward.

Kristof cited an Aspen Institute report that said, "The United States imprisons a larger percentage of its black population than South Africa did at the height of apartheid."

The U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics reported that, in 2010, the incarceration rate for black men in all of the country's jails and prisons was 4,347 people per 100,000. For whites, the rate was 678 people per 100,000. America imprisons people far more in general than comparable countries. Among the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development nations, the United States is the clear leader with an incarceration rate about two and half times higher than the second place country, Chile.

Precise numbers from South Africa during the apartheid years are more elusive.

As a refresher, apartheid was South Africa's policy of strict segregation and differential treatment of people according to their race. It became fully part of South African law in 1950 with passage of the Population Registration Act. That law dovetailed with other bills to anchor race-based controls. For instance, the Lands Act set aside about 87 percent of property for whites, and the Group Areas Act forbid nonwhites from living in white-designated zones. The 1950 legislation involved a set of "pass laws," so called because they created an internal passport system that supported the forced segregation.

The apartheid era lasted more than 40 years, ending in 1991 with the repeal of the apartheid laws.

William Worger, professor of history at the University of California-Los Angeles, is a longtime researcher of the apartheid era. Worger said the pass laws did much to fill the prisons.

"Most of the arrests and imprisonment in South Africa were for pass laws offences," Worger told PunditFact. "The incarceration rate in South Africa in 1984 -- the midst of apartheid -- was 440 persons imprisoned per 100,000 population. Blacks comprised around 94 percent of those incarcerated."

Based on Worger's numbers, that would translate to an imprisonment rate of 612 per 100,000 for blacks in 1984.

A report from the advocacy group The Sentencing Project found an incarceration rate of 851 African-Americans per 100,000 in 1993 (two years after the end of apartheid). The figure tracks back to a 1993 report of the South African Correctional Services. The report combined the categories of "black" and "colored" to produce the black male rate of incarceration.

That's two snapshots over a span of a decade, but it's the best we have. In both cases, the numbers don't begin to approach the current U.S. incarceration rate of African-American males.

Whatever the limits in these data, the relative numbers for South Africa and the United States hold up, simply based on the number of beds in the South African prison system. In 1992, according to a report by University of Cape Town researchers, the country housed about 109,000 inmates in space designed for about 88,000. While overcrowding was known to have been worse before 1992, the black imprisonment rate could not have come close to today's American rate simply due to limited room.

There's something of an international theme in countries comparing themselves to apartheid South Africa. We found Australian journalists drawing the same contrast relative to rates of imprisonment

in their country.

Our ruling

Kristof said that America puts African-Americans behind bars at a higher rate than South Africa did under apartheid.

Based on the known evidence, that appears to be correct. In 2010, the black male incarceration rate in the United States was 4,347 people per 100,000 in the United States. That comes nowhere close to reported incarceration rates of blacks in South Africa during and immediately after the apartheid era.

We rate the claim True.

Kiir to visit Zuma in South Africa
radiotamazuj.org/ (11 Dec.)

JUBA

President Salva Kiir is expected to visit his South African counterpart President Jacob Zuma in Cape Town on Friday.

State radio in South Africa reported, "The visit is aimed at strengthening the already cordial relations between South Africa and South Sudan which is anchored on the agreement signed in September 2011."

Kiir is expected to be accompanied by several ministers and senior officials. Zuma will be joined by his deputy Cyril Ramaphosa and the foreign minister.

According to the South African Department of International Relations and Cooperation, Kiir is expected to brief President Zuma on South Sudan's ongoing peace process.

Dr. Dan Leads \$139 Billion Fund in Weak South Africa Economy
By Franz Wild and Janice Kew/bloomberg.com/Dec 12, 2014

Dan Matjila has a tall order as the new head of the \$139 billion Public Investment Corp.: raise South African state-worker pensions, kick-start flagging economic growth, revive investor confidence, and heed government demands.

In a career ranging from math professor to the Pretoria-based PIC's chief investment officer, Matjila, 52, has won his peers' respect as someone who can handle the pressure of the big-time and reduce the state-owned company's multifarious challenges into simple ideas.

"There's a whole plethora of stakeholders," Royal Bafokeng Holdings Ltd. Chief Executive Officer Albertinah Kekana, who worked with Matjila at the PIC, said in an interview last month. "I think he has a very good appreciation. Running a fund of 1.6 trillion rand (\$139 billion) is not an easy task. There's so much complexity. If you have it in your personality to remain calm and relaxed in a very demanding role, it's a very helpful thing."

South Africa's cabinet yesterday promoted Matjila to chief executive officer with immediate effect.

Battered by months of strikes, ratings downgrades and a persistent jobless rate of about 25 percent, Africa's second-biggest economy is projected to post the lowest growth since a 2009 recession. The benchmark FTSE/JSE Africa (JALSH) All-Share Index has climbed 3.6 percent this year, compared to 18 percent last year and 23 percent in 2012.

The PIC's first mandate is to get good returns for state-worker pensions, which make up about 90 percent of the funds it manages.

PIC Returns

Under Matjila's lead, it's done that, with assets under management growing 3.5 times to 1.6 trillion rand. In the year ended March, the Government Employees Pension Fund, the PIC's largest client, reported a total return of 14.77 percent, excluding offshore investments. The All-Share index rose 20 percent in the same period.

The government has also directed the company, whose chairman is Deputy Finance Minister Mcebisi Jonas, to support its efforts to tackle the issues holding back economic growth such as a lack of power supply and transport routes. It is also trying to help end the legacy of white domination in the economy by supporting black-owned businesses.

"He's got a very rare combination of being very strategic and being very technical," Patrice Rassou, head of equities at Sanlam Investment Management, said in an interview. "He grasps issues very quickly. He is someone who has the big-picture thinking."

Doctorate, Diploma

Matjila has a PhD in math and completed a diploma in mathematical finance at Oxford University. With his parents too poor to be able to afford his studies, Matjila at one stage worked at a car-parts factory on the outskirts of Pretoria to pay his way, according to Brian Molefe, who recruited him to the PIC.

Matjila declined to comment for the story when contacted by phone.

Initially, Matjila stayed in academia. Already affectionately known as Dr. Dan -- a nickname that has stuck -- Matjila was popular with students when he lectured in applied math at what is now known as the University of Limpopo, in the northern town of Polokwane.

Dressed in the best suits he could afford, he would stand at the small chalk board in his office without supporting documents and show students and colleagues how to work out problems, according to Bethuel Ramadisha, a fellow math lecturer at the time.

Solve Anything

"You would go to him if you couldn't solve something," Ramadisha said in an interview. "He would solve it. He could keep it all in his head. He would go to class without any notes with him, but he knew exactly what to say and when to say it. His students were always flocking at his office, because they knew he could explain things to them."

Outside of work he led a quiet life, often spending weekends playing soccer and watching matches on TV, Madisha said. Matjila's ambition and poor pay eventually drove him to the private sector, he said.

After stints at Anglo American Plc and Stanlib Asset Management, Matjila was hired as a risk manager at the PIC by then-CEO Molefe in 2003, who promoted him to CIO two years later.

“He’s got a very comical way of looking at life,” Molefe, now at the helm of state logistics operator Transnet SOC Ltd., said in an interview. “It doesn’t matter how complex a problem is, he can reduce it into a very funny anecdote.”

Firmer Strategy

Even before his predecessor Elias Masilela resigned in June, observers often said Matjila held more sway at the PIC.

“He was in charge of the whole quasi-political oversight of PIC and its activities,” Peter Attard Montalto, an economist at Nomura International Plc, said in an interview. “He gave the PIC a much firmer overall strategy than they had before, much more aligned to thinking bigger picture, thinking about development more generally, and probably being more gutsy around some of the interventions, particularly in equities.”

The PIC has a say in most corporate issues in South Africa. About 55 percent of its funds are in listed assets, making up 13 percent of the entire value on the Johannesburg stock exchange, while 35 percent is in bonds.

Matjila this year helped scupper a takeover bid for South African drugmaker Adcock Ingram Holdings Ltd. by Chile’s CFR Pharmaceuticals SA (CFR), arguing it was a bad deal.

Trademark Humor

Matjila revealed his trademark sense of humor in an August interview in Johannesburg, when he recounted a conversation with former Adcock CEO Jonathan Louw, who backed the deal, about the company completing a renovation of its plants. The “bride is now dressed and ready for the wedding,” Louw said, according to Matjila. “That’s an expensive wedding dress,” Matjila responded, referring to the upgrades.

At other times, Matjila has been a voice of moderation. When South Africa’s biggest cement maker, PPC Ltd., was gripped by a three-month conflict between its CEO and the board, he called for the body to be strengthened rather than totally replaced as some other shareholders, including Foord Asset Management, had wanted.

The parties eventually agreed to replace some of the company’s board members without holding a meeting to vote on whether to have a total clear-out as had been planned.

Under the government’s direction, the PIC has allocated 5 percent of its funds to what it calls developmental investments, including health and education.

Among the issues Matjila has committed to tackling are disproportionate executive pay and the poor conditions mine workers live in, which have contributed to repeated strikes over the last few years.

“All these issues which were at the fringe of investing have become more mainstream now,” Sanlam’s Rassou said. “The PIC and Dr. Matjila have been at the forefront of this thinking. We are forced as investors to sort out these key issues of sustainability.”

TANZANIA :

KENYA :

Kenya opposition resists security law changes

12 Dec 2014/ Source:AP

Critics say proposed legislation that could impose harsh punishment on journalists undermines civil liberties.

Proposed changes to Kenya's security laws would curb fundamental freedoms enshrined in the constitution, Kenya's main opposition coalition and human rights groups have said.

The opposition political coalition CORD said the government is rushing the proposed amendments through parliament and that if they pass Kenyans will lose civil liberties.

The legislation, which was debated in parliament on Thursday, would level a fine of \$56,000 or a three-year prison term or both for journalists whose reports on any police activities are deemed to undermine the fight against terrorism.

The fine also applies to journalists who publish pictures of terrorism victims without police permission. It also allows the Interior Ministry to decide if, when and where public demonstrations can be held.

The legislation also proposes to arm Kenya's spy agency and allow them to arrest suspects and conduct pre-emptive, covert strikes against suspected terrorists.

It proposes to allow the president to fire and hire the police and spy chief, powers that were removed under Kenya's new 2010 constitution because of abuse by previous presidents.

'Extraordinary times'

Legislators on Thursday voted to allow the legislation to go forward for a third and final phase of the legislative process, the Associated Press reported.

Parliament then adjourned until February but the speaker could call a special sitting to discuss the proposal.

Kenya has suffered a series of attacks since it sent its troops to Somalia in October 2011 to fight the armed group al-Shabab.

Al-Shabab claimed responsibility for two massive attacks in the last month that killed 64 non-Muslim Kenyans.

Asman Kamama, chairman of the Administrative and National Security Committee who proposed the legislation, justified the proposals by saying: "These are extraordinary times and extraordinary times require extraordinary decisions."

Kamama compared the legislation to the American Patriotic Act enacted after September 11, 2001.

Legislator Ababu Namwamba said Kenya's problem is not a lack of anti-terror laws but a lack of enforcement of those laws because of endemic corruption.

"This is a sad day. That's why I am dressed like a man going to a funeral. We are mourning the death of the constitutional gains we have made," said Namwamba.

Kenya defends international court cooperation on president's case

By Reuters/Friday, December 12th 2014

Kenya defended its involvement with the International Criminal Court on Thursday as prosecutors seek to have the country held accountable by the court's member states for failing to cooperate on an investigation of President Uhuru Kenyatta. Prosecutors last week dropped charges of crimes against humanity against Kenyatta, who was accused of orchestrating a wave of deadly violence after Kenya's 2007 elections, due to a lack of evidence. They have said Kenyatta, the first sitting president to have attended a session of the court, used his powers to obstruct the investigation, especially since becoming head of state last year. Kenyatta's lawyers denied this. ICC judges agreed that Kenya had not cooperated in "good faith" with the court, but decided against referring the matter to the body representing the court's 122 member states. On Tuesday the prosecutors sought leave to appeal that decision. Kenyan U.N. Ambassador Macharia Kamau defended his country's cooperation with The Hague-based international court at a meeting of the court's member states, known as the Assembly of States Parties, at the United Nations in New York on Thursday. "There is nothing in the history of our country, nothing in the manner in which we have cooperated with the prosecutor or the ICC in general, that should ever be construed as a lack of cooperation without clear determinable evidence being provided," he said. Kamau told the Assembly of States Parties that despite fully cooperating, Kenya had become "a victim of castigation, ridicule and disparagement." He said cooperation with the court was ill-defined and there was a lack of oversight. "We insist here today that cooperation must be defined in a manner that is consistent with universal norms and cannot be something that is determined by one party at the expense of another party, particularly not at the expense of a state party," Kamau said. The court did not acquit Kenyatta, so charges could be brought again if more evidence becomes available. The most prominent public figures indicted by the ICC include Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, wanted for genocide in Darfur, who remains at large and in office, and Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, son of Libya's former leader, whom Libyan authorities have refused to hand over.

Insecurity in Kenya affecting regional tourism, says official

BY Frankline Sunday/standardmedia.co.ke/Thursday, December 11th 2014

Kenya: Insecurity in Kenya has negatively impacted tourist arrivals to East Africa, raising concern over the region's tourism sector's economic prospects. According to Tourism Federation of Kenya (KTF), Kenya's central position as a communication hub for East Africa has seen her neighbours suffer a domino effect of the insecurity perception currently bogging the country down. "Jomo Kenyatta International Airport is the point of entry for many visitors to the EAC and the unfortunate insecurity perception has meant less visitors to Kenya and consequently also to the region," stated Kenya Tourism Federation CEO Agatha Juma. Kenya has suffered a spate of insecurity incidents which earlier on this year led to the issuance of travel advisories on the country by the UK, US, France and Austria - the country's top tourism markets. In the last three weeks, more than 50 people have been killed in the North Eastern town of Mandera by suspected Al-Shabaab militia. The event led to the exit of Interior Cabinet Secretary Joseph Ole Lenku Inspector of Police David Kimaiyo. The East African Region has been trying to market the region as a whole, scaling up this initiative with the launch of the single tourist visa in February this year. However, the efforts to attract more visitors to the region have been hampered by rising insecurity in Kenya, which has affected the uptake of the single tourist visa. "Since we launched the single tourist visa, we have had about

1,560 applications and while this might seem a low number, we believe it is a good start despite the situation,” stated Mike Macharia, chief executive of the Kenya Association of Hotel Keepers and Caterers (KAHC).

Militia attacks Tourist operators in the region are hopeful that the negative impact and perception of the country in the wake of the militia attacks will not persist into the long term. “We are having some successes in separating the areas that have been hit from areas that are safe and assuring prospective visitors that the situation in Mandera is not the picture of what is happening all over the country,” states Ms Juma. KTF further states recovery efforts are being hampered by the inability of tour operators from respective countries to adequately market the attractions available to visitors to the East African region.

“Tour operators not only in Kenya but also in Uganda and Rwanda do not yet know what attractions they can propose to their clients who might want to use the single tourist visa and this is also impeding its uptake,” states Ms Juma. KTF is currently lobbying concerned regulators and is planing to issue a free one-month regional tourism pass to diplomats and expatriates as one of the measures to boost tourism in the region.

Cop killed, 2 wounded in attack on Kenya

Reuters/12/12/2014

Attackers raided a police camp in the Mwanamwinga area on Thursday night.

NAIROBI - Suspected separatists killed a Kenyan policeman and critically wounded two more when they attacked their camp in the coastal county of Kilifi, a senior regional official said on Friday.

Albert Kobia, the county commissioner for Kilifi, said machete-wielding attackers raided the police camp in the Mwanamwinga area on Thursday night, killing the corporal in charge.

“Some guns were stolen. We have launched a manhunt for the attackers,” Kobia told Reuters.

He said the attackers struck at about 11pm local time when it was raining heavily in the area.

“We think the MRC are involved,” he said, referring to the Mombasa Republican Council, a separatist group that wants the coast to govern itself, citing decades of neglect by the government in Nairobi.

Randu Nzai, the secretary general of MRC, rejected the claim.

“We are not even aware of any attack in the first place. As usual the government is using us as a scapegoat on this one again,” Nzai told Reuters.

The MRC is an outlawed group that lost most of its strength in heavy crackdowns by the government in 2012 and 2013.

It had carried out several violent raids in the area before then.

This year, Kenya’s coastal strip has borne the brunt of frequent gun and grenade attacks, mostly blamed on militants from neighbouring Somalia.

The attacks have caused a slump in tourism, an economic mainstay for the region and an important source of foreign exchange for Kenya.

La CPI avance sur des pays africains: la Côte d'Ivoire après le Kenya

le vendredi 12 décembre 2014/rtdf.be

Une semaine après l'abandon des poursuites contre le président kényan, la Cour pénale internationale a avancé dans la procédure contre deux proches de l'ancien chef d'Etat ivoirien Laurent Gbagbo, au risque de se voir encore taxée de pratiquer une "justice des vainqueurs".

La CPI a décidé jeudi de confirmer quatre charges de crimes contre l'humanité contre Charles Blé Goudé, qui a du même coup été renvoyé en procès, et a sommé la Côte d'Ivoire de lui livrer Simone Gbagbo, l'épouse de l'ancien président.

Ils sont tous deux poursuivis pour leur rôle présumé dans les violences ayant suivi la présidentielle de 2010 qui a opposé Laurent Gbagbo au président actuel Alassane Ouattara. La crise s'était achevée par deux semaines de guerre et avait fait quelque 3.000 morts.

Charles Blé Goudé, ex-chef des "Jeunes patriotes", mouvement pro-Gbagbo extrêmement virulent, est écroué à La Haye depuis mars 2014.

Surnommé "général de la rue" pour sa capacité à mobiliser les foules, il était l'un des hommes forts de l'ancien régime.

Selon le bureau du procureur de la CPI, des miliciens sous les ordres de Charles Blé Goudé avaient tué, violé, brûlé vives et persécuté des centaines de personnes. "Personne n'est surpris de cette confirmation des charges", a réagi Bruno Koné, le porte-parole du gouvernement ivoirien, lors d'une conférence de presse. La date du procès de Charles Blé Goudé n'est pas encore déterminée, et la défense peut encore interjeter appel.

Simone Gbagbo est, quant à elle, détenue à Abidjan. En plus d'être poursuivie par la CPI, l'ancienne "dame de fer" est en effet inculpée par la justice ivoirienne d'"atteinte à la sûreté de l'Etat" en lien avec la crise postélectorale.

Abidjan refuse de livrer Mme Gbagbo à la Cour pour la juger en Côte d'Ivoire, et avait soulevé une "exception d'irrecevabilité" contestant la compétence de la CPI, qui ne peut poursuivre un suspect que si la justice nationale ne peut pas ou ne veut pas le faire.

Or, la CPI a estimé jeudi que les poursuites engagées en Côte d'Ivoire ne portent pas sur les mêmes accusations, rejetant dès lors l'"exception d'irrecevabilité".

Abidjan se donne du temps

Le gouvernement ivoirien "va se donner le temps de (l') analyse et revenir avec une position claire", a promis M. Koné. Selon ce ministre, la Côte d'Ivoire, "respectueuse des engagements qu'elle prend", a aussi "des principes qu'elle souhaite voir respectés".

Charles Blé Goudé doit répondre de quatre chefs de crimes contre l'humanité: meurtre, viol, actes inhumains et persécution.

Il est accusé d'avoir participé à un plan commun fomenté par Laurent Gbagbo et son entourage pour conserver le pouvoir "à tout prix".

Son avocat, Nick Kaufman, que Charles Blé Goudé "est surpris de la décision de la Cour, qui néglige en grande partie les preuves de la défense et confirme une enquête sélective et politiquement motivée".

Le camp Gbagbo affirme que l'ancien président a été évincé en faveur de son rival Alassane Ouattara, dénonçant un "complot" qui aurait été mis sur pied par la France, l'ancienne puissance coloniale.

Laurent Gbagbo est lui aussi poursuivi par la CPI. Ecroué à La Haye, il est dans l'attente d'un procès qui doit s'ouvrir en juillet 2015.

Alors que les deux camps rivaux ont été accusés de graves crimes dans de multiples rapports, aucun partisan du président Ouattara n'a encore été inquiété par la CPI, ce qui lui vaut d'être accusée de pratiquer une "justice des vainqueurs".

Le 5 décembre, le procureur de la CPI avait décidé d'abandonner les poursuites contre le président kényan Uhuru Kenyatta, faute de preuve. Cette décision avait été perçue comme un véritable camouflet pour la CPI.

Ce faux pas illustre une des plus grandes difficultés de la CPI: poursuivre de hauts responsables qui sont toujours au pouvoir.

Dans le cas de Kenyatta, la CPI demandait au Kenya de lui fournir des documents qui auraient pu compromettre son propre chef de l'Etat... "Peut-être qu'on attend trop de la CPI, peut-être que le produit nous a trop bien été vendu?", s'était alors interrogé Dov Jacobs, spécialiste en justice internationale à l'université de Leiden (Pays-Bas).

Avec Charles Blé Goudé et Simone Gbagbo, la CPI avance sur deux dossiers très différents de l'affaire Kenyatta: ils se trouvent dans le camp des vaincus.

AFP

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UN Ebola Chief: outbreak in West Africa will take several more months to get under control

The Canadian Press/Thursday, December 11, 2014

The U.N. Ebola chief said Thursday it will take several more months before the outbreak in West Africa is under control, an assessment that makes clear the U.N.'s goal of isolating 100 per cent of

Ebola cases by Jan. 1 won't be met.

Dr. David Nabarro said there has been "a massive shift" over the last four months in the way affected governments have taken the lead in responding to the epidemic, communities are taking action and the international community has pitched in.

But he said greater efforts are needed to combat Ebola in western Sierra Leone and northern Mali, to reduce the number of new cases in Liberia and to limit transmission to Mali.

The World Health Organization conceded that it didn't meet an interim Dec. 1 target of isolating 70 per cent of Ebola patients and safely burying 70 per cent of victims in hardest-hit Sierra Leone. But it hasn't made clear what that means for the Jan. 1 goal of 100 per cent of cases isolated and bodies buried safely. WHO has acknowledged that its patchy data could compromise the goal, since the agency does not know how many Ebola patients there actually are and is unable to track all of their contacts.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said last month the outbreak might not be contained until sometime next year.

"We must be prepared for ups and downs, difficulties and successes," Nabarro told a meeting promoting greater collaboration between the U.N. and the business community in responding to Ebola. "And it's going to take, I'm afraid, several more months before we can truly declare that the outbreak is coming under control."

More than 18,100 people have been infected and more than 6,500 have died in West Africa since the initial case in Guinea a year ago, in an area bordering Sierra Leone and Liberia. Unlike previous Ebola outbreaks, which had been confined to faraway villages in the rain forests of Central Africa, this one quickly spread to capital cities in all three West African nations and has become the worst in history.

Nabarro told a news conference that "the outbreak is actually a collection of a large number of small outbreaks all over the affected countries, possibly as many as a hundred different outbreaks, all at varying stages of evolution, all with different intensity."

The number of Ebola cases is now stabilizing in Liberia and Guinea but continues to spread rapidly in Sierra Leone, where Nabarro said the country's president is leading "an intensified surge operation" in the capital Freetown and hard-hit western areas.

"It will come under control -- it's, I think, a matter of weeks," Nabarro said.

In Sierra Leone on Thursday, President Ernest Bai Koroma implored the country's traditional leaders to stop cultural practices blamed for spreading Ebola, including funerals that involve touching corpses that are highly contagious.

Koroma said he hoped to end all Ebola transmissions in the next 21 days, but that goal seems unrealistic in a country where 400 to 500 cases a week have recently been reported.

Nabarro, the U.N. special envoy for Ebola, said the U.N. and experts responding to the outbreak are also disturbed by the 10-20 new cases daily in Liberia and want the number reduced to zero.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announced Thursday that the Ebola operations chief in West Africa, Anthony Banbury, will be replaced by veteran U.N. official Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed of

Mauritania when he returns to U.N. headquarters in January.

Ahmed, who is currently the U.N. deputy special representative in Libya, will work closely with Nabarro and governments in the region when he takes over as head of the U.N. Mission for Emergency Response in West Africa, Ban said.

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Ebola vaccine trial in Geneva suspended because of joint pain side effects

11/12 /euronews

The clinical trial of a promising Ebola vaccine has been suspended in Geneva after some patients complained of joint pain.

Some 60 people had been injected with the vaccine and four of them complained of problems with their feet and hands.

One of the directors of the trial, Professor Laurent Kaiser, said only one site involved in the study has experienced problems.

“So far the side effects have only been detected in Geneva,” he said. “Maybe because here the volunteers are closely monitored. We have lots of medical personnel and volunteer doctors. The symptoms have only been weak and didn’t last long. Maybe here they have been detected a little more accurately.”

Researchers in numerous locations are attempting to develop vaccines for Ebola, which has so far killed more than 6,000 people in West Africa.

Authorities say the trial in Geneva will resume early next year once checks have been made on the affected patients.

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