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BURUNDI :

RWANDA :

RDC CONGO :

UGANDA :

Sudan says Uganda plans to deploy 16,000 soldiers on its borders

Friday 27 February 2015/sudantribune.com

February 26, 2015 (KHARTOUM) – The Sudanese official news agency (SUNA) quoted what it described as an “authorised source” as saying that 16,000 soldiers from the Ugandan People’s Defence Force (UPDF) will be deployed on the borders between Sudan and South Sudan.

The source blasted this step, saying it poses the risk of reigniting the war as in Sudan’s southern border.

South Sudan was aided by Ugandan troops in its war against the rebels led by former VP Riek Machar following the outbreak of civil war in December 2013.

Rebels allege that South Sudan pays Uganda \$900 million per year to cover its military costs.

Last January Juba's foreign minister Barnaba Benjamin assured that Ugandan troops will not be deployed in any border areas with Sudan.

The source told SUNA that UPDF deployment will be focused the Unity and Upper Nile states which are rich in oil adding that the target are areas where Machar's forces are present.

"This move by the state of Uganda is unacceptable because it poses a threat to the stability of Sudan .. this work could lead to a raging war in the southern borders of Sudan," the source said.

Sudan Tribune contacted a UPDF spokesperson who promised to return later with a comment.

Khartoum has recently declared that its relations with Kampala are in process of being normalised after years of exchanged accusations over harbouring rebels.

SOUTH AFRICA :

South Africa: Struggle Heroes Credited for SA, Russia Relationship
SAnews.gov.za (Tshwane)/26 February 2015

Pretoria - Arts and Culture Minister Nathi Mthethwa has credited struggle heroes Moses Kotane and JB Marks for laying a foundation for the relationship between Russia and South Africa.

"Russia supported our struggle unconditionally... these two leaders were laying a foundation for this relationship between Russia and South Africa," Minister Mthethwa said.

Speaking in Moscow during the memorial service of the struggle stalwarts, Minister Mthethwa said Marks and Kotane were the bones that bind South Africa and Russia.

A wreath laying ceremony was also held for the struggle heroes in Moscow on Thursday.

"It's no accident today that in this second phase of our transition which is the economic transformation phase... that Russia and South Africa are part of and parcel of BRICS because BRICS is there as counter measure politically and economically of what is happening in the world today," Minister Mthethwa said.

He was in Moscow to repatriate the mortal remains of Marks and Kotane who both died in exile while living in Russia in the 1970s.

"To the people of Russia and the Russian government, invoke what we said during our dark times, that Russian people you are loving people. Here we are far from home, we shall love you, we shall need you for the things you have done for us," Minister Mthethwa said.

He said Kotane and Marks represented and embodied the entire revolutionary movement.

"These two giants represent the spirit of struggle, the spirit of triumph of good over evil; they represent the foremost revolutionary movement in our country which led the liberation of our people in our country," he said.

President Jacob Zuma had tasked the Department of Arts and Culture to lead and coordinate the repatriation and reburial of Kotane and Marks.

The remains of the struggle heroes were expected to arrive back in the country on Sunday.

A special reception to welcome back the remains of the struggle stalwarts will be held at Waterkloof Air Force Base.

Kotane and Marks were both buried in Moscow in the Novodevichy cemetery.

I had a farm in Africa

Feb 27 2015/economist.com

South Africa takes a populist turn on land reform

CHURCHILLIAN is seldom an adjective used to describe Jacob Zuma, South Africa's president, whose ponderous parliamentary speeches are so irresistibly soporific to backbenchers that at least three were photographed snoozing through his recent state-of-the-nation address. But on the subject of land ownership a few days later he took a leaf out of the master orator's book. "The fate of too many", he said, "is in the hands of too few."

Mr Zuma's flagship policy in the face of a slowing economy and rising unemployment is to ban the foreign ownership of farmland. When first announced in parliament it drew loud applause, cheers and whistling from members of the ruling African National Congress (ANC).

It was a touch of populism, but it hit a raw nerve. Land reform remains a deeply emotive issue in South Africa. A cornerstone of colonial rule and subsequently of apartheid (as well as resentment against both), was a land act passed in 1913 that prevented black people from buying land outside native reserves that made up just 13% of the country. More than two decades after the end of apartheid, the country's white minority still owns most of the land.

Now the government proposes to prevent foreigners from buying farmland as well as to restrict the size and number of farms that citizens may own. Foreigners would still be allowed to take out long-term leases on farmland, but not buy more.

Restricting foreign ownership is not unusual: China, Argentina, Thailand and Canada's prairie provinces are among the many places that limit land ownership by aliens. Seeff, a South African real-estate firm, has argued that proposed restrictions are more about politics than righting historical wrongs. Just 3% of total property in the country is in the hands of non-natives, according to Lightstone Property, a South African analytics company.

More significant, however, is Mr Zuma's announcement that land holdings even by citizens would be restricted to 12,000 hectares, which the government crudely described as being approximately the size of two farms. If a person owns more than this, the government will have the right to buy the excess land for redistribution. Mr Zuma said that the process of establishing an "Office of the Valuer-General" is under way, for determining land valuations in forced sales. The government is

also considering a proposal that would allow it to compel farmers to hand over a 50% share in their farms to employees.

This sudden interest in land reform is because of the slow pace of change. Efforts to rectify land injustices through a “willing seller, willing buyer” system have been seen as largely ineffective. Only a small area of land has changed hands since the advent of democracy in 1994, and 90% of redistributed farms are not productive, by the government’s own account. More recently the ANC has been outflanked by an upstart populist party, the Economic Freedom Fighters, which declared it would expropriate all land without compensation for “equitable redistribution”.

Such proposals, whether by the government or opposition parties, inevitably unsettle South Africa’s commercial farmers, as well as foreign investors. Close to mind is the memory of Zimbabwe’s brutal land seizures of the early 2000s, which devastated its economy. The challenge for the ANC will be to effect real change without undermining its commercial farming sector, a significant export-earner and employer. Some farmers have already upped and left for African countries and beyond. Targeting foreign landowners will send a worrying message to investors at a time when the country can ill afford it.

TANZANIA :

Witch hunts increase in Tanzania as albino deaths jump

Tonny Onyulo, Special for USA TODAY/February 26, 2015

TABORA, Tanzania — Many women are living in fear in this rural part of northwestern Tanzania because they are increasingly being targeted by witch hunts — literally.

This East African country is grappling with an upswing in vigilante justice as villagers attack women they believe are witches responsible for the murders of albinos, whose white skin some believe possess magical powers.

Last month, some 200 angry villagers — mostly youths carrying axes, machetes and knives — grabbed Jane Faidha Bakari, 58, in Tabora, hacked her with sharp weapons and burned her alive while her helpless husband watched.

"They came around midnight banging on the door," said Moses Bakari, her husband. "They broke into the house and hacked my wife with machetes and knives. They burned the body of my wife and later set fire on my house. They claimed that my wife was practicing witchcraft and killing albinos."

The villagers believed the woman was using body parts from albinos — people born with the absence of pigment in their skin, eyes and hair — to practice witchcraft. Bakari fled with his three children and took refuge in a neighbor's house.

"I neither knew nor heard that my wife was practicing witchcraft," Bakari said. "I still don't believe that I lost my wife to such a painful death. I will only heal if justice is done, because she was innocent."

The murder of Bakari's wife isn't uncommon. Frightened neighbors-cum-vigilantes lynched, stoned or hacked more than 1,000 women to death last year, according to the Center for Advocacy in Rural Development, a Kenyan development group, and the Dar es Salaam-based Legal and Human Rights

Center. The groups estimate more than 3,000 suspected witches, usually late middle-age and older women, were killed in the past six years alone.

"The government has failed to apprehend witch doctors who kill our innocent people," said Wilson Asida, a Tabora resident. "They have killed many albinos to help them gain magical powers. We'll kill them ourselves to get justice."

Asida accused the government — which banned witchcraft in January — of relying too much on the courts to prove whether women were practicing witches. "They pretend as if they don't know witchcraft exists," he said.

Attacks against those with albinism also seem to be on the rise, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein said in a statement last week, citing at least three incidents in the past two months. The statement was in response to the "horrific murder and mutilation" of a 1-year-old baby with albinism earlier this month.

The agency worries the killings will only rise in the run-up to October's Tanzanian presidential elections as political campaigners seek the help of seers who use albino body parts to foretell the future.

In the past 15 years, at least 75 albinos have been killed in Tanzania, but prosecutors have convicted just 10 people in those murders, according to the U.N. Albino organs fetch hundreds of dollars in illegal trading. Around 33,000 people out of a population of about 50 million have albinism, according to the Tanzanian Albinism Society.

Older women are suffering from the backlash against witches as a result of the albino deaths, said Erick Wandera Omwami, chief executive of the Center for Advocacy in Rural Development, who is pushing the government to expand its education campaign against killing albinos to include admonitions against harming alleged witches.

"It's unlucky for older persons to live in this region, but we should know that every older person has a right to life like anyone else," he said. "We'll work together to help communities understand the rights of others and avoid retrogressive and barbaric actions on other human beings."

Tanzanian police admit witchcraft-related killings are common in the country's northwest but say catching the culprits is difficult. The lynchings tend to occur after someone dies unexpectedly in the community or when albinos go missing, said police spokesman Ignas Mtana.

Often, he said, sorcerers identify other witches as the perpetrators of the misfortunes. Because the same people who attack witches often consult with other enchanterers and potentially also deal in albino body parts, it's hard to get to the bottom of the cases, Mtana said.

"The family members will go to soothsayers to find out the cause of death and the responsible person," Mtana said. "The soothsayers will say the name of a witch as the cause of death."

Mtana said police intervene in lynchings they witness and arrest anyone attacking a suspected witch on sight, but forces are spread thin throughout the region, which includes the great plains of the Serengeti.

In the meantime, women are hiding out of fear of being attacked.

"Someone dropped leaflets bearing my name" on a list of suspected sorceresses, said Rosemary

Aziza, 76, who lives near Tabora. "I will hide until the things go back to normal."

Tanzania says third-quarter growth slows to 6.8%

février 27 2015/Reuters

DAR ES SALAAM — Tanzania's economy grew 6.8% in the third quarter of 2014 compared with 7.4% in the same period a year ago due to a slowdown in agriculture, construction and transport sectors, data showed on Thursday.

The government sees Tanzania's economy growing 7.4% this year from an estimated 7.2% in 2014 due to an expected improvement in its agriculture, construction and manufacturing sectors.

Growth in agriculture, the biggest contributor to the economy, slowed to 2.4% from 4.5% previously, said the state-run National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in a report. A fall in demand and weather-related setbacks affected output.

Tanzania produces maize, sorghum, millet, rice, wheat, pulses (mainly beans), cassava, potatoes, bananas and plantains. The bulk of the country's export crops are coffee, cotton, cashew nuts, tobacco, sisal, pyrethrum, tea, cloves, horticultural crops, oil seeds, spices and flowers. A fall in global commodity prices have also hurt. For example, the price of its arabica coffee fell \$4.22 per 50kg this week.

Tanzania has felt China's slowdown more than other African states. According to official data, by the end of 2013 Tanzania was China's largest trading partner on the continent. One estimate put the number of Chinese firms in the country at 500. Business with these companies has boosted economic growth — but China's economic growth slowed to 7.4% in 2014, its weakest annual expansion in 24 years.

In Tanzania construction expanded 15% in the third quarter of 2014 versus a 16.3% expansion previously, while transport also slowed to 13.9% from 19.3% previously. Manufacturing bucked the trend, expanding 10.8% in the third quarter of 2014 versus 10.4% previously.

Other sectors that improved include information and communication, which rose 11.9% compared with 7% previously, while the mining and quarrying sector rose 5.2% from 3.3% previously.

"Diamond production in the third quarter of 2014 rose to 66,508 carats from 27,828 carats produced during the same period in 2013," said NBS, pointing to the expansion in mining.

Tanzania is Africa's fourth-largest gold producer, and also produces diamond, tanzanite and other precious stones. Gold production fell to 10.137 tonnes in the third quarter of last year from 11.01 tonnes previously, the data showed.

Tanzania's gross domestic product expanded 32% in 2013 to 69.8-trillion Tanzanian shillings after the state rebased its calculation to incorporate new sectors in the economy, including big discoveries of natural gas.

Kikwete pledges to strengthen Tanzania-Zambia ties

February 27, 2015/STEVEN MVULA, Lusaka/daily-mail.co.zm

TANZANIAN President Jakaya Kikwete says he wants to maximise relations with Zambia for the

benefit of its peoples before he leaves office in October.

Dr Kikwete said relations between Zambia and his country are bright because there is a lot the two countries can benefit from each other.

Dr Kikwete said one would not differentiate between a Zambian and a Tanzanian because the two nationals are one people.

He said this on Wednesday night at a state banquet in his honour.

“We want to make TAZARA viable. We discussed many other areas of cordial relations,” Dr Kikwete said.

He said before TAZARA, the road between Tanzania and Zambia was “hell run”.

And President Lungu said he is satisfied with the constructive discussions he held with President Kikwete.

President Lungu said the acceptance of the invitation to visit Zambia in his early stages of his presidency is a clear manifestation of President Kikwete’s personal appreciation and commitment to the bilateral and fraternal ties between the two countries.

“We are extremely honoured to have you here with us as we together seek common solutions to the challenges affecting our countries,” President Lungu said.

He said Zambia and Tanzania have a shared culture and have similar political, economic and social aspirations.

“These strong bonds have always given impetus to our joint efforts in economic development and in the fight against poverty, disease, illiteracy, unemployment as well as other social vices,” President Lungu said.

President Lungu said joint projects like the TAZARA and TAZAMA are proof of the oneness that exists between the two countries.

“These joint projects not only continue to strengthen and deepen our relations, but they have also proven to be sources of mutual benefit to our countries in terms of trade and investment, job creation, poverty alleviation and economic growth,” he said.

President Lungu said Zambia remains fully committed to enhancing co-operation between the two countries, particularly regarding the future success of TAZARA.

“It is our conviction that the relations that exist between our two countries should grow from strength to strength,” he said.

And President Kikwete has described former President Kenneth Kaunda as an icon and hero to many African leaders, JIMMY CHIBUYE and MWAPE MWENYA report.

Dr Kikwete said before having a private breakfast meeting at Dr Kaunda’s State Lodge home yesterday that the former President inspired many African leaders during the struggle for liberation on the continent.

“We wish you a long, healthy, happy life. You are one of our icons on the African continent and you are always an inspiration. When we were growing up, we were seeing you as the hero and our mentor,” he said.

Dr Kikwete said Dr Kaunda inspired a lot of African leaders to play a part in the development of their nations and the continent at large.

“You gave us inspiration to play some part in the development of our nations and the African continent and thank God here we are but I am also happy to have this opportunity to visit Zambia and you,” he said.

Dr Kikwete was also happy that the Zambian government has built Dr Kaunda a house where he can spend his retirement.

He said Dr Kaunda deserves “such a beautiful house” because he contributed a lot to the development of Zambia.

Dr Kikwete also visited Mama Betty’s grave on which he laid wreaths. He was received by Dr Kaunda’s children, Kaweche and Cheswa.

And Dr Kaunda said he was humbled by Dr Kikwete’s visit.

Dr Kikwete, who was accompanied by his wife, Salma, and senior Tanzanian officials, left for his country yesterday after a two-day state visit. He was seen off by President Lungu and First Lady

Esther.

Other government officials who saw off Dr Kikwete were Minister of Home Affairs Harry Kalaba, Lusaka Province Minister Obvious Mwaliteta, Minister of Justice Ngosa Simbyakula and defence service chiefs.

Before his departure, Dr Kikwete was given a 21-gun salute by the Zambia Army.

He left in a chartered presidential plane at Kenneth Kaunda International Airport.

While in Zambia, Dr Kikwete held official bilateral talks at State House and laid wreaths at the late Presidents Michael Sata, Frederick Chiluba and Levy Mwanawasa's graves at Lusaka's Embassy Park.

KENYA :

Kenya's BAT says FY 2104 pretax profit up 11 pct

Feb 27/Reuters

NAIROBI, Feb 27 (Reuters) - British American Tobacco Kenya's full year 2014 pretax profit jumped 11 percent to 6.1 billion shillings (\$66.8 million), helped by increased export and domestic sales, the company said on Friday.

The firm, East Africa's biggest cigarette maker that is majority owned by British-based group British American Tobacco (LSE: BATS.L - news) Plc, said its total turnover rose to 34.12 billion shillings from 31.92 billion shillings.

Its earnings per share rose to 42.55 shillings from 37.24 shillings the previous year.

BAT shares closed down 0.23 percent on Thursday at 878.00 shillings. (\$1 = 91.3300 Kenyan shillings) (Editing by George Obulutsa; Editing by Sunil Nair)

ANGOLA :

AU/AFRICA :

UN/AFRICA :

US/AFRICA :

US ramping up trade with Africa

By Vicki Needham/thehill.com/02/26/15

U.S. trade officials inked an agreement on Thursday aimed at increasing trade and investment with five East African nations while boosting the economic relationship across the continent.

U.S. Trade Representative Michael Froman said the deal will ramp up the U.S. partnership with the East African Community (EAC), which includes Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda, while reaching deeper into Africa to improve trade.

"Today's agreement is an important milestone for deepening what has already proven itself to be a promising and impactful partnership," Froman said.

"This agreement will help us lift the burdens that trade barriers impose, unlocking opportunity on both our continents," he said.

Thursday's deal will help the African nations further streamline the customs process, meet global standards on food protections and reduce other technical barriers to trade.

It also establishes a new five-year, \$64 million trade and investment hub in East Africa focused on broadly increasing exports under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), while expanding and diversifying regional agricultural trade and food security.

During a summer 2013 trip to Africa, President Obama announced the Trade Africa initiative to promote U.S.-Africa trade and investment, with the starting point in East Africa.

With strides made there, the Obama administration wants to deepen that relationship by knocking down additional trade barriers in the region while expanding the U.S. reach to other African nations.

"We see this agreement and all our work with the EAC to date as an important steppingstone, not the final destination," Froman said.

Successes in the region, Froman said, include a significant reduction — to six days from 21 — in container transit times from Mombasa, the biggest port in the region, to Kigali, Rwanda.

That helped boost trade to \$4.7 billion in 2013 within the five-nation bloc, up from \$2.3 billion in 2005.

Trade of goods between the United States and the five countries totaled \$2.8 billion in 2014, the USTR said.

"Together, we can tackle more tasks, support more jobs, and unlock more opportunities for the American and African people alike," Froman said.

The new EAC strategy also started a new commercial dialogue to develop public-private initiatives further bolster trade.

"The global economy is evolving and the U.S.-Africa economic relationship must evolve, too," he said.

The move comes as the Obama administration and Congress are discussing a renewal and modernization of AGOA, which expires in September.

"Prompt renewal is critical because many businesses plan their orders six, even 12 months in advance, and waiting until the 11th hour to renew AGOA will result in jobs lost, factories closed, and investment deferred, all of which undermine our goal for a stronger U.S.-Africa economic relationship," Froman said.

U.S. Push for Abstinence in Africa Is Seen as Failure Against H.I.V.

By DONALD G. McNEIL Jr./nytimes.com/FEB. 26, 2015

SEATTLE — The \$1.3 billion that the United States government has spent since 2005 encouraging Africans to avoid AIDS by practicing abstinence and fidelity did not measurably change sexual behavior and was largely wasted, according to a study presented on the last day of an AIDS conference here.

The study, done by a second-year student at Stanford Medical School for a professor with an expertise in cost-benefit analyses, caused a major stir in the room where it was presented.

The researcher, Nathan Lo, analyzed records showing the age of people having sex for the first time, teenage pregnancy and number of sexual partners in international health surveys that have been paid for by the State Department since the 1970s.

His work was overseen by Dr. Eran Bendavid, an assistant professor of medicine at Stanford, who has done previous analyses of American global anti-AIDS programs for the Institute of Medicine, a branch of the National Academy of Sciences.

Global health specialists came to the microphone to congratulate Mr. Lo, who had received a Young Investigators' award from the International AIDS Society that paid his way to the conference. Advocates who had long opposed the American policy that sought to prevent AIDS by promoting abstinence and faithfulness applauded.

"That was fantastic," said Dr. Gilles van Cutsem, medical coordinator for Doctors Without Borders in South Africa.

Staff members from the government program that Mr. Lo had accused of wasting money — Pefar, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief — came up afterward to quietly congratulate him. When they realized a reporter was present, they nervously asked that they not be named.

President George W. Bush's global AIDS plan was enacted in 2003 and marshaled billions of dollars to treat Africans who had AIDS with lifesaving drugs. Conservative Republican leaders in the House of Representatives successfully included a provision that one-third of AIDS prevention money go to programs to encourage abstinence and fidelity. That campaign — known as ABC, for abstain, be faithful and use condoms — was part of the bargain made when Christian conservatives joined with liberals to pass the law.

After Mr. Lo gave his presentation, the moderator asked if anyone from Pefar in the room would respond. A woman identifying herself as a director of Pefar's efforts in an unidentified country said the program — which is led by Dr. Deborah Bix — had just cut the \$47 million it still spends on abstinence and fidelity to \$21 million. Beyond that, she said, she would have to wait until people at headquarters could read the study.

A spokeswoman for Dr. Bix declined to comment in an email.

Dr. Mark Dybul, who directed Pefar during most of the Bush administration and now runs the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, said by email that he did not wish to comment. He noted that previous studies by Dr. Bendavid had shown that Pefar prevented infections and saved lives.

Michael Gerson, now a columnist for The Washington Post who was a Pefar advocate and a close adviser to President Bush, also said he would have no comment on the study until the experts he trusted could read it.

Mr. Lo said he spent a year analyzing dozens of health surveys that the United States paid for in countries around the world.

Originally called the World Fertility Surveys, they were begun in the 1970s. They were later subsumed into the large Demographic and Health Surveys, now paid for by the United States Agency for International Development, that document health behaviors in dozens of countries. Spending on abstinence and fidelity peaked in 2005 and began to drop after the Obama administration took office in 2009.

Mr. Lo compared data from 1998 to the present in 22 African countries, 14 of which received Pefar money and eight that did not. He looked at answers to three questions that are part of the extensive questionnaire given to people interviewed: What was your age when you had sex for the first time? At what age did you have your first child? How many people have you had sex with in the last year?

When answers about age at loss of virginity did not appear to be truthful, he said, he used a conservative form of adjustment, calculating backward from the birth of the first child.

Although the numbers changed over time, the differences between the Pefar and non-Pefar countries did not change after 2005. That indicated “no detectable effect” from the expenditure, he said.

The differences were so small that, for example, men in the Pefar countries appeared to have 0.02 more sexual partners after the abstinence and fidelity funding began than they had before.

In the past, Dr. Bendavid said, he approached Pefar’s chief medical officer more than once suggesting that the Demographic and Health Surveys be used to analyze the effectiveness of the abstinence and fidelity efforts.

“He said it was outside their purview,” Dr. Bendavid said.

US jury convicts Saudi man Khalid al-Fawwaz over Africa embassy bombings

2015-02-27/Reuters

A Saudi man described by prosecutors as one of Osama bin Laden's most trusted lieutenants has been convicted in New York in connection with the 1998 bombings of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.

Khalid al-Fawwaz, 52, faces up to life in prison after a federal court jury convicted him on four conspiracy counts on their third day of deliberations.

US attorney Preet Bharara said the verdict marked the tenth conviction at trial or via a guilty plea of

a defendant tied to the bombings, which killed 224 people and injured more than 4,000.

"We hope this verdict gives some comfort to Al Qaeda's victims around the world," Mr Bharara said in a statement.

Al-Fawwaz was not charged with planning the attacks. Instead, prosecutors said he functioned as a key bin Laden associate while living in London, disseminating the Al Qaeda leader's declarations of war to the media and sending equipment to the group's members in Africa.

He was also accused of operating an Al Qaeda training camp in Afghanistan in the early 1990s and helped lead an Al Qaeda cell in Kenya's capital, Nairobi, that later conducted surveillance ahead of the embassy bombing there.

Defence attorney Bobbi Sternheim said al-Fawwaz would appeal.

"Trying a pre-9/11 case in a post-9/11 era within blocks of the World Trade Centre insured Mr al-Fawwaz would never receive a fair trial from an impartial jury," she said, referring to the September 11, 2001, attacks in downtown Manhattan.

Al-Fawwaz's attorneys painted their client as a peaceful dissident who shared with bin Laden a desire to effect reform in their native Saudi Arabia, but turned away from him when he began calling for violence against US civilians.

Prosecutors, however, said al-Fawwaz did whatever was asked of him to help advance Al Qaeda's mission.

The trial featured testimony from several victims of the bombings. A number of other victims watched some of the trial from the courtroom gallery.

Al-Fawwaz was arrested in London in 1998 and extradited to the US in 2012 following a lengthy legal battle.

He was originally set to be tried alongside two co-defendants, Abu Anas al-Liby of Libya and Egyptian Adel Abdul Bary.

Al-Liby, also known as Nazih al-Ragye, died in custody last month after longstanding health problems.

Bary pleaded guilty in September and was sentenced this month to 25 years in prison.

US targets Africa-based Hezbollah network

The Daily Star/Feb. 27, 2015

BEIRUT: The U.S. Treasury Department has imposed sanctions on an alleged Africa-based Hezbollah support network, the Wall Street Journal said.

It said the Treasury targeted Mustapha Fawaz, Fouzi Fawaz and Abdallah Tahini, all of whom are Lebanese-born men based in Africa, with sanctions designations.

The Treasury also placed sanctions on a holding company, a supermarket and an amusement park in Nigeria controlled by the Fawazes, who are brothers and business partners.

A statement published Thursday by Adam Szubin, acting undersecretary of Treasury for terrorism and financial intelligence, said the U.S. “will track Hezbollah’s illicit activities to all corners of the Earth.”

“Wherever this terrorist group may seek to raise funds, we will target and expose its activity,” added the statement.

The report quoted the Treasury as saying that Mustapha Fawaz has been “a significant donor” to Hezbollah, and that he had solicited donations in Abuja, Nigeria, helping transfer them to Hezbollah in Lebanon. Mustapha was detained in mid-May 2013 by Nigerian authorities, where he reportedly confessed the details of his activities and named other Nigeria-based members of Hezbollah’s Islamic Jihad Organization, Treasury said.

It said the Treasury also alleged that Mustapha’s brother Fouzi is a member of a Hezbollah terrorist cell in Nigeria. He was also an official with Hezbollah’s foreign relations department, the primary goal of which, according to Treasury, is to scout recruits and to support the group’s infrastructure for its operational units. In 2013, Nigerian authorities issued an arrest warrant for him, Treasury said.

Tahini was targeted with sanctions after being arrested in May 2013 for being a member of the Hezbollah terrorist cell in Nigeria, Treasury said. Mustapha Fawaz and Tahini were both released from custody in late-November 2013 after being cleared of terrorism charges. They both have denied allegations against them.

Separately, the report added, Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control lifted sanctions on Youssef Nada, and six companies formerly affiliated with him. Nada, who was placed under terrorism sanctions in November 2001, submitted a delisting petition to OFAC in July 2012, a Treasury spokeswoman said.

REFILE-U.S. military ends Ebola mission in Liberia

Thu Feb 26, 2015/By James Harding Giahvue/Reuters

Feb 26 (Reuters) - The United States military officially ended a mission to build treatment facilities to combat an Ebola outbreak in Liberia on Thursday, months earlier than expected, in the latest indication that a year-long epidemic in West Africa is waning.

Washington launched the mission five months ago and the force peaked at over 2,800 troops at a time when Liberia was at the epicentre of the worst Ebola epidemic on record.

Nearly 10,000 people have died in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea over the past year. More than 4,000 of those deaths were in Liberia, but the number of new cases has plummeted in recent months, leaving many treatment centres empty and the mission has already begun winding down.

"While our large scale military mission is ending...the fight to get to zero cases will continue and the (Joint Force Command) has ensured capabilities were brought that will be sustained in the future," said U.S. Army Major General Gary Volesky.

The troops were deployed to support the international Ebola response mission led by the U.S. Agency for International Development. The operation was initially expected to last between nine and 12 months, said Volesky, the mission's commander.

Speaking to lawmakers during a visit to Washington on Thursday, Liberia's President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf thanked the United States for its support during the crisis.

U.S. soldiers built treatment centres, set up mobile testing labs, and provided transportation and logistical support. Military medical teams trained around 1,500 local health workers.

"A lot of our health workers of this country died during the course of the Ebola crisis," Liberian nurse Juma Kollie told Reuters. "There was a need to have some attention giving to them. So the American government came in that direction."

The force will withdraw over the coming weeks but more than 100 soldiers would remain in the country for several months to monitor the disease.

"We are not turning our backs. We're transitioning to a civilian operation that is already supporting more than 10,000 civilians who are working in the region," U.S. Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Linda Thomas Greenfield said on Wednesday.

(Additional reporting by Emma Farge, Writing by Joe Bavier, Editing by Angus MacSwan)

CANADA/AFRICA :

AUSTRALIA/AFRICA :

CEO of Allan Gray Australia passes away

Author: Narayanan Somasundaram, Bloomberg/27 February 2015

Simon Marais spent 11 years with Allan Gray in South Africa.

Simon Marais, an activist investor and chief executive officer of fund manager Allan Gray Australia Pty, died Thursday. He was 50.

Marais died from cancer, William Gray, chairman of the Sydney-based firm said in an e-mailed statement. He named Simon Mawhinney, 39, a portfolio manager and director as Marais's replacement.

Marais gained attention in Australia's financial industry as an activist investor in 2011 when he disagreed with the board of Spotless Group Ltd. when it rejected a takeover offer. Last year he opposed ROC Oil Co.'s plans to combine with Horizon Oil Ltd. Fosun International Ltd, eventually bought ROC.

"The exceptionally positive, brave, caring and open manner in which Simon took on this disease is indicative of the incredible spirit of the man," Gray said. "There is a palpable sense of energy, drive and determination to ensure that Allan Gray Australia serves as an enduring testament to Simon."

Marais moved to Australia in 2004 from South Africa to set up the firm. He spent 11 years with

Allan Gray in South Africa, according to the firm's website. Prior to joining Allan Gray, Marais studied theoretical physics at Cambridge. He held a Master of Science, Doctor of Philosophy, and was a CFA Charterholder, according to Allan Gray's website.

Allan Gray's flagship Australian Equity Fund, which manages A\$846 million (\$660 million) has returned an annualized 15.6 percent in the three-years to Jan. 31, beating a 14 percent rise for the S&P/ASX300 Accumulation Index, against which it is benchmarked.

EU/AFRICA :

EU, African countries to convene on Ebola recovery

27 February 2015/en.apa.az

Baku-APA. The European Union (EU) has invited African countries for a high level conference in Brussels to review current efforts of fighting Ebola and place a plan to help Liberia and the other African countries to recover from the hit of the disease, APA reports quoting Xinhua.

An emailed EU statement reaching Xinhua on Thursday said the presidents and ministers of Guinea, Sierra Leone and Togo as well as representatives of the African Union Commission, the UN, the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) and the European Union will all be attending at the very highest level.

Liberia's President Ellen Johnson- Sirleaf will co-chair the conference on Ebola and she will be speaking as spokesperson for the Mano River Union (MRU).

During this High Level Conference, the 11th European Development Fund National Indicative Program for Liberia 2014-2020 will be signed between Liberia and the EU.

This is the most important support program of the EU to Liberia for the coming years, the statement said.

This Fund is allocating 326 million U.S. dollars to Liberia, which will be divided into the four areas including good governance, energy, education and agriculture.

The EU Ambassador to Liberia, Tiina Intelmann, said "For us it is crucial to assess the priorities and envisaged action presented by Liberia and to find a way that we can all work together, in the immediate and longer term, for recovery in Liberia and in West Africa."

CHINA/AFRICA :

INDIA/AFRICA :

BRAZIL/AFRICA :

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