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BURUNDI :

RWANDA :

DR Congo army launches new offensive against Rwandan rebels

Sunday, 08 March 2015/independent.co.ug

The Democratic Republic of Congo army has launched a fresh offensive against Rwandan Hutu rebels in the east of the country, an army officer participating in the operations has said. “We have been ordered to hunt down the FDLR (Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda) and we recovered some positions,” an army based in the eastern Virunga National Park told AFP. Several armed groups operate in this Congolese park which has been designated as a World Heritage Site.

The new offensive in the North Kivu province was launched on Feb.26, a council of ministers report published on Feb.27 said.

Military operations are on-going in the Rutshuru territory on the border of Rwanda and Uganda, North Kivu civil society groups said in a statement confirming the government report. The first army offensive against the FDLR took place on Feb.24 in the South Kivu province, also in the east.

Rwandan rebels have been active in North and South Kivu provinces since older members of the movement fled across the border in 1994.

The government says there have been “significant results” since the operation in the region. Seventy-five fighters have surrendered, 42 of whom have been handed over to Monusco, the UN mission in DR Congo, a government source said. Another 32 might be repatriated to Rwanda, he added.

Older members of the FDLR are held responsible for taking part in the 1994 genocide in neighbouring Rwanda, when at least 800,000 people, mainly from the Tutsi minority, were massacred.

The killers fled across the border when a mainly Tutsi rebel front led by Paul Kagame, the current president of Rwanda, seized power after three months and ended the genocide. The DRC government of President Joseph Kabila has been under international pressure to tackle the FDLR, which is among the most intractable of many armed groups operating in the North and South Kivu provinces, displacing scores of thousands of villagers.

The Rwandan rebels, numbering between 1,500 and 2,000, are blamed for killings, rapes, lootings and the forced enlistment of children in the resource-rich Kivus, where they also traffic in timber and gold.

RDC CONGO :

UGANDA :

SOUTH AFRICA :

South Africa: Pilot Dies in W Cape Helicopter Crash

South African Press Association/9 March 2015

A pilot died in a helicopter crash while fighting fire in Cape Point on Sunday, Cape Town mayor Patrica de Lille said.

"I am deeply saddened by the tragic loss of the legendary pilot, Willem "Bees" Marais who died in a helicopter crash whilst providing aerial combatting against the fire at Olifantsbos in the Cape Point Nature Reserve this afternoon," De Lille said in a statement.

At least 500 people had been evacuated since the fire began in Muizenberg.

The fire started last Sunday and was contained, but flared up again just after on Monday in Muizenberg above Boyes Drive. It was fanned by strong winds.

It spread to Ou Kaapse Weg, Chapman's Peak, Hout Bay, and Tokai.

One city fire-fighter sustained burn wounds and 52 frail-care residents from a Noordhoek retirement village were treated for smoke inhalation.

More than 2000 people were helping to quell the fire during the week, the environmental affairs department said at the time.

De Lille said counselling was being provided to Marais' colleagues following the crash.

She extended condolences to Marais's family, friends and colleagues.

"The public safety and aviation fraternity has lost a great pilot."

"We salute him and pay tribute to him for the contribution that he made in saving lives and protecting property."

De Lille said Marais was a skilled pilot who also worked at the South African Air Force, South African Police Services and the South African Red Cross Air Mercy Service.

The South African Civil Aviation Authority would investigate the crash, she said.

South African teen Zephany Nurse found 17 years after she was stolen as infant
ROBYN DIXON/stuff.co.nz/March 9 2015

Every year, on Zephany Nurse's birthday, her parents got a cake to honour their first daughter, who was stolen from her mother in a maternity unit in Cape Town, South Africa, as a newborn.

Gathered around the cake each April 28, Zephany's younger brothers and sisters - Cassidy, Joshua and Micah - heard about the sister they had never met.

Last month, 17 years after Zephany's disappearance, Cassidy enrolled in Zwaanswyk High School in Cape Town. There was an older student who looked so similar to her that it drew comments from the other children. Cassidy told her parents, who had never given up hope of finding Zephany.

The extraordinary coincidence led Celeste and Morne Nurse back to their long-lost daughter.

On Friday, a 50-year-old woman appeared in Cape Town Magistrates Court, charged with kidnapping Zephany, fraud and breaches of the nation's Child Care Act.

The woman and her husband have no other children. The husband loved the child and believed she was his daughter, South African news reports said, citing police.

Now neither family has Zephany. She has been taken into state protective care and met her biological family for the first time last month.

Celeste Nurse, the grieving mother who never stopped hoping, told a newspaper in 2011 that she still felt a connection with her lost child. "There was a smell on her when she was born. I smelled it the other day. I still feel our connection," she said.

In a 2010 interview marking Zephany's 13th birthday, her biological father, Morne, said he felt sure in his heart that she was living somewhere safe.

The alleged kidnapper covers her face during a court appearance

"I'll never, ever give up hope," he said. "I can feel it in my gut. My daughter is out there and she is going to come home."

When Cassidy started at her new school, she and her biological sister clicked and grew close without knowing they were related, according to news reports. As Morne Nurse chatted with Cassidy's new friend about her life and family, she mentioned her birthday: April 28.

He went to the police.

An investigation revealed that the girl's birth hadn't been registered until six years later, and that the hospital where she was registered had no record of it. DNA tests confirmed that Zephany is the Nurses' child.

The aftermath of the discovery pits two families against each other: the Nurses, overjoyed by the hope of getting Zephany back, and the relatives and supporters of the desperate woman accused of stealing someone else's baby after suffering several miscarriages.

"We are very heartbroken. We loved each other. She is our child," the accused woman's sister told journalists last week. The family said they were worried that Zephany would be wrenched away during her final year of school from the woman she knew as her mum.

Police told reporters Friday that they were trying to negotiate a plea bargain that would involve the woman serving prison time but would avert a trial that might further traumatise the two families and Zephany.

Among the state witnesses whom the prosecution would call in a trial are the woman's husband and other family members. They cannot be identified, to avoid identifying Zephany by what has been her last name.

On Friday, Magistrate Mark Engel granted bail to the woman, who is on medication after a heart attack last year. But he warned her not to try to contact Zephany, either in person, by phone, on Facebook or through any other means.

Celeste Nurse gave birth in the Groote Schuur hospital by Caesarean section on April 28, 1997. In photographs taken just after the baby was born, she cuddles the infant, looking ecstatic and proud.

On April 30, Nurse dozed groggily in the hospital ward, her baby beside her. At one point, she woke up to see a woman dressed as a nurse beside her bed holding the baby, then she dozed off again. Later, she was awakened by a nurse asking where her baby was.

South Africa has had scattered cases of abductions from maternity wards. A woman who took a boy in 2009 was sentenced to 10 years. On January 2, a baby was stolen from the same hospital Zephany was taken from.

A heartbreaking story in Cape Town's Cape Argus newspaper in 2011 marked Zephany's 14th birthday, with pictures of the fluffy-haired baby and of the family with their lost child's birthday cake. "We do this every year to show that we haven't forgotten about her," Morne Nurse said.

Cassidy told the Cape Argus at the time she never let her other children out of her sight, even to ride their bikes in their secure gated residential complex.

She pleaded with the kidnapper: "Bring her back home. It's been long enough."

A lawyer who is acting as spokeswoman for the Nurse family, Heidi van der Meulen, said this week that Zephany had had limited interaction with her biological family since her identity was discovered. She said the family was worried about the effect of the situation on all four children.

Zephany released a brief statement, thanking South Africans for their concern and saying she was "doing well under the circumstances."

The state Minister for Social Development, Albert Fritz, told South African television that Zephany was confused, disappointed and anxious and had asked to remain in state care. Department social workers were supervising short visits with her biological family to begin the process of bonding.

Social worker Leana Goosen told reporters that the teen just wanted to go back to school and a normal life, without having to choose between two families.

TANZANIA :

'Jihadi John' deported from Tanzania for being drunk

USA Today/March 8, 2015

LONDON (USA TODAY) — Islamic State executioner Mohammed Emwazi, identified as the militant known as "Jihadi John," was deported from Tanzania in 2009 for being drunk and abusive, the BBC reports.

Tanzanian authorities deny Emwazi's claim that they were informed by British security officials, or any other country, that he planned to travel there, according to the broadcaster.

After graduating from the University of Westminster in London in 2009, Emwazi, 26, traveled to Tanzania for a safari with friends, but he was detained by authorities and taken to a police station, stripped to his underwear and held in a cell for 24 hours, according to a case file released by CAGE, a British-based group that assists people who claim they are targeted by security officials.

Emwazi was put on a flight to Amsterdam, where he is reported to have said that security officials interrogated him about suspicions he was trying to join al-Shabab militants in Somalia, before returning to the United Kingdom.

Tanzania's Immigration commissioner Abdullah Khamis Abdullah told the BBC that Emwazi was drunk on the flight to the country and that other passengers had complained about his behavior.

He said after arriving at the airport Emwazi "tried to force his way in" and added: "He said, 'Give me the permit to the country ... you are nothing here, you're just rubbish.'"

"We didn't get any order or whatever from any country or any organization to stop Emwazi," Abdullah said.

One of the police officers who arrested Emwazi, whom the BBC did not name because he wanted his identity protected, told the broadcaster that Emwazi was taken to cells at the airport and left to sober up. He said Emwazi was not touched, harmed or tortured.

A custody record written in Kiswahili and dated May 23, 2009, asks that Emwazi and two friends "be detained after they refused to return back to Amsterdam using KLM 569 after being refused entry to the country," the BBC reported.

On Sunday, a leaked draft of a strategy document from Britain's Home Office said that radical Islamists could be banned from working with children unsupervised, the Sunday Times reported.

The draft document, which includes proposals including a review of Sharia courts, ensuring applicants for citizenship embrace "British values," and penalties to make people on welfare learn English, warns that the government needs to be "more assertive" in challenging extremism, according to the paper.

Tanzania albino boy loses hand in latest attack

Date: Mar 09, 2015/newvision

A six-year-old albino boy has had his right hand hacked off in the latest of a string of attacks in Tanzania against the minority, police said Sunday.

The boy, Baraka Cosmas, was sleeping at home with his mother in the village of Kipenda, in Tanzania's south-western Rukwa region, when a gang of assailants stormed in late Saturday, regional police commander Jacob Mruanda said.

"The gangsters got hold of the victim's mother, Prisca Shaaban, and beat her severely after she refused to hand over the boy," Mruanda said.

"The assailants later used machetes to cut off the boy's right palm and walked out," he added, saying the boy and his mother were being treated in hospital.

The latest assault comes days after Tanzania's President Jakaya Kikwete blasted the wave of killings and attacks against albinos, whose body parts are used for witchcraft, as a "disgusting and big embarrassment for the nation".

During the week a court in the northwest of the country also sentenced four people to death for the murder of an albino woman.

According to a UN expert, attacks on people with albinism have claimed the lives of at least 75 since 2000, and that albino body parts sell for around \$600, with an entire corpse fetching \$75,000.

Albinism is a hereditary genetic condition which causes a total absence of pigmentation in the skin, hair and eyes. It affects one Tanzanian in 1,400, often as a result of inbreeding, experts say.

KENYA :

ANGOLA :

AU/AFRICA :

Boko Haram purportedly pledges allegiance to ISIS

By Nima Elbagir, Paul Cruickshank and Mohammed Tawfeeq, CNN/March 8, 2015

(CNN)Boko Haram, the Nigeria-based Islamist terror group, has pledged allegiance to ISIS, according to an audio message purported to be from Boko Haram's leader, Abubakar Shekau.

In the audio, which was posted online Saturday, the speaker says Boko Haram is announcing its "allegiance to the Caliph of the Muslims, Ibrahim ibn Awad ibn Ibrahim al-Husseini al-Qurashi," which is another name for ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

CNN has not been able to independently authenticate the message.

Expert: Coupling makes sense

But Jacob Zenn, an expert on the terror group and is with the Jamestown Foundation, said the recording appeared to be authentic. He said that while other messages have been faked, the speaker in this one is Shekau.

"Boko Haram joining the ISIS fold makes sense to both groups," he said from Abuja, Nigeria. "Boko Haram will get legitimacy, which will help its recruiting, funding and logistics as it expands into (French-speaking) West Africa. It will also get guidance from ISIS in media warfare and propaganda. Previously Boko Haram was a sort of outcast in the global Jihadi community. Now it is perhaps ISIS's biggest affiliate.

"ISIS gets more international legitimacy as a global caliphate."

Zenn said the allegiance will be official when an ISIS leader such as spokesman Abu Mohammed al Adnani issues a statement.

Boko Haram has had two main factions -- one led by Shekau and the other comprising former members of Ansaru, a Boko Haram offshoot. Ansaru had been operating from around 2012 as the Nigerian wing of AQIM (al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb). After the French-led intervention in Mali in 2013, a significant number of Ansaru members re-integrated with Shekau, Zenn told CNN.

The prerequisite for Boko Haram joining ISIS coalition was a coming together of two factions.

ISIS connected with former Ansaru fighters within Boko Haram and pressed them to further unify the group's ranks. The result was the formation of a unity general command between the two factions.

That involved bridging of some ideological differences between the al Qaeda-like Ansaru and the ultra extreme "takfiri"-like Shekau.

The pledge follows a period during which Shekau's faction had been mimicking ISIS, including praising al-Baghdadi and featuring his image in their videos and photos. Zenn said that until recently there had been little feedback from ISIS, apart from a few references to Nigerian jihadis in recent issues of the English-language Dabiq magazine.

It appears that a month ago ISIS set up a Twitter account on which Saturday's message was linked, Zenn said. The Twitter handle was mutually promoted by Boko Haram and ISIS.

U.S. doubts about if partnership will be effective

In July, Shekau voiced support for ISIS, and declared an overtaken town in northeast Nigeria to be part of an Islamic caliphate. But he also said he was praying for al Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri and Taliban leader Mullah Omar.

U.S. intelligence officials have some doubts the two groups would get along.

The CIA's analysis has been that Boko Haram is very African and rooted in that region's Islamic practices, even if they have similar fundamentalist interpretations of Islam. And ISIS's Arab leadership and membership tends to have racist attitudes toward blacks, not unlike the society they come from.

ISIS leaders view Shekau as inferior, partly for racist reasons, the CIA indicated at a briefing for reporters.

Increasing violence

Boko Haram, whose name translates as "Western education is sin," has been waging a yearslong campaign of terror aimed at instituting its extreme version of Sharia law.

Boko Haram's tactics have intensified in recent years, from battling Nigerian government soldiers to acts disproportionately affecting civilians -- such as raids on villages, mass kidnappings, assassinations, market bombings and attacks on churches and unaffiliated mosques.

Much of this violence has taken place in Nigeria. But neighboring countries, such as Cameroon and Chad, have also been hit increasingly hard.

CNN's Steve Almsy and Evan Perez contributed to this story.

Deux enfants et un Casque bleu tchadien tués à Kidal

9/03/15/Source: AFP

Deux enfants et un Casque bleu tchadien ont été tués dimanche par des tirs de roquettes à Kidal, dans le nord-est du Mali, au lendemain d'un attentat meurtrier à Bamako, le premier à frapper des Occidentaux dans la capitale. Le corps de l'un des cinq tués de l'attentat, un Français de 30 ans, Fabien Guyomard, devait être rapatrié lundi soir. Un Belge, le lieutenant-colonel Ronny Piens, 44 ans, responsable de la sécurité pour la délégation de l'Union européenne (UE) fait partie des morts, ainsi que trois Maliens.

L'attentat a également fait huit blessés, dont deux militaires suisses, qui ont été rapatriés dimanche après avoir été évacués au Sénégal et se trouvaient hors de danger, a annoncé l'armée suisse. Contrairement à l'attaque de Bamako, revendiquée par Al-Mourabitoune, le groupe jihadiste de

l'Algérien Mokhtar Belmokhtar, les auteurs des tirs de roquettes contre un camp de l'ONU à Kidal, fréquents dans ce bastion de la rébellion, ne se sont pas fait connaître dans l'immédiat.

La Mission de l'ONU au Mali (Minusma) a déploré un soldat mort et huit blessés dans ses rangs, ainsi que deux enfants tués et trois adultes blessés parmi la population civile à l'extérieur du camp. Une source au sein de la Minusma a indiqué que le soldat tué était tchadien. Selon une source sécuritaire de la Minusma, les civils touchés, appartenant à la tribu arabe des Kountas, se trouvaient dans un campement situé à environ trois kilomètres de la base de l'ONU.

"Vers 05H40 (locale et GMT) le camp de la Minusma à Kidal a essuyé plus d'une trentaine de tirs de roquettes et d'obus", et les Casques bleus ont répliqué peu après à deux kilomètres du camp, "une fois la provenance des tirs établie", selon un communiqué. "Cette attaque intervient alors que des progrès ont été enregistrés à Alger lors des pourparlers de paix", ajoute la force de l'ONU, en référence à l'accord paraphé le 1er mars par le gouvernement, mais pas encore par la rébellion à dominante touareg du Nord. Le Conseil de sécurité a condamné une attaque "odieuse", assurant que leurs auteurs devraient "rendre des comptes".

Le secrétaire général de l'ONU Ban Ki-moon a également fermement condamné l'attaque. "Le meurtre de membres des forces de maintien de la paix et de civils maliens est intolérable et constitue une violation du droit humanitaire international", a déclaré M. Ban dans un communiqué. "Cette tentative flagrante d'entraver les progrès réalisés dans un moment crucial du processus de paix au Mali est répréhensible", a ajouté le secrétaire général.

Sécurité insuffisante avant l'attentat

Forte de quelque 10.000 militaires et policiers, la Minusma a mis à la disposition du Mali des enquêteurs et experts en scènes de crime pour retrouver les auteurs de l'attentat de Bamako. Une source policière a fait état d'"indices sur le véhicule qui a servi à transporter le commando auteur des crimes commis à Bamako", sans autre précision. La sécurité était renforcée dans la capitale, où les contrôles étaient stricts sur les trois ponts enjambant le fleuve Niger, et la police anticriminelle était déployée en force, équipée de gilets pare-balles.

Un ami malien du Français tué, rescapé de l'attentat, Zakaria Maïga, s'est dit "surpris" de la facilité avec laquelle les assaillants ont pu "avec des grenades - ils étaient bien équipés - venir au centre ville, là où il y a la police malienne, l'armée malienne et la Minusma". Signe de la tension, notamment au sein de la communauté expatriée, le lycée français de Bamako a annoncé que la rentrée scolaire d'après les vacances, prévue lundi, était reportée de deux jours. Dans sa revendication, le groupe Al-Mourabitoune a dit vouloir venger non seulement un de ses chefs, Ahmed el-Tilemsi, tué par l'armée française en décembre, mais surtout son prophète, "de l'Occident mécréant qui l'a insulté et moqué".

Il faisait allusion aux caricatures du prophète Mohammad publiées par l'hebdomadaire satirique français Charlie Hebdo, dont une partie de la rédaction avait été massacrée deux mois auparavant, jour pour jour, par deux jihadistes à Paris. Bamako vit sous la menace jihadiste depuis que le nord du Mali est tombé au printemps 2012 sous la coupe de groupes jihadistes liés à Al-Qaïda. Ces groupes ont été partiellement chassés par l'opération militaire "Serval", lancée à l'initiative de la France en janvier 2013, à laquelle a succédé en août 2014 l'opération "Barkhane", dont le rayon d'action s'étend à l'ensemble de la zone sahélo-saharienne. Des zones entières échappent néanmoins toujours au pouvoir central, mais les attaques jihadistes, qui s'étaient multipliées depuis l'été, surtout contre la Minusma, ont récemment diminué d'intensité.

Égypte: un écolier battu à mort par un enseignant

lesoir.be/ 09/03/2015

Un écolier âgé de 12 ans est décédé dimanche en Égypte après avoir été battu par un enseignant, à l'heure où la maltraitance des enfants prend des proportions inquiétantes dans le pays. L'instituteur a été suspendu, selon le ministère de l'Éducation, qui a annoncé l'ouverture d'une enquête.

L'écolier, en classe dans un établissement du Caire, est mort dimanche, « après avoir été battu la veille », a annoncé le ministère de l'Éducation nationale dans un communiqué. Le ministère n'évoque pas les motifs de l'instituteur.

Le corps de l'écolier porte les marques d'une blessure au crâne, a indiqué le directeur du département médico-légal Hicham Abdel Hamid, précisant que l'enfant a souffert d'une hémorragie cérébrale.

UN/AFRICA :

US/AFRICA :

CANADA/AFRICA :

AUSTRALIA/AFRICA :

EU/AFRICA :

CHINA/AFRICA :

Spotlight: Foreign expert lauds China's human rights philosophy, participation in aiding African nations

English.news.cn /Xinhua/ 2015-03-09

BEIJING, March 9 (Xinhua) -- A foreign human rights expert has lauded China's human rights philosophy and participation in aiding African nations and urged China to share its Chinese dream and wisdom with the international community.

Tom Zwart, a human rights professor with Utrecht University in the Netherlands, has recently expounded in an article on China's human rights philosophy that guides its assistance to African nations, noting that only approaches anchored by deeply rooted values and social institutions are applicable and effective in local human rights protection.

EQUALITY BASED COOPERATION WITH NO POLITICAL STRINGS ATTACHED

Almost two years ago, Chinese President Xi Jinping paid a visit to the African continent as part of his maiden foreign tour as China's head of state.

During his visit to Tanzania, Xi urged all countries to respect Africa's dignity and independence in developing relations with the "continent of hope and promise."

Noting that unlike the Sino-Africa relations that aims at "fairness and extending justice," Zwart said, Western aid to Africa comes in some ways tied with strict conditions as Western nations have been trying to push their world view that is "so alien to Africans."

"There are no such political strings attached to Chinese assistance," the professor said. "Because the Sino-African cooperation is based on equality."

SHARED HUMAN RIGHTS PHILOSOPHY

"China and Africa perceive their cooperation in their own common philosophical terms," and therefore "do not necessarily resort to the Western vocabulary of human rights," said Zwart.

Different from the Western perception of human rights through the lenses of legalism and liberalism, Zwart said, the "values and social institutions that have emerged over centuries and sometimes millennia" in China and Africa are justifiable to be described as human rights.

Those principles like "friendship, virtue, reciprocity, harmony, benevolence and loyalty," which "characterize Sino-African relations and serve as very important building blocks for human rights protection," meet the requirements of human rights treaties under the core assumption of the so-called receptor approach.

The concept that has been developed by a group of top Chinese scholars assumes that the "state's duty to implement a particular human rights obligation can be matched by values and social institutions other than law," Zwart explained.

It also allows complementarity between international obligations and local cultural, social and political context when it comes to human right issues, he added, basing on that "human rights will only be effective if they spring from local values."

CHINESE DREAM DESERVES TO BE SHARED OUTSIDE CHINA

Mentioning that Sino-Africa cooperation dates back to the 1950s, Zwart praised China's long-term support for "African countries to solve their own problems using their own home-grown remedies, while respecting their autonomy and their dignity," thus allowing "Africa to remain in charge of its own fate."

Decades ago, China assisted Africa in liberation movements to fight colonialism and to implement the right to self-determination. Nowadays, China has helped improve its educational environment and sanitary conditions and boost its economy and infrastructure, the professor said.

"China's more active engagement in the human rights discourse, by showcasing its human rights philosophy as well as its record, needs to be welcomed," he added.

"Therefore, China should not keep its ideas and concepts to itself, but make them known to others by bringing them to the international marketplaces of ideas," Zwart continued. "The China Dream deserves to be shared with people outside China as well.

Editor: An

INDIA/AFRICA :

BRAZIL/AFRICA :

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