



(Independent South African political analyst Harald Pakerndorf said he hopes Mmusi Maimane, the first black leader of South Africa's mostly-white main opposition Democratic Alliance (DA) party, was selected for his leadership qualities, not skin color.)

BURUNDI :

Burundi: manifestation de femmes dans le centre-ville de Bujumbura

Par RFI /11-05-2015

Au Burundi, après l'injonction samedi du pouvoir burundais d'arrêter immédiatement ce qu'il appelle « l'insurrection » contre la candidature du président Pierre Nkurunziza à un troisième mandat, quelque 200 femmes, bravant l'interdit, sont descendues dans la rue ce dimanche 10 mai, le matin, dans le centre de Bujumbura. Depuis le début de la contestation, c'est la première manifestation dans le centre-ville de la capitale.

Les femmes, ce matin, sont fières. Nous avons interrogé une femme qui se prenait dans les bras avec une autre : « Nous sommes les premières à être arrivées en centre-ville. La police n'a pas osé intervenir, c'est la preuve que même les fous respectent les femmes », nous disait-elle, ce matin.

Elles ont défilé d'abord sur la place de l'Indépendance. Là, elles ont été stoppées par la police et ont été cantonnées devant le ministère de l'Intérieur pendant à peu près trente minutes. Puis, elles ont décidé de marcher, bravant les cordons policiers.

Nous avons vu des policiers sortir des grenades de gaz lacrymogène et ne pas oser les lancer sur ces femmes qui chantaient pour la paix.

« Nous sommes là contre le 3e mandat »

« Nous sommes les mères. Ce sont nos enfants qui sont tués. Ce sont nos enfants qui sont en prison. Nous sommes là pour le respect des droits humains. Nous sommes là contre le troisième mandat », scandaient-elles

Toutes ces femmes ont ensuite rejoint d'autres groupes qui arrivaient d'une autre direction. A Bujumbura, nous avons ainsi assisté à des situations incroyables où il y avait des cordons de police qui bloquaient ces femmes et qui les empêchaient de se rejoindre. Puis, elles se mettaient à courir pour se rejoindre sans que la police n'ose intervenir.

Lorsque les policiers essayaient de les bloquer, à chaque fois, elles s'assayaient par terre, mains en l'air, et toujours en chantant. Puis, elles se remettaient en route au grand dam des forces de sécurité.

A plusieurs reprises, des policiers énervés les ont menacées avec des grenades de gaz lacrymogène mais d'autres les ont découragés. Il fallait voir ces femmes se mettre à courir entre les policiers qui étaient sans cesse en train de reculer pour reformer les barrages. Finalement elles se sont retrouvées à plus de 200.

Prières, hymne national, chants pour la paix, elles ont fait ce que les hommes n'ont jamais réussi à faire, c'est-à-dire défiler dans le centre ville. Les hommes, des jeunes des quartiers populaires ou des étudiants pour l'essentiel, ont pourtant essayé, ces deux dernières semaines, mais ils ont toujours été bloqués dans les quartiers périphériques par les forces de sécurité, la police et surtout avec des gaz lacrymogènes, camions anti-émeutes et tirs à balles réelles.

« Si ça avait été des hommes, ça fait longtemps qu'on les aurait dégagés », a expliqué, à RFI, un policier.

« Ils savent que tirer sur nous, ça donnerait une image encore plus désastreuse à la police burundaise », a confirmé l'une des manifestantes.

De 10h00 à midi, ce dimanche, elles se sont dispersées petit à petit - quand elles l'ont décidé - se prenant dans les bras, pleurant aussi pour certaines, pour « rejoindre les hommes restés à la maison », disaient-elles amusées. Elles sont heureuses aujourd'hui d'avoir réussi là où les hommes ont échoué.

La Belgique suspend l'aide au processus électoral au Burundi

internet@lesoir.be (Avec les rédactions du Soir en ligne, du Soir, d'AFP, d'AP et de Belga)/Lundi 11 Mai 2015

Le ministre en charge de la Coopération au développement Alexander De Croo a décidé de suspendre provisoirement l'appui au processus électoral burundais. La coopération policière est également suspendue, précise le cabinet du ministre, lundi dans un communiqué. « La coopération belge au développement avait prévu un budget de 4 millions d'euros pour soutenir les élections au Burundi. Une première tranche de 2 millions a déjà été versée. Le vice-Premier ministre De Croo estime que dans les circonstances actuelles, le versement de la tranche restante de 2 millions doit être suspendu. La mission d'observation électorale de l'Union européenne au Burundi (MOE UE) a indiqué la semaine dernière que les conditions pour des élections libres n'étaient pas réunies pour l'instant », explique le cabinet De Croo.

L'UA envoie une délégation de haut rang au Burundi

(Source: Xinhua)/11.05.2015

L'Union africaine (UA) a envoyé une délégation de haut rang au Burundi secoué par une crise politique depuis l'annonce de la candidature du président Pierre Nkurunziza à la prochaine élection présidentielle, prévue le 26 juin.

Selon une déclaration publiée dimanche, l'UA a de nouveau préconisé le dialogue et la retenue pour mettre fin à la crise au Burundi.

La délégation a été envoyée dans le cadre des efforts visant à résoudre pacifiquement la crise actuelle du Burundi, dit la délégation.

Conduite par Edem Kodjio, ancien secrétaire général de l'Organisation de l'unité africaine (OUA), ancien Premier ministre togolais et membre du Panel des sages, la délégation aura des entretiens avec les autorités burundaises, les partis politiques, les organisations de la société civile ainsi que les leaders religieux.

La décision du président Nkurunziza de briguer un troisième mandat a provoqué une vague de manifestations depuis le 26 avril, qui ont été émaillées de violences et ont causé plus d'une quinzaine de morts.

Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, présidente de la Commission de l'UA, a appelé à rejeter toutes les formes de violences et à respect des droits de l'homme et des libertés fondamentales, indique la déclaration.

RWANDA :

RDC CONGO :

UGANDA :

Uganda's 'oil rush' town stuck in the slow lane

May 11, 2015/REUTERS

HOIMA, Uganda - Before the discovery of large amounts of oil in Lake Albert, Hoima was a forlorn and remote town in Western Uganda, whose main sources of income were farming and the trickle of tourists heading to nearby national parks.

A decade later, an oil-fuelled boom is transforming the town nearest the lake, with smart new office blocks and hotels drawing scores of new businesses and people from engineers to prostitutes to bankers.

But with the east African nation yet to pump a single drop of oil, this rapid development may be premature. Oil executives say production will start in 2018 at the earliest.

"Everybody in the country and the region is looking at Hoima," said Betty Tibesigwa, manager of Rosaline Suites, a new hotel and office complex that is home to Chinese oil company CNOOC's operations in Uganda.

"People from all over the world will be visiting Hoima," she told Reuters enthusiastically. "We're coming in to offer services at the standard one would expect of a town with such promising and booming business."

CNOOC, Britain's Tullow Oil and France's Total are among companies exploring for oil beneath Lake Albert, a pristine body of water in the heart of the Rift Valley estimated to contain crude reserves of 6.5 billion barrels.

The discovery of oil there about 10 years ago unleashed dreams of an economic windfall that would lift Uganda's 38 million people out of poverty but development has proceeded at a snail's pace, stymied by spats over planning and taxes.

CRUDE DREAMS

"Oil comes with its own hype. This investment seems to be way ahead of its time," says Stephen Kaboyo, managing director at Alpha Capital Partners, a leading Ugandan fund manager. "These investors won't find enough business activity to support them right away. We'll have idle capacity." Officials are now eyeing 2018 as the start of production, but Kaboyo believes this is still too optimistic, pointing to infrastructure delays such as a \$4.5 billion, 1,300 km export pipeline to the Kenyan coast that has not yet been started.

The tender to build a \$2.5 billion domestic refinery was awarded only early this year, to Russia's RT-Global Resources, and construction is not expected to start before 2016. Government economists estimate that developing the oil fields will cost \$15-22 billion, against \$50 billion that Tullow says the country could earn from crude sales during the lifetime of the Lake Albert fields.

Such sums are exciting investors around Hoima, where a new tarmac highway shimmers westwards through marshes and forests before plunging over an escarpment to the Albertine basin and the border with Democratic Republic of Congo. Alongside the road, warehouses are springing up in lush green fields, next to banks, motor showrooms, office blocks and shopping malls.

Estate agents estimate land prices have gone up 50 percent in the last four years as speculators have snapped up plots. They anticipate huge demand from a population that has quadrupled since 2002 to 100,000, according to census data.

"I see these two -- food and housing -- as the next growth hotspots in Hoima," said Ddembe Kawaga Setumba, 46, a grain and cereals dealer.

EARLY BIRDS

But the delays in oil production are pushing back the expected payday for investors who have banked on the arrival of oil men ready to splash out on everything from burgers and beer, fancy clothes and electronics, to schooling for their children.

For 40-year-old Godfrey Muleke, who sells and services Renault and Mitsubishi trucks and water pumps and generators, business in the last two years has not been brisk.

Since opening he has sold only 10 Renault trucks and has about 25 off-roader vehicles under management on both lease and rental arrangements.

But he still believes he made the right choice by getting his foot in the door before anybody else.

"Moving in now is good," Muleke told Reuters. "You invest less when you move in early. And you're given a bird's eye view of the scene."

SOUTH AFRICA :

First Black Leader Elected for South Africa's Main Opposition Party

James Butty/voanews.com/May 11, 2015

Independent South African political analyst Harald Pakerndorf said he hopes Mmusi Maimane, the first black leader of South Africa's mostly-white main opposition Democratic Alliance (DA) party, was selected for his leadership qualities, not skin color.

Delegates attending the DA's convention in Port Elizabeth Sunday chose Maimane to replace Helen Zille, who stepped down last month.

Maimane reportedly told party members that "freedom means nothing without opportunities," as South Africans struggle with poverty, high unemployment and economic inequality.

Pakerndorf said the election of Maimane is significant, particularly at a time when support for the ruling African National Congress has been declining, even among black voters.

"It's an important step for the Democratic Alliance which actually started in 1958 with about just over one percent of voter support and at the last election got almost 23 percent. But, its leaders were mostly white and then they started changing four, five years ago and now we have a black, a young charismatic leader. He's only 35 years old, Mmusi Maimane," he said.

Pakerndorf said Maimane's election comes at a very good time for the Democratic Alliance party.

"The cry of the ruling (ANC) party that liberated South Africa from apartheid is gradually no longer enough to sell. So, it's an important step, but I myself hope that Mr. Maimane was elected because of his leadership qualities and not because he's black. It's an advantage that he's black, but I hope that's not the only reason," Pakerndorf said.

He said 2016 promises to be an important year in South African politics because the Democratic Alliance plans to make gains in key cities such as Pretoria, and Johannesburg during local elections.

"The important point to note about these local elections and their possible significance is that the ANC doesn't control Cape Town anymore and it will be close in three other major cities. So, the next year will be very important for what happens in South Africa," Pakerndorf said.

Pakerndorf noted that while the Democratic Alliance is expected to make gains in the 2016 local elections, it remains to be seen whether it can be a serious presidential contender in the 2019 national election.

“Politics is a funny thing. Once a party begins to slide then the fall comes fairly quickly and, as I said, the ANC has been sliding in the last 11 years. They’re still at 62 percent nationally, but the local government elections at about 50 percent in Johannesburg, the capital Pretoria and in the eastern industrial area and they will certainly lose Port Elizabeth and Nelson Mandela Bay, which will be very significant,” Pakerndorf said.

Pakerndorf said Maimane can use the DA’s successes in cities under its control to reassure South Africans that it can deliver economically.

“I think what he can do is he can say, ‘Look, what we’ve done in the city of Cape Town,’ which is a well-run city with no corruption, he can say, ‘Look what we’ve done in the province of the Western Cape, which is the best administered province in South Africa,’” Pakerndorf said.

Rhino poaching in South Africa at record levels following 18% rise in killings

Monday 11 May 2015 /theguardian.com

In the first four months of 2015, 393 rhinos were killed, with most taken in the Kruger national park, says environment minister

Rhino poaching in South Africa is at record levels, the country’s environment minister has warned, with an 18 % rise in the first four months of 2015 on the same period a year ago.

Edna Molewa said that by the end of April 2015 the number of rhino lost to poachers was 393 for the whole country, and 290 of them were poached in the Kruger national park. In 2014, 331 rhinos were poached including 212 in Kruger, she said at a media conference in Pretoria.

The vast park bordering Mozambique is home to the majority of South Africa’s 20,700 rhinos, which are killed for their horns, used in traditional Asian medicine.

Despite the appointment of a former general to oversee anti-poaching operations, a new record is set each year in the number of rhinos killed as South Africans and Mozambicans join the lucrative trade.

A total of 1,215 rhinos were killed in 2014, compared with 1,004 in 2013, 668 in 2012 and 448 in 2011.

The numbers began surging in 2008, when 83 rhinos were killed. The year before that just 13 animals were poached.

Sunday’s public briefing on rhino poaching was the first the South African government has given in months.

“This is not deliberate, it is because of the heavy load of work that we have,” Molewa said. “We are soldiering on, we do think that this fight will have to be won and we will win it.”

Since 2008, South African authorities have struggled to contain the carnage despite moving some animals out of poaching hotspots in the Kruger.

South Africa’s police commissioner, Riah Phiyega, reported that, as of the end of April, park rangers detained 132 suspected poachers, crediting the use of helicopters and anti-poaching dogs for a rise in arrests.

In South Africa, many people buy beaded "Rhino Force" bracelets and affix life-size red plastic rhino horns to the bonnets of their cars in support of the anti-rhino poaching cause.

The government in February announced it would investigate whether the trade in rhino horn should be legalised and regulated to try to halt the poaching.

South Africa's international image badly tarnished

By Sambulo Mathebula/sowetanlive.co.za/ mai 09, 2015

South Africa's moral authority on the international stage has been severely tarnished.

For a country that articulates the centrality of the African agenda and human rights as critical cogs in its foreign policy machinations, it suffices to say that this status is unravelling rather rapidly.

The nexus between domestic and foreign policy is well demonstrated by the way other African states have reacted to the recent spate of xenophobic violence that has afflicted SA.

What has occurred over the past months and weeks has brought into sharp focus South Africa's relations with the African continent.

The Malawian government repatriated its citizens from the country, Nigeria threatened SA business operations in its territory if SA authorities did not take swift action to quell the violence.

In Zimbabwe, demonstrations were held outside the South African embassy. This action was accompanied by demands for boycotts of South African goods and services.

In somewhat of an odd twist of historical events, South Africa finds itself at risk of returning to "African pariah" status, an image that it has worked tirelessly to shed after securing its democracy.

It would seem that the time of reckoning has come for SA's foreign policy, particularly where one of its key pillars in the African agenda has come into question in a significant way.

Following a meeting with heads of African missions accredited to SA, Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Nkoana Maite-Mashabane was at pains to emphasise Pretoria's commitment to a foreign policy that is committed to the vision to achieve a "united African continent that is peaceful, democratic, nonracial, nonsexist, prosperous, which contributes to a world that is just and equitable".

She also drew attention to the commitment by the South African government to fully integrate fellow Africans into SA's democratic dispensation.

The utterances made by the minister show a well-formulated and clearly articulated foreign policy strategy. But the xenophobic violence reflects a different reality at the community level.

On the one hand, the xenophobic horrors perpetrated by South Africans have exposed a glaring disjuncture between foreign policy formulation and its domestic impact. On the other hand, the attacks have exposed how domestic affairs affect the work that South Africa conducts across its borders.

What has also been brought to light is the significant extent to which South African relations with

the continent are overwhelmingly defined by high-level politics and commerce as opposed to "people to people" relations and solidarity.

This is cause for concern because it reflects the disheartening reality that ordinary South African citizens are alienated from the noble and well-intentioned policy narratives and dispositions which are crafted in their name.

It is also about time that SA business shows concern that is commensurate with the commercial successes that it enjoys on the rest of the African continent.

What has transpired over the past decade in relation to the treatment of citizens from neighbouring countries has left an indelible stain on South Africa's domestic and foreign policy architecture.

A united and swift leadership effort is required across the social spectrum to bring an end to the horrific xenophobic violence that has engulfed the country intermittently over the past years.

It is time that South African foreign policy practitioners thought deeply about the impact of their work not only outside of SA but within its borders.

IMathebula is a researcher at the Southern African Liaison Office

South African mercenaries' secret war on Boko Haram

By Colin Freeman, Abuja/telegraph.co.uk/10 May 2015

Mercenaries from South Africa have proved quietly decisive in helping the Nigerian military turn around its campaign against Boko Haram, writes Colin Freeman in Abuja

With their roots in South Africa apartheid-era security forces, they do not fit the standard image of an army of liberation. But after just three months on the ground, a squad of grizzled, ageing white mercenaries have helped to end Boko Haram's six-long year reign of terror in northern Nigeria.

Run by Colonel Eeben Barlow, a former commander in the South African Defence Force, the group of bush warfare experts were recruited in top secrecy in January to train an elite strike group within Nigeria's disorganised, demoralised army.

Some of the guns-for-hire cut their teeth in South Africa's border wars 30 years ago. But their formidable fighting skills – back by their own helicopter pilots flying combat missions – have proved decisive in helping the military turn around its campaign against Boko Haram in its north-eastern strongholds.

Who are Nigeria's Boko Haram Islamists?

The Islamists have now fled many of the towns they once controlled, leading to the freeing of hundreds of girls and women last week who were used by Boko Haram as slaves and bush wives.

The role of Col Barlow's firm in turning around one of the most vicious African insurgencies of modern times has been kept largely quiet by Nigeria's outgoing president, Goodluck Jonathan, who lost elections six weeks ago to ex-general Muhammadu Buhari.

But last week, Col Barlow discussed his company's role in a seminar at the Royal Danish Defence College, and in a separate interview with a Sofrep.com, a special forces website, he described in

detail the "aggressive" strike force that was created to push Boko Haram onto the back foot.

"The campaign gathered good momentum and wrested much of the initiative from the enemy," said Col Barlow, 62. "It was not uncommon for the strike force to be met by thousands of cheering locals once the enemy had been driven from an area."

He added: "Yes, many of us are no longer 20-year-olds. But with our age has come a knowledge of conflicts and wars in Africa that our younger generation employees have yet to learn, and a steady hand when things get rough."

During apartheid, Col Barlow served with the South African Defence Force, a mainly white military unit that defended the regime against insurrection and fought border wars in neighbouring Angola and what is now Namibia.

In 1989, as apartheid was beginning to crumble, he co-founded Executive Outcomes, a private military company made up of many ex-members of South Africa's security forces. One of the first modern "private armies", in 1995 it successfully helped the government of Sierra Leone defend itself against the rebels of the Revolutionary United Front, notorious for chopping off the arms of their enemies.

Another co-founder of Executive Outcomes, which dissolved in 2000, was Simon Mann, the Old Etonian later jailed in Equatorial Guinea over his attempts to plot a coup there.

Col Barlow's new company is known as STTEP, which stands for Specialized Tasks, Training, Equipment and Protection. It is thought to have sent around 100 men to Nigeria, including black troopers who previously served in elite South African units. Others even fought as communist guerrillas against the South African Defence Force.

It is not known how much the Nigerian military has paid for STTEP's services. But the fact that the Nigerian government felt it necessary to bring them in raises questions about the level of help that it was receiving from the British and US militaries, who offered mentoring packages in the wake of Boko Haram's kidnapping last year of more than 200 schoolgirls from the north-eastern town of Chibok.

Describing Boko Haram as "a bunch of armed thugs who have used religion as the glue to hold their followers", Col Barlow said the initial plan was for his men to train up a team to help free the schoolgirls. However, as Boko Haram continued to run amok across northern Nigeria, massacring hundreds at a time in village raids, the plan turned to schooling Nigeria's largely traditional army in "unconventional mobile warfare".

Key to this was a tactic known as "relentless pursuit", which involved mimicking Boko Haram's hit-and-run tactics with non-stop assaults. Once the insurgents were on the run and their likely route established, members of the strike force would be helicoptered into land ahead of them to cut off their likely escape routes, gradually exhausting them.

The South Africans even used bush trackers to work out where their enemies were going, an old-fashioned art that proved vital in Boko Haram's forest hideouts. "Good trackers can tell the age of a track as well as indicate if the enemy is carrying heavy loads, the types of weapons he has, if the enemy is moving hurriedly, what he is eating, and so forth," said Col Barlow.

While the Nigerian government has insisted the South Africans' role was mainly as "technical advisers", Col Barlow suggested his men had been involved in direct combat. His air power unit

was “given ‘kill blocks’ to the front and flanks of the strike force and could conduct missions in those areas,” he said. His forces also helped with intelligence gathering, troop transportation and evacuation of casualties.

Mr Jonathan's decision to hire STTEP came just ahead of March's elections, when his government's failure to either tackle Boko Haram or free the kidnapped Chibok schoolgirls was a major issue. He has promised that when Mr Buhari takes over at the end of this month, Boko Haram will be a spent force, although it is not yet clear whether the Buhari government will renew STTEP's contract.

Col Barlow warned that while the Nigerians had done well within three months that he had been contracted to mentor them, "the enemy was able to flee the battlefield with some of their forces intact, and will no doubt regroup and continue their acts of terror."

The involvement of STTEP in Nigeria will inevitably reignite the debate over whether private military companies should be used in conflicts. Human rights groups question whether they are publicly accountable, and in South Africa especially, their background in the apartheid-era makes some uneasy.

However, Col Barlow, whose firm has a code of conduct for behaving "in a legal, moral, and ethical manner" said that private companies were often better than UN or Western trainers of African armies. The latter were often hamstrung by political baggage and a failure to understand how either African armies or their enemies worked, he said. The advisers that Britain and America have sent to Nigeria are also not permitted to take part in operations on the ground, partly because of the Nigerian's army's poor human rights record.

Noting that even the US military appeared to regard his firm with distrust, Col Barlow added: “Some like to refer to us as ‘racists’ or ‘apartheid soldiers’ with little knowledge of our organisation. We are primarily white, black, and brown Africans who reside on this continent and are accepted as such by African governments.”

'SA is Russia's leading trade partner in Africa'

ewn.co.za/2015/05/11

The comment was made by Russian president Vladimir Putin

MOSCOW – President Vladimir Putin has called South Africa Russia’s leading trade partner on the African continent.

A South African delegation headed by President Jacob Zuma is in Moscow and has been holding a series of meetings to further cement relations between the two countries.

Zuma is accompanied by Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, and the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula.

In a meeting with president Zuma over the weekend, Putin said relations between Moscow and Pretoria has a special character.

Putin advocated the development of the BRICS group, of which South Africa is a member, as a vehicle for improving the economies of both countries.

President Zuma thanked his Russian counterparts for the warm welcome and also for inviting him

to the Victory Parade that marked 70 years since the end of the World War II.

In interviews with the Russian press, Zuma criticised the existing international financial institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund, saying African countries got into more difficulties by relying on their assistance, which is why he supported the idea of the BRICS bank.

A series of bilateral meetings between the two countries were attended by Russia's Foreign Minister, Russian advisor to the president and the Head of the Russian Ministry of Nature.

TANZANIA :

Tanzania to finalise land acquisition for natural gas project

BY Reuters/Monday, May 11th 2015

Tanzania plans to spend \$6 million in the next fiscal year to buy land for the planned construction of a Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminal, raising hopes it is speeding up progress of the long-delayed project. The two-train onshore LNG export terminal, which the government says could cost up to \$30 billion, has run into delays mainly due to complex land acquisition procedures and an uncertain legal and regulatory framework. Along with neighbouring Mozambique, Tanzania is in a race with Russia, Australia, US and Canada to build LNG export plants, aiming to exploit a gap in global supply that is expected to open up by 2020. Set aside "The government has set aside Sh12 billion in 2015-16 for assessment and compensation of 450 people ... where the (LNG) terminal will be built," the Government's planning commission said in a report seen by Reuters on Saturday. The 2015-2016 fiscal year starts on July 1, 2015. The terminal would be built in the small southern town of Lindi, located close to an offshore deep-sea region where huge natural gas discoveries have been made. Tanzania is estimated to have more than 53.2 trillion cubic feet (tcf) of gas reserves off its southern coast, but its energy sector has long been dogged by allegations of graft and other problems. Tanzania's parliament last year accused senior government officials of fraudulently authorising the transfer of at least \$122 million of public funds to a private energy company. Three cabinet officials, including the energy minister, lost their jobs. Analysts said the graft accusations, coupled with delays in passing new gas legislation, are holding back the development of the sector. British gas company BG Group, together with partners Statoil, Exxon Mobil and Ophir Energy, plan to build an LNG export terminal, expected to start operating in the early 2020s, but a final investment decision is only set for 2016.

Sirari one-border post building opens soon

Monday, 11 May 2015/Written by MUGINI JACOB/dailynews.co.tz

EAST Africa Cooperation Minister, Dr Harrison Mwakyembe, has assured the general public including the business community that the one-border post building at Sirari in Mara region will be open within two months from now.

He made the assurance after visiting the building.

However, he was not happy to detect poor workmanship. He also realized that the builders used poor quality materials.

"We will open the building between June and July.

If there is any negligence on the government side we will take action and let you know as soon as possible”, Dr Mwakyembe maintained.

He also refused requests by some residents of Sirari who were of the view that the one-border post on the Tanzanian side should be demolished on grounds that it is embarrassing.

The minister, however, said that stern measures will be taken against the government officials involved in messing up the construction work at the multi-billion shilling one-border post building.

“Cheap materials have been used. I see too many cracks. We will take action against the officials involved”, the EAC Minister insisted.

He wanted the Tanzania Building Agency (TBA) to provide a report on the status of the building immediately. But, he also hinted that the committee formed to evaluate the shortcomings of the work has completed its work.

Thus, the contractor of the building had been given chance to correct the shortcomings. Construction of the building had been carried out under the supervision of Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA), according to EAC Ministry officials.

Earlier, Dr Mwakyembe had visited a similar one border post building that had already started operating on the Kenyan side and was impressed by their work.

Construction of the one-border posts is aimed at improving cross border business among traders hailing from the EAC partner states.

The Minister conducted a day-long meeting with traders and farmers operating at the border and urged them to make good use of the EAC common market business opportunities.

He also directed government leaders at all levels to protect farmers so that they make meaningful gains from their produce. “Let us do away with the business as usual notion,” the minister said urging officials serving at the border to be patriotic.

Meanwhile, Minister Mwakyembe said Tanzanian products that are sold in the US under African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) have been decreasing instead of increasing.

Tanzania, he said stands to gain from AGOA because it is blessed with plenty of resources. Thus, Dr Mwakyembe called for an immediate end to obstacles that frustrate Tanzania from benefiting from AGOA and other EAC market opportunities .

Algeria, Tanzania discuss over developing mutually advantageous partnership

May 10, 2015/Source: Xinhua

Visiting Tanzanian President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete on Sunday held talks with his Algerian counterpart Abdelaziz Bouteflika, discussing about the development of mutually advantageous partnership.

Kikwete voiced interest of his nation to get profit of Algeria’s experience in energy field to develop recent discoveries of natural resources, as boosting energy partnership between the two nations was on the agenda.

He also called on Algerian businessmen to come and invest in Tanzania, saying that a delegation of

Algerian economic operators are scheduled to visit his country to discuss investment opportunities. The president said his visit to Algeria was a success and the two nations have been working together for peace and stability in Africa and the world. Enditem

KENYA :

ANGOLA :

AU/AFRICA :

Liberia is Ebola free but West Africa still has work to do

Sunday, May 10, 2015/ajc.com

The World Health Organization has declared the outbreak of Ebola in Liberia is over.

It was once the nation hit hardest by the disease. More than 4,700 Liberians lost their lives during the outbreak. During the peak of the epidemic, flights were cancelled into the country, fuel and food supplies ran low and schools, businesses and borders were closed.

But now it's been 42 days since a case of Ebola was confirmed in Liberia. That's twice the normal incubation period for the disease.

But West Africa, and that includes Liberia, isn't out of the woods just yet. Guinea and Sierra Leone are still reporting new cases of the disease. Both countries reported nine cases for the week ending May 3. (Video via World Health Organization)

That's a far cry from the 300 to 400 fresh cases Liberia was reporting on a weekly basis in August and September at the peak of the outbreak, but it is a sign that the disease is still spreading, and could spill over into Liberia again if it isn't properly managed.

Plus, there is a lot researchers are still discovering about how long Ebola can remain in a person's body.

On May 1 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued a warning that male Ebola survivors should use a condom during sex indefinitely.

That's because a woman became infected with the disease after having intercourse with a man who had overcome the virus five months before. It was previously thought that Ebola could survive in semen for about three months.

And The New England Journal of Medicine detailed a case on Thursday of an American doctor who survived the disease but found the virus was still present in his eye more than a month after leaving the hospital. (Video via World Affairs Council)

So researchers are still learning about how Ebola can continue to spread through survivors of the disease, and it isn't completely out of West Africa just yet. But the announcement of an Ebola-free Liberia is still cause for some celebration.

Liberia's economy took a big blow during the epidemic with many foreign companies pulling out of the country. Now that the worst seems to be over, Liberia can work on building their economy back up.

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