



(United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has asked the U.N. Security Council for 1,030 more peacekeepers for Central African Republic after the mission was left overstretched when infrastructure and senior officials needed to be protected in the capital, Bangui.)

BURUNDI :

RWANDA :

**In Rwanda, Israelis and Americans launch East Africa's first commercial solar field**  
By SHARON UDASIN/jpost.com/02/06/2015

“We’ve come together to see the light.”

RWAMAGANA – Just a few degrees south of the equator on Thursday, sunlight bathed rows of pristine solar panels as delegates from around the world arrived to celebrate the inauguration of East Africa’s first solar field.

“What we can see up here today for Rwanda, Africa and the world is hope,” said Yosef Abramowitz, the American-Israeli co-founder and president of the Gigawatt Global company.  
“We’ve come together to see the light.”

The company’s \$23.7 million, 8.5 MW solar field is the first utility-scale solar power plant in the

region, and the largest solar field on the continent outside of South Africa and Mauritius.

Made up of 28,360 photovoltaic panels on a 20-hectare (50 acres) plot of land, the field is now supplying 6 percent of Rwanda's power supply, and will be harnessing the sun's light for 25 years according to the power purchase agreement.

"It's a very good feeling to know that we put something on the ground," Haim Motzen, managing director and co-founder of Gigawatt Global, told The Jerusalem Post before the launch ceremony.

"It's not a theory," continued Motzen, who has been the driving force behind the project since its beginning. "It's something very tangible and practical and has a significant impact on a country."

The field is located on the grounds of the Agahozo Shalom Youth Village, in Rwanda's Eastern Province district of Rwamagana, about 60 km. from Kigali.

The village, which houses and educates students orphaned during or after the Rwandan genocide, was established in December 2008 by Jewish South African-American attorney and philanthropist Anne Heyman, who died in a horse riding accident in January 2014. The fees paid by Gigawatt Global to lease the solar field's land help pay the village's expenses.

Gigawatt Global defines itself as an American-owned Dutch company with an objective of developing, financing, constructing and activating utility-scale solar fields in emerging markets. The firm's Israeli research and development arm, the Jerusalem-based Energiya Global, supplied the initial research and development and seed money for the Dutch developer, which took over and implemented the project.

Abramowitz, also the co-founder of the Arava Power Company – the firm responsible for Israel's first commercial-scale solar field, Ketura Sun – called the Rwandan field "a catalyst for solar in sub-Saharan Africa."

Working with a local partner in Rwanda, the Remote Partners, Gigawatt Global signed a power purchase agreement with the Rwandan government in July 2013, reaching financial close on February 14, 2014. Interconnection to the grid was complete by July 2014, and by September, the field went to full production.

Although Motzen was told by industry experts that pursuing such a time line was unrealistic, government officials insisted upon the schedule due to the country's energy shortage, he explained.

"They gave us time lines that were very difficult to meet," he said. "At the same time, because of the country's business environment and because of its laser focus on getting more energy on the grid, we were able to move quite quickly."

The Gigawatt Global field is the first project to be grid-connected within the United States Power Africa initiative, launched by President Barack Obama in June 2013 – a program involving 12 American government agencies and authorities, including OPIC and USAID. Power Africa aims to add more than 30 GW of cleaner energy to Africa, enough to power 60 million homes and businesses.

A \$20 billion venture, Power Africa is funded two-thirds by the private sector and one-third by the US government, United States Ambassador Erica Barks-Ruggles told the Post in an interview at the Kigali embassy on Wednesday.

“These are very, very ambitious goals and these small projects are on the leading edge,” she said. “We’re really pleased to be a partner in this.”

By funding the initial feasibility study for the Gigawatt Global field, OPIC was able to demonstrate to investors that the project would be financially viable, Barks-Ruggles said.

“It’s a basic necessity to be part of the knowledge economy to have access to electricity,” she said.

By benefiting the local community, the government and the private sector, the project proves “that you can actually make money building these things” and constitute a “triple win,” she added. Barks-Ruggles praised Gigawatt Global for the swift pace at which it was able to accomplish financial closure and grid connection. Instrumental in that process, she added, was the firm’s strong connection with and support from the local community. “It is very fast, which is great, because it proves that these things don’t have to take years and years to do,” she said. “It can be done quickly when all the partners agree.”

Asked if the project could be replicated elsewhere in Rwanda and in other East African countries, Barks-Ruggles responded, “That’s part of why I’m so excited to go out there.

“I think this is something you can show you can do on a fairly medium-scale, fairly rapidly, if you have all the pieces together,” she said.

As far as the Israeli involvement in the project is concerned, Barks-Ruggles credited the research and development arm for supplying technological expertise.

“As with any international project, you’ll find different partners bring different pieces to the table,” she said. “The experience and the research and development that the Israeli company brought technologically wise obviously helped Gigawatt Global to get going faster. They had access to proven technology.

At the Power Africa initiative, we want to work with partners to make this happen, to get double the energy supply – of reliable, safe energy to sub-Saharan Africa. If somebody brings clean energy to the table and they have an American partner they are working with, then great.”

At the launch on Thursday afternoon, Rwandan Infrastructure Minister James Musoni echoed Barks-Ruggles’s comments, calling upon investors to come build more such clean power facilities. The country has a target of connecting 70% of Rwandan households to electricity by 2018 – up from the current 23%, he explained.

“The completion of this project shows us that when there is such a big boost to the network we can easily solve the problems we are facing,” Musoni said.

The governor of the Eastern Province, Odette Uwamariya, stressed that continued developed of alternative sources of energy is required in order to meet the country’s energy development goals.

“I’m very grateful as a governor to see this project being launched today, because I happened to witness its conception, which actually by that time seemed to be too good to believe and probably too long to wait for,” Uwamariya said.

All in all, financing the project has required \$23.7m., with debt provided by the Netherlands Development Finance Company and the London-based Emerging Africa Infrastructure Fund, as well as mezzanine debt (whereby a company issues debt that the holders may convert into equity if

the debt is not repaid in due course) provided by the Norwegian Investment Fund for Developing Countries (Norfund).

Equity came from Scatec Solar ASA – which also served as engineering, procurement and construction contractor and the operations and management provider – as well as from Norfund and KLP Norfund Investments.

The project was also supported financially by grants from the US government by way of an Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) Africa Clean Energy Finance grant, and from Finland's Energy and Environment Partnership. SEDI Labs, led by Raffi Mardirosian, served as a key project development partner.

### Rwanda, U.S. Researchers Develop HIV Testing Kit

By Collins Mwai/The New Times (Kigali)/6 February 2015

HIV and syphilis testing and diagnosis could soon be simplified to a simple procedure that can be carried out using a cell phone accessory following the development of an appliance through a partnership of Rwandan and US researchers.

The dongle appliance is fitted onto a smartphone and can successfully test people for the virus that causes Aids and syphilis with a finger-prick of blood, according to research findings published on Wednesday.

The low-cost smartphone accessory can detect HIV and syphilis from a finger prick of blood in just 15 minutes.

Although it was developed by researchers from the University of Columbia, US, the research protocol, actual research and research journal was carried out in partnership with a team of Rwandans.

According to the research findings published in the Science Translational Medicine Journal, the team jointly carried out 96 tests in the country where the device correctly identified HIV and syphilis infections.

Dr Sabin Nsanzimana, the head of HIV division at the Rwanda Biomedical Centre, who was part of the research team, told The New Times that the team carried out tests in Kimironko, Biryogo and Gahanga suburbs in Kigali.

He said following the research findings, the device was awaiting approval from the World Health Organisation, which will mostly come after further tests, to ascertain that it was accurate and indeed functional.

The device, which is light and small enough to fit in an adult's hand, had a manufacturing cost of only \$34 (about Rwf24,000) as compared to laboratory equipment that cost about \$18,000.

The device was able to achieve the goal of low power consumption, a benefit in places that do not always have electricity and compatibility to multiple gadgets, phones.

It cuts down the time taken to perform the tests to 15 minutes as opposed to two hours, the approximate time taken to diagnose both cases.

According to the research journal, despite the differences in cost and power source, the device can replicate all mechanical, optical, and electronic functions of a lab-based blood test.

How Rwanda got into the picture:

Dr Nsanzimana said Rwanda was chosen as a research partner because of the existing partnership with the American varsity and because of previous research success in the area of HIV/Aids.

In 2013, Rwanda was the first country to launch the non-surgical circumcision (Prepex) with the aim of circumcising up to 700,000 men to help cut down the rate of HIV infection by 2016.

This was after a successful pilot phase and global approval of the mode of circumcision that is expected to be adopted across the world.

Dr Nsanzimana said Rwanda fares well in medical research as it fulfills all the three aspects for research.

"For a country to fare well in global research, it should have proper infrastructure, qualified medical personnel and an open mind for collaboration with other global partners. This (the findings) is proof that Rwanda meets all the criteria," Dr Nsanzimana said.

When adopted, the device is expected to give health facilities an upper hand in the fight against the spread of HIV/Aids.

In the published research finding, Samuel K. Sia, an associate professor of biomedical engineering at the University of Columbia, who was the head of the research, said part of a wider effort to simplify medical tests that are normally done in a lab and that could be used in poor or remote locations.

"Our work shows that a full laboratory-quality immunoassay can be run on a smartphone accessory. This kind of capability can transform how health care services are delivered around the world," Sia wrote in the journal.

He said the dongle presents new capabilities for a broad range of users, from health care providers to consumers.

"By increasing detection of syphilis infections, we might be able to reduce deaths tenfold. We can be able to scale up HIV testing at the community level with immediate antiretroviral therapy that could nearly stop HIV transmissions and approach elimination of this devastating disease," Sia added.

According to statistics from the Ministry of Health, HIV prevalence stands at 3 per cent in the country and more than 135,000 adults and 8,000 children living with HIV are on anti-retroviral therapy.

Over the past 10 years, there has been a 50 per cent reduction in HIV prevalence.

The statistics further indicate that between July 2013 and June, last year, the number of health facilities offering voluntary testing and counselling increased from 493 to 544 facilities enabling the country to achieve 99 per cent of national coverage.

Currently, Rwanda is also involved in medical research of HIV vaccine that could further boost

efforts in the fight against the disease.

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RDC CONGO :

UGANDA :

### Duquesne awards honorary doctorate to compassionate Ugandan school leader

By Tory N. Parrish/triblive.com/Friday, Feb. 6, 2015

Sister Rosemary Nyirumbe was unafraid when she took over a school for young women and girls in civil war-ravaged Uganda in 2001, she said.

For many, the school was their only chance at life as the war raged.

They were displaced former child soldiers and sex slaves forced into service by Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army, which waged war against the government and villages for more than two decades.

"No, I wasn't afraid. This program is just (in) great demand," said Nyirumbe, 59.

As part of its Founders Week 2015, Duquesne University recognized Nyirumbe's work by conferring an honorary doctor of humane letters to her Thursday.

Nyirumbe serves God by serving students, so that they, in turn, serve others, said the Rev. Raymond French, vice president for mission and identity at Duquesne, a Catholic university. Education is a vehicle out of poverty, he said.

"Rosemary already has a Ph.D. in love, a Ph.D. in compassion," French said. "She's an inspiration. She brings hope in the midst of despair."

Nyirumbe is the director of the St. Monica's Vocational School in Gulu, Uganda, which provides literacy education, vocational training and health care to young women and girls, some of whom are mothers.

The school has helped about 1,400 women and girls. Nyirumbe started a similar school in nearby Atiak, Uganda, about three years ago, and a third is under construction in Torit, South Sudan.

"Practical skills is something restoring the dignity of these women," Nyirumbe said.

Named by Time Magazine as one of its 100 Most Influential People of 2014, Nyirumbe also is the subject of a 2013 documentary, "Sewing Hope," and a book of the same name chronicling her work at the school. Book sales help support St. Monica's.

Nyirumbe joined the Catholic Order of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in 1976. She graduated with a

master's degree in community leadership from Duquesne's campus in Rome in 2011.

Uganda's civil war is over, but life remains difficult for children in the East African country, especially for girls because there are fewer opportunities for them, Nyirumbe said.

“Many parents prefer to send their boys to study,” she said.

The girls at the school suffered physical and mental abuse from rebels at very young ages, Nyirumbe said.

“They had to serve as sex slaves. They were traded as child soldiers ... used as cooks, as baby sitters,” she said.

About 2 million children are orphaned or homeless in Uganda, said Louis Picard, director of the Ford Institute for Human Security and professor of public and international affairs at the University of Pittsburgh.

Of those, about 500,000 are refugees from the civil war, but HIV and AIDS took many children's parents, said Picard, who also is a board member of a humanitarian organization that runs a children's home, Bright Kids Uganda, near Kampala, Uganda.

Many organizations work to help children in Uganda, but they are small, and the challenges are plentiful, he said.

At St. Monica's, girls learn tailoring, catering, secretarial skills and computer programming to help them become self-sufficient.

Nyirumbe said she hopes the school's model can be replicated in other areas in conflict.

“It's giving them a family where they can be loved and where they also in turn begin to love their children,” she said.

### Uganda: CSOS Criticize Move to Export Health Workers

By Flavia Nassaka/The Independent (Kampala)/5 February 2015

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) have criticized the move by government through the ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Health to export highly qualified health workers including psychiatrists, ophthalmologists and neurologists to a Caribbean country, Trinidad and Tobago.

While speaking to journalists on Feb.05, Denis Odue, a health rights activist said it's a sign of failed leadership when government that is supposed to protect its people gives away the few health experts the country has to another country for the sake of strengthening ties.

Currently, the patient to doctor ratio still stands at 1: 15000, patient to mid wife at 1: 9000 whereas for nurses it's at 1:700 way apart from the World Health Organization's recommendation of 1: 1000 patient to doctor ratio, 1:3 and 1:5 for midwives and nurses respectively.

Activists say the remittance generated by health workers exported overseas would fail to compensate for the economic costs associated with catastrophic illnesses and increased rates of death.

"The economic gains a productive health worker brings to communities greatly exceed projected remittances generated", said Joshua Wamboga of the Uganda Alliance of Patients Organization

Instead of exporting medics, they suggested that the government should focus on increasing health workers' remuneration and make conditions favorable for more people to enroll for health related courses since the 2013/2014 Ministerial Policy Statement for the Health sector highlighted poor wages and few health workers as the main cause for the persistent service delivery gap.

Meanwhile, hearing of the court case halting the controversial government plan which was filed by Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR) was adjourned to Mar. 02.

## SOUTH AFRICA :

### South Africa's Eskom says to resume rolling blackouts

Fri Feb 6, 2015 /Reuters

JOHANNESBURG (Reuters) - South African power utility Eskom will implement rolling blackouts from 8 a.m.-10 p.m. (0600-2000 GMT) on Friday, the fourth consecutive day of power cuts to hit Africa's most developed economy.

Eskom said on its Twitter feed that it would restart controlled outages at "Stage 2", which means it has to reduce 2,000 megawatts (MW) from the grid as it tries to meet consumer demand of around 30,000 MW.

On Thursday, power outages reached "Stage 3", which means 4,000 MW is cut from the grid.

Eskom has warned that blackouts will be an almost daily occurrence over the next three years as its aging fleet of plants continues to buckle under pressure.

Eskom has been scrambling to build new power stations to erase razor-thin supply margins, but has been beset by a two year delay at its planned large Medupi plant.

## TANZANIA :

### Tanzania Cancels Meeting With Kenya

Feb 4, 2015/Source Tanzania Daily News

Mr Nyalandu told reporters in Dar es Salaam that the meeting was to be held on Saturday, but it has now been postponed to allow more internal consultations within the government.

He said the consultations would involve top officials from ministries of Natural Resources and Tourism, East African Cooperation, Transport and Industry and Trade.

Tanzania and Kenya are locked in dispute over a 1985 bilateral agreement between the two countries in the multi-million dollar tourism industry. The Kenyan authorities banned tour operators from Tanzania from reaching the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport late last year.



The ban has so far been lifted pending discussions between governments of the two countries.

Speaking in Dar es Salaam last week, the minister said Tanzania and Kenya were committed to ensure the matter was resolved immediately, allaying fear of a potential trade war between the two neighbouring countries.

“There shall never be a trade war with Kenya. We shall find every way possible to sit together and discuss the issue and find a solution,” he said at the launching of the World Bank Economic Update for Tanzania which focused on tourism.

The minister further said the government was in final stages of filming tourist attractions in Tanzania with a view to rebrand the country.

The idea is to use major international television channels of CNN and British Broadcasting Services to advertise tourists attractions abroad, he said.

A Hollywood film company had completed filming tourists attractions in many parts of the country, including Zanzibar, he said.

It was earlier said tourism industry had a great potential for more growth and increase of foreign exchange earnings to US \$16 billion annually by 2025 from the current US \$1.5 billion if it is adequately managed.

The World Bank Lead Economist, Jacques Morisset said Tanzania would get optimal benefit from its booming tourism industry if it simplified its tax system and fees and make its revenue allocations more transparent.

The government failed to capture all returns from the tourism sector due to an inefficient tax system and non-transparent redistribution mechanism and weaker linkages with the local communities and businesses, he said.

Tourism is currently the leading foreign exchange earner for the country after overtaking gold which was affected by low output and global price plunge.

KENYA :

ANGOLA :

AU/AFRICA :

**Boko Haram facing mounting regional military pressure**

4 February 2015/IRIN

ABUJA , 4 February 2015 (IRIN) - Nigeria and its neighbours have launched a major military offensive that has retaken a string of border towns from Boko Haram. The move comes just ahead of talks in Cameroon to agree details of the 7,500-strong taskforce proposed by the African Union to tackle the militant Islamist group.

Chadian troops have crossed into northeastern Nigeria and re-captured at least three border towns, including Gamboru, Ngala and Malam Fatori.

“They [Chad and Cameroon] are acting out of their own national interest, to push Boko Haram back into Nigeria,” political scientist and columnist, Jibrin Ibrahim, told IRIN.

The Nigerian military, revitalized by new equipment - including upgraded T-72 tanks and helicopter gunships - has also gone on the attack and reportedly won back a number of towns in Borno and Adamawa states. There is a growing perception among some security watchers that Boko Haram is on the back foot.

A major Boko Haram assault on Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State, was repulsed on 1 February with heavy casualties inflicted on the militants. Analysts have speculated the attack, the second in a week, was a result of Boko Haram having been driven from the border areas it has effectively controlled for close to a year.

#### New threat for civilians

But the renewed military vigour has raised concerns over the protection of civilians in the remote regions where the fighting has been fiercest and has involved air strikes with unguided munitions.

“We know what [violations] Boko Haram is capable of, and in the past there have been reports of violations by Nigerian troops,” said human rights lawyer Clement Nwankwo. “Certainly we must also be worried about the activities of the Chadian and Cameroonian military.”

The coordinated offensive comes ahead of the 5-7 February meeting in Yaounde to finalize details of the AU’s planned Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF). At the table will be representatives of the AU, UN, Economic Community of West African States and the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) all hoping to agree issues of command and control, rules of engagement, and intelligence sharing, an African diplomat based in Addis Ababa, the AU headquarters, told IRIN.

#### A global fight?

The AU’s Peace and Security Council decision to deploy a taskforce is the result of continent-wide frustration over the inability of the Nigerian government to crush Boko Haram, the diplomat said. The failure to solve an essentially local issue allowed the insurgency to spread beyond the country’s borders, threatening neighbouring Cameroon’s North West region in particular. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has also warned of the mounting threat the group poses.

Nigeria’s preference has clearly been for bilateral security arrangements with its neighbours rather than the internationalisation of its Boko Haram problem. But after five years of military failure, “we are on our knees – it’s time for begging, not for pride,” said Ibrahim. With elections due on 14 February, the government is keenly aware its military shortcomings and political miscalculation is a vote loser.

Casting the conflict as part of the global fight against terror serves to spare some of Nigeria’s

blushes. The AU's deployment decision is based on a request made in January by the six-nation LCBC for a mandate to expand on an existing MNJTF – made up of Nigeria, Chad and Niger – originally conceived as a counter-smuggling initiative, with limited cross-border collaboration.

In 2012 the MNJTF was handed the additional task of tackling Boko Haram. The capture of its headquarters in Baga, Nigeria, by the militants in January underlined the extent of its incapacity. Chad and Niger reportedly withdrew in the aftermath of the setback.

### Safety in numbers

The AU envisages something far more ambitious for an expanded MNJTF. The 29 January declaration authorizing its creation includes language on protection of civilians; support for the initial stages of a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme; and the facilitation “within the limit of its capabilities” of “humanitarian operations and the delivery of assistance to the affected populations”.

The MNJTF will be “truly multinational” said the diplomat; so far only tiny Benin has been signed up as a troop contributing nation, beyond the core group of Nigeria, Chad, Niger and Cameroon. But the AU is crucially seeking a UN Security Council mandate, which would open the door to financial and logistical support, London-based analyst Muktar Usman-Janguza told IRIN.

However, getting to the full “ceiling” of 7,500 troops will take time. So too will potentially winning permission to deploy inside Nigeria from a political and military class still accustomed to regarding the country as an African superpower, the Addis Ababa-based diplomat said.

But the AU proposal has been generally welcomed by Nigerians. “It’s better than having US or French forces on Nigerian soil,” said Nwankwo. “There is overwhelming popular support for it ... and with the backing of the UN, the advantage would be a relatively more disciplined force, with rules of engagement defined by the international community.”

### UN/AFRICA :

**Secret Burials in Africa Thwarting Efforts to Stamp Out Ebola: U.N.**  
[nbcnews.com/February](http://nbcnews.com/February) 6th 2015

GENEVA — Efforts to stamp out West Africa's Ebola epidemic are being thwarted by villagers touching and washing the infectious bodies of dead victims at secret burials, and the difficulties in tracing those exposed to the virus, U.N. officials said Thursday.

The number of new cases rose for the first time this year in the past week, coinciding with a looming funding shortfall and the approach of the rainy season that will hamper aid efforts from April, they warned.

"The commonest way in which people are getting Ebola is through the rituals that take place when somebody is buried, particularly the important cleansing and touching that goes on," Dr. David Nabarro, U.N. Ebola special envoy, said at a briefing.

Some communities in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone believe traditional practices are needed for the departed's spirit and the society, so it is "asking a lot of them" to change, he said.

"The flares (in new cases) that we're seeing are usually because there has been an unsafe burial, probably done secretly," Nabarro said.

Dr. Bruce Aylward, the World Health Organization's special representative on Ebola, said the 124 new cases recorded in the week to Feb. 1, up from 99 the previous week, also reflected the virus' spread to border areas near Mali and Senegal.

"The virus has told us this week loud and clear I'm not going to go away the way you are expecting me to based on these (epidemiological) curves. And all I have to do is survive out the next couple of weeks or months until the rains hit, and then you're going to have a very, very difficult situation," he said.

But WHO, the U.N. agency leading the fight against the year-old epidemic that has killed nearly 9,000 people, faces financial constraints.

"Right now, though, our funding for those 800 people out there in the field, it ends at the end of February. That is how precarious the situation is right now in terms of being able to sustain this," Aylward said.

The five new cases reported in Liberia last week were all people on lists of contacts of Ebola patients, he said, noting that the success rate may prove hard to sustain. In Guinea the rate was 54 percent and in Sierra Leone 57 percent.

### U.N. wants 1,030 more peacekeepers for Central African Republic

World Bulletin /06 February 2015 Friday

News Desk

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has asked the U.N. Security Council for 1,030 more peacekeepers for Central African Republic after the mission was left overstretched when infrastructure and senior officials needed to be protected in the capital, Bangui.

Ban wants an additional 750 troops and 280 police, which would take the mandated strength of the peacekeeping operation to nearly 13,000 uniformed personnel. The 15-member Security Council is due to renew the mandate of the mission in April.

A largely Christian "anti-balaka" militia took up arms in 2013 against Muslim Seleka rebels who had toppled President Francois Bozize and seized power in March of that year.

"The security situation remains volatile and clashes between anti-Balaka and ex-Seleka elements continue, while criminal activities aimed at, among other things, controlling the country's natural resources are increasing," Ban said in a letter to the Security Council.

"Pockets of vulnerable Muslim communities remain under nearly constant threat and in dire humanitarian conditions, despite the efforts of the international forces," he said.

A U.N. commission of inquiry found that the Christian militia carried out ethnic cleansing of the Muslim population during the country's ongoing civil war, but there is no proof there was genocidal intent.

Some 5,600 African Union peacekeepers, deployed in December 2013, and an additional 2,000 French troops struggled to stem the violence in the impoverished landlocked country of 4.6 million people. The United Nations took over the AU mission in September.

Ban said that following violence in Bangui in October 2014, more troops had to be dedicated to securing the capital and critical infrastructure, while police had to be deployed to protect senior CAR officials.

"Doing so has, however, left fewer troops available to deploy outside Bangui, including in the northeast, which is an ex-Seleka stronghold," Ban wrote.

"It has also required committing the force reserve to tasks in Bangui, thereby limiting the ability of MINUSCA (the U.N. mission) to respond flexibly and rapidly to emerging crises throughout the country," he said.

Along with additional troops and police, Ban said another 20 corrections officers were needed to help reopen prisons outside of Bangui.

The mission was due to be at 90 percent of its full strength by April and, if authorized, the additional peacekeepers could be on the ground by July as the United Nations already had preliminary commitments for them, Ban said.

US/AFRICA :

CANADA/AFRICA :

AUSTRALIA/AFRICA :

EU/AFRICA :

**EU gives €3m to Southern Africa flood victims**

by: APA /date : February 5, 2015

The European Union (EU) has given € 3 million in humanitarian aid to assist people affected by floods in Malawi, Mozambique and Madagascar. According to a statement from the EU Commission on Thursday, the funding will help provide immediate life-saving assistance to the affected populations such as shelter, food, clean water, health care and household utensils.

"The current heavy rains in the region has caused floods that destroyed houses other infrastructure leaving thousands in need of shelter, food, health services among others," it said.

The statement added that the commission will support the most vulnerable people, those who have lost everything.

More than 1 million people have been affected, about 300,000 displaced and around 300 people killed by heavy rains and flooding throughout the region.

Hundreds of thousands of farmers have lost their crops and many families have been told to flee their homes due to high levels of water and landslides, it said.

It further said a crucial component of the EU aid will be to help those affected to recover their livelihoods and their sources of income as well as preventing outbreaks of diseases in the affected areas.

The funds will be disbursed to Non Governmental Organizations (NGO's), United Nations (UN) agencies and the Red Cross who are already on the ground implementing humanitarian aid projects in the affected areas, it said.

Malawi is the most affected country in the region with over 600,000 people affected and 200 killed by the floods due to heavy rains.

Signature : APA

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EN BREF, CE 06 Février 2015... AGNEWS/DAM, NY, 06/02/2015