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BURUNDI :

Burundi: rencontre attendue entre Ban Ki-moon et Pierre Nkurunziza
Par RFI/le 22-02-2016

Quelques semaines après le Conseil de sécurité, le Burundi s'apprête à recevoir ce lundi une visite de Ban Ki-moon. Dans les deux cas, l'objectif est d'aider le pays sorti d'une longue guerre civile meurtrière il y a dix ans, à ne pas retomber dans un nouveau conflit, alors qu'il a sombré dans la violence depuis la décision du président Pierre Nkurunziza de briguer un troisième mandat fin avril 2015. Mais la mission du secrétaire général des Nations unies s'annonce délicate. L'heure est à la crispation : refus d'un dialogue avec l'opposition en exil, refus d'une force d'interposition de l'Union africaine ou multiplications de manifestations hostile au Rwanda et à son président, accusés d'entraîner et d'armer de nouvelles rébellions burundaises.

Ban Ki-moon doit arriver au Burundi ce lundi en fin d'après-midi pour une visite très attendue dans ce pays des Grands Lacs plongé dans une profonde crise politique depuis bientôt dix mois. A moins d'un changement de dernière minute, le secrétaire général de l'ONU devrait rencontrer le ministre burundais des Affaires étrangères, Alain-Aimé Nyamitwe, la classe politique, dont les quelques figures d'opposition qui n'ont pas fui en exil.

Et surtout, le président Pierre Nkurunziza mardi matin. Ce sera « le moment fort » de cette visite

selon des sources onusiennes, car Ban Ki-moon va tenter de peser de tout son poids sur le président burundais pour qu'il « accepte enfin un dialogue inclusif et sans condition », un sujet sur lequel il s'est montré intransigeant jusqu'ici.

Droits de l'homme

Autre sujet de préoccupation, le secrétaire général de l'ONU devrait aborder la question « des violations massives des droits de l'homme au Burundi ». « Nous espérons qu'il parviendra à convaincre le président burundais d'accepter une véritable enquête internationale sur ces allégations », explique un diplomate en poste à Bujumbura.

Aujourd'hui, la communauté internationale « se réjouit de petits gestes faits par le pouvoir burundais avant cette visite », affirme-t-il, en parlant notamment de l'annulation de quelques mandats d'arrêt internationaux contre des opposants, de la réouverture de deux radios privées ou encore de l'acceptation d'une mission de trois experts mandatés par le Haut-Commissaire de l'ONU aux droits de l'homme. Tout le monde espère donc que Pierre Nkurunziza va profiter de cette visite « pour transformer l'essai », mais sans trop se faire d'illusions.

RWANDA :

RDC CONGO :

UGANDA :

Uganda's Museveni wins, again

Monday, February 22/stream.aljazeera.com

Ugandans reflect on election results and how they'll shape their future.

Uganda's veteran President, Yoweri Museveni, secured another victory in the country's general election. This was supposed to be the toughest challenge yet for Museveni and extends his 30-year rule for another five years, making him one of Africa's longest-serving leaders.

The elections have been marred by vote-rigging claims, arrests of politicians, delays and social media shutdowns. The opposition accused the government of vote fraud and the main opposition leader, Kizza Besigye, was arrested three times in the week leading up to the vote after he made allegations of government vote-rigging. There were also delays in delivering voting materials, especially in areas seen as opposition strongholds. Social media, including Facebook and Twitter, were also largely inaccessible on voting day, although internet-savvy Ugandans dodged the apparent shutdown using virtual private networks. The government regulator, the Uganda Communications Commission, said the attempted shutdown was for "security reasons".

Although Uganda has experienced peace and security under Museveni's leadership, the country is

facing a number of problems. The economy is faltering and there's massive unemployment. Two-thirds of youth are without a job, according to government data. Though non-governmental organisations estimate the figure to be much higher. Uganda's youths, dubbed "Museveni babies", are increasingly frustrated over the government's failure to ensure job security. Corruption, improving the quality of public services and developing the country's oil reserves have been debated as well.

So what does Museveni's win mean for the future of everyday Ugandans?

Uganda: opposition leader calls for protests after longtime president is re-elected

22/02/2016/euronews.com

Uganda's main opposition leader has called on his supporters to protest after President Yoweri Museveni, in power for 30 years, won another five-year term.

Kizza Besigye, who says he has been under house arrest, has rejected the election outcome, claiming fraud.

Museveni won 60.8 percent of the vote, according to officials.

He has presided over strong economic growth, but is accused at home and abroad of repression of dissent and failing to tackle rampant corruption in the nation of 37 million people.

Museveni brought calm and stability to Uganda after decades of chaos under leaders Idi Amin and Milton Obote, but many opposition voters accused the former guerilla fighter of becoming increasingly autocratic and wanting to rule for life.

The opposition had tried to tap into mounting anger among young voters, especially in urban areas, where unemployment is high and many are frustrated by the poor state of schools and hospitals.

International observers give Uganda elections mixed bill of health

DAILY NEWS Reporter and Agencies/22 February 2016

INTERNATIONAL election observers have given the presidential election in Uganda last Thursday a mixed bill of health with the European Union and Commonwealth groups describing it as "short of being free and fair" while African monitors praised the exercise.

Incumbent President Yoweri Museveni was declared a winner on Saturday, polling 60 per cent of the votes against 35 per cent of his closest contestant, Dr Kiiza Besigye of the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC).

Dr Besigye, who has contested for presidency in vain since 2001, slammed the results as a fraud and appealed to the international community not to recognise them.

The European Union Election Observation Mission (EU-EOM), who condemned the actions of the police prior to voting and on polling day, commended the voters' enthusiasm to participate in the election process, citing their active involvement in the campaigns and the long hours they queued up waiting to vote.

The EU observers said this enthusiasm in the democratic process, however, was eclipsed by an

atmosphere of intimidation and further concluded that the Election Commission lacks the required independence and transparency, which explains why “it does not have the trust of the stakeholders.”

The various election mission observer groups invited by the government to monitor the 2016 presidential and parliamentary polls yesterday issued their preliminary assessments of the Thursday polls, which offered a number of key pointers.

“On Friday, while the national tally centre was announcing the preliminary results of the presidential polls and the political parties were still following tallying and collecting data from their agents in the field, the police stormed FDC’s party headquarters using tear gas and arrested Dr Besigye and the party’s leadership. This extensive use of police force was not acceptable,” notes the EU-EOM chief observer Eduard Kukan in a statement.

The EU-EOM report also pointed out the intimidation and harassment of the opposition and its supporters by police, the conduct of state-owned Uganda Broadcasting Corporation by denying Opposition air space.

While the polls were conducted in a generally peaceful and calm environment in the various parts of the country, Mr Kukan noted that the National Resistance Movement’s “domination of the political landscape distorted the fairness of the campaign.

Speaking at the same event, the head of the European Parliament, Jo Leinen, who joined the EU-EOM to monitor the elections, observed that going back to two previous reports they had issued, “it was clear the same recommendations had been made, were not acted upon”.

The head of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (Comesa) mission, Mr Ashraf Gamal Rashed, and other African observer groups said security was adequately deployed to secure polling stations and their duties were performed in a proper manner.

The East African Community (EAC) mission led by former Tanzanian president Mr Ali Hassan Mwinyi said they were still monitoring the process and would issue a final report of their assessment. Meanwhile, President Museveni celebrated extending his three decades in power with a walk with his cows, after an election rejected as fraudulent by the opposition and criticised by the international community.

Pictures released by the Ugandan government showed a relaxed Museveni walking in the midst of his long-horn cattle and chatting with their herders, wielding a stick and wearing his trademark wide-brimmed hat.

Another photograph showed the 71-year-old leader surrounded by his family. After the chaotic election, which returned him to a fifth term in office, Museveni said he planned to “go for my cross-country walk to exercise and then go to my cows.” Born in western Uganda to a cattle-rearing family, he has always said he plans to be a herder on his retirement.

While Museveni succeeded to extend his rule of the east African country, over a dozen influential ministers lost their parliamentary seats. Among them were defense minister Crispus Kiyonga, who is spearheading regional efforts to end the political crisis in Burundi, and attorney general Fred Ruhindi. Despite the controversy, several African leaders extended their congratulations.

Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta wished Museveni “every success as he serves his nation for another term”, while Burundi’s embattled President Pierre Nkurunziza offered his “warmest congratulations” for the “well-deserved re-election.”

President Museveni was chosen by fellow leaders of the East African Community (EAC) last year as a key mediator for wrangling parties in Burundi.

SOUTH AFRICA :

South Africa's ANC accuses US diplomats of pursuing regime change

Associated Press/Monday 22 February

Ruling party's secretary general wants Washington to clarify the activities of its diplomats after claiming the US has deployed agents to destabilise the nation

South Africa's ruling party has accused US diplomats of "irregular activities", claiming that Washington is trying to foment regime change inside the country.

A spokesman for the African National Congress on Sunday called on the US government to clarify the activities of some its diplomats.

"There seems to be irregular activities coming from the US Embassy," said Keith Khoza. The ANC party will communicate their concerns to Washington through diplomatic channels, he said.

Khoza referred to accusations made last week by ANC secretary general Gwede Mantashe that the US was planning regime change in South Africa, similar to the Arab Spring.

Speaking on Friday at a march for non-racialism in the capital Pretoria, Mantashe said "regime change elements" similar to those in Libya and Egypt had crept into South Africa, the African News Agency reported.

"Those meetings in the American Embassy are about nothing else other than mobilisation for regime change," said Mantashe, according to the agency. "We're aware of a program that takes young people to the United States for six weeks, brings them back and plants them everywhere."

The US ambassador to South Africa Patrick Gaspard has strongly denied the allegations.

Gaspard said the young people in question were part of the Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders, an initiative started by president Barack Obama in 2014.

"I'm incredibly proud of the work my US embassy colleagues do every day to partner with South Africans on health, education and job growth," Gaspard tweeted. "And I will defend their honor and non-partisan integrity."

The ambassador made light of the accusations - likening the suggestion that the US was sponsoring regime change across the globe to an Oprah Winfrey Show giveaway.

According to its website, the initiative's aim is to support young African leaders, to help strengthen democratic governance and enhance peace and security across Africa.

Tipping Point Looms for Despairing South Africa

February 22, 2016 /bloomberg.com

Not since Nelson Mandela walked out of Victor Verster prison 26 years ago have investors been gloomier about South Africa's economy.

Money is pouring out at a record pace as inflows dwindle. The rand has plunged and unemployment is the highest among almost 40 developing nations tracked by Bloomberg. Drought is driving up food costs. Hanging in the balance is the investment-grade credit rating South Africa sweated to achieve in 2000, shortly after Mandela left office.

South Africans are paying the price not just for a collapse in commodities prices -- metals and mining contribute more than 50 percent of exports -- but for growing questions over whether President Jacob Zuma is up to the task. Stoking doubts were the antics at the finance ministry in December, when Zuma removed Nhlanhla Nene and replaced him with little-known lawmaker David van Rooyen. As bond yields soared and the rand crashed, he changed his mind four days later and installed Pravin Gordhan, Nene's predecessor.

"The country still faces serious structural challenges, and the changes at the top of the finance ministry just reconfirmed the policy risks," says Viktor Szabo, who helps manage \$12 billion of emerging-market debt at Aberdeen Asset Management Plc. "Things could get worse."

A key test looms Feb. 24 when Gordhan presents the national budget to lawmakers. He has said the government will do everything necessary to avoid a downgrade to junk, including reining in free-spending state enterprises and sticking to expenditure ceilings.

"The trust towards South Africa disappeared," said Hakan Aksoy, a London-based bond fund manager at Pioneer Investment Management in London, which oversees 224 billion euros (\$244 billion).

Since multiracial elections brought Mandela to power in 1994, the economy has grown an average of 3 percent a year, enabling the ruling African National Congress to provide housing, water and electricity to millions of households and extend social grants to more than 16 million people, while cutting government debt. The country's benchmark stock index soared to a record less than a year ago, while bond yields fell to record lows.

Since then, the bottom has fallen out. The commodity rout could leave the economy growing at the slowest pace this year since 2009. The country narrowly avoided a recession during the third quarter, posting annualized expansion of 0.7 percent. Fitch Ratings on Dec. 4 cut South Africa's credit rating one level to BBB-, the lowest investment grade, and in line with the assessment of Standard & Poor's, which lowered its outlook to negative from stable on the same day.

'Good Signals'

Gordhan, and increasingly Zuma too, recognize the challenge. In the past month, the finance minister has held meetings with heads of the country's biggest companies to ask their advice on ways to stimulate the economy, while Zuma promised measures to appease the rating companies, including spending restraints and privatization of some state-owned companies. The rand has recovered some losses, gaining 3.1 percent against the dollar in February after plunging 27 percent in the previous 12 months, and bond yields fell.

While Gordhan's statements since taking office have been "good signals," they may not be enough, according Konrad Reuss, S&P's managing director for Africa. South Africa's "dismal" growth is the rating company's biggest concern, while policy will remain under close scrutiny following the

replacement of the finance minister, he said.

His skepticism is reflected in accelerating capital flight. Domestic investors more than doubled the amount sent overseas to 24.2 billion rand (\$1.65 billion) in the third quarter from 10 billion rand in the previous three months, according to central bank data. Foreign investors sold a net 43 billion rand of stocks and bonds in the final five months of 2015; there's no sign they're returning, with net outflows this year at 20 billion rand as of Feb. 19.

While South Africa's hardly alone among emerging-market nations that rely on commodity exports -- Brazil and Russia, among others, have seen their currencies tumble and ratings reduced to junk -- the policy bumbles came at the worst possible time. And with local elections looming this year, Gordhan will have to convince investors he can withstand political pressure to increase spending.

"We are likely to remain quite cautious at current prices," said Kieran Curtis, the London-based director of investment at Standard Life Investments Ltd., which oversees about \$436 billion and is underweight South African debt. "The wish list of things that investors have is quite long and not really very achievable with the current political dynamic."

TANZANIA :

Tanzanian scientists on the brink of finding shorter doses for TB treatment

Feb 22,2016/Xinhua

DAR ES SALAAM, Feb. 21 (Xinhua) -- Tanzanian scientists are conducting clinical trials on shorter courses of tuberculosis (TB) treatment which would now be more user-friendly and more effective to the patients, the scientists have said.

The scientists from the Ifakara Health Institute (IHI) - the east African-nation's leading medical research facility - said the new treatment would help cut down the number of patients who drop out of treatment because of the aversive and long-duration medications that last up to six months.

Patients suffering from tuberculosis in Tanzania have been enduring the pains of being put on long-term medications against the disease until they recover but the new dosage could now last less than three months.

For many years, researchers on TB in Tanzania have warned that cases of patients who quit TB treatment are behind the increasing burden of drug-resistance in the country and the high transmission rates of the disease in communities.

Paul Smithson, IHI chief knowledge officer, said local researchers were now collaborating with international ones to try and come up with new shorter regimes of the drugs which would also contain more effective treatment substances against the disease.

"In the next four to five years, the mode of treatment for TB would enter a new era in Tanzania and the world at large," Smithson told a news conference at IHI research centre in the country's historical town of Bagamoyo.

"Currently IHI is collaborating with the Global Alliance for TB Drug Development in a drug trial which will help come up with a drug combination known as bedaquiline, pretonamid and

pyrazinamide,"he added.

Smithson said the new combination of the drugs, whose trial in Tanzania was now at phase II, was one of its kind, adding that in its new form, it will be able to tackle both drug-resistant tuberculosis and non-resistant tuberculosis.

This comes as the fourth clinical trial on TB drugs among a series of more others done at IHI. For the past ten years, IHI has been also conducting surveillance studies on TB in rural and urban parts of the country, according to the IHI Director, Salim Abdullah.

Abdullah said that in the near future, the institute would also embark on testing another new TB combination of drugs in a phase III clinical trial.

Thomas Zoller, a team leader in TB research at IHI, said that if the other new combination of drugs known as moxifloxacin, pretonamid and pyrazinamide was successful, that would mean an important step in the efforts to produce less aversive but more effective medications for TB patients in Tanzania.

Studies show that one patient with TB can infect 10 to 15 others in one year. This, according to the experts, means that those patients who remain half-treated in the communities would lead to an increased TB burden in future.

Tanzania has been recording about 63, 000 TB patients each year for the consecutive past five years - making the country rank number six among African nations with the highest TB burden on the World Health Organization's scales.

East Africa: Rwanda Hails JPM for Cleansing Dar Port

20 February 2016/The Citizen (Dar es Salaam)

Dar es Salaam — The government of Rwanda has commended President John Magufuli for solving problems facing the Dar es Salaam port and creating a conducive environment for trade between Tanzania and Rwanda.

Foreign minister Dr Augustine Mahiga said yesterday that Rwandan businessmen and their Tanzanian counterparts will hold a meeting aimed at improving businesses between the two east African countries.

He told a news conference on his return from the Rwandan capital Kigali where he held bilateral talks with President Paul Kagame that the improved port services will enhance trade relations between the countries.

He said President Magufuli had sent him to Rwanda to express appreciation for the improved relations between the two countries.

Dr Mahiga added that he went to Rwanda to confirm Rwanda's participation in the forthcoming East African Community (EAC) Summit to discuss regional issues.

"President Kagame has confirmed he will attend; something that will be a good opportunity for us to speak on the dispute between Rwanda and Burundi and seek a round table solution," he said.

He added that this year's summit will be hosted by the Tanzanian government towards the end of

February bringing together delegates and presidents from all five EAC member states of Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi.

He said the issue of Burundi and Rwanda has prompted the need for seeking an immediate solution and the summit is likely to provide answers.

"Recently Rwanda's government has met with United Nations officials and appealed to them to reallocate over 75,000 Burundian refugees to other countries to avoid further rivalry," he said.

Rumours had it that Rwanda was training some Burundian refugees to turn against their own government, something that President Kagame has denied, noting that the rumours had increased tension between the two countries.

KENYA :

Kenyan's slam Uhuru for praising Museveni

Feb. 22, 2016/the-star.co.ke

KENYANS yesterday reacted angrily to President Uhuru Kenyatta's swift congratulatory message to Uganda's Yoweri Museveni following his disputed election victory.

Uhuru congratulated Museveni shortly after he was declared winner in an election that observers have criticised as "falling short of key democratic benchmarks".

In his commendation to Museveni who has helped him and Deputy President William Ruto fight off ICC charges, Uhuru said the people of Uganda spoke "very clearly".

"I am very pleased to congratulate His Excellency President Yoweri Museveni on his re-election as President of the Republic of Uganda," Uhuru said.

"The people of Uganda have spoken, and they have spoken very clearly. We respect their choice of President Museveni."

This sparked off an immediate online storm.

Ruto was among the Jubilee leaders who had drummed up support for Museveni, 71, to extend his 30-year rule for another five-year term.

Online, Kenyans took on Uhuru, with some openly telling him he is speaking on his own behalf and not Kenyans.

"I regret on behalf of people of Kenya. The views Kenyatta has expressed here are personal and do not reflect wishes of Kenyans. We stand with our brothers in Uganda during these trying moments of their democracy when election is rigged and people are intimidated," Kapia Frankline Abdallah said on Uhuru's Facebook page.

The Commonwealth Observer Mission and the European Observer Mission both said the ballot fell short of key democratic benchmarks after the shutdown of social media sites and several arrests of Museveni's closest challenger Kizza Besigye.

“The inexcusable delays of supply of material to polling stations, particularly in Kampala and its environs, and other deficiencies in the process ... have seriously detracted from the fairness and credibility of the result of the elections,” the Commonwealth Observer Group, headed by former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, said.

By yesterday, only Uhuru and South Sudan rebel leader Riek Machar, who also doubles as the designated first Vice President, had sent their congratulatory messages to Museveni.

Opposition leader Raila Odinga, who had initially called for a peaceful, transparent and credible electoral process, has remained mum on the Ugandan elections.

However, some of his troops have rubbished Museveni’s victory, saying the elections are a mere ritual every five years.

“He [Museveni] controls the electoral agency and arrests his opponents arbitrarily just to cling to power. In Uganda, election is merely treated as a ritual every five years,” nominated MP and Raila’s eldest brother Oburu Oginga said.

In his message, Uhuru wished Museveni “every success as he serves his nation for another term”.

“He and Uganda can count on my support, and my friendship, as well as that of their brothers and sisters in Kenya,” he said.

ANGOLA :

AU/AFRICA :

Africa: Overcoming Our Fears of Doing Business Together Will Drive African Integration and The African Growth Narrative

IC Publications (London)/22 February 2016

Sharm el Sheikh — The Africa 2016 Forum, which has just concluded in Sharm el Sheikh called for greater trust and cooperation, between government and the private sector but also between African businesses to look beyond their borders for partners and opportunities.

His Highness Aga Khan, Chairman of the Aga Khan Development Network opened day two of the Africa 2016 Forum with a keynote address that highlighted the African opportunity as well as the need to build layers of trust. “My enthusiasm today is especially strong because of the message which is at the heart of this Forum. And that message is, quite simply, that Africa’s moment has come,” he said before adding that [we need to “address a problem that has long plagued the human race. I refer to the fear we so often have that our environment will be controlled by others – to the point where we distance ourselves from potential worthy partners...A difference that can lead to fragmentation of society.”

During a frank interview style debate, Carlos Lopes noted that the Africa Rising story is not an

African construct but a foreign narrative based on a few successful trends that do not take into account the lack of transformation of Africa's economies. He stated that Africans have to concentrate on what matters and what matters is structural transformation, what he calls growth with quality. And this transformation required concentrating on two pillars which were improving agricultural productivity and building manufacturing capacity as well as growing the formal economy and tax base

Throughout the Forum, it was agreed that Africa's long-term success is underpinned by strong demographics, rapid urbanisation and the digital revolution. But if there is an opportunity it is because there is a lot to do. And that this responsibility and leadership to change the continent is no longer about heads of state alone. This leadership in Africa is widespread and is not just about a few individuals: it includes the private sector, civil society, individuals in academia, as well as innovators.

The Africa 2016 Forum, the first Africa to Africa business and investment forum was attended by 1,800 participants from public and private sector. Six African heads of State were present as well as a number of special guests including Cheikh Modibo Diarra, former Prime Minister of Mali, Akinwumi Adesina, President of the African Development Bank and Dr Benedict Oramah, President of the Afreximbank.

UN/AFRICA :

US/AFRICA :

CANADA/AFRICA :

AUSTRALIA/AFRICA :

EU/AFRICA :

Congo Election: EU refuses to send observers
africanews.com/2016/02/21

The European Union has decided not to send observers to the Republic of Congo to monitor a controversial presidential election set for March 20.

AP reports the EU decision is coming ahead of its dismissal of recent electoral reforms in the

country, including the introduction of an independent electoral commission.

The EU said the reforms are insufficient to guarantee a transparent election.

“The current context does not allow the EU to envisage setting up an electoral observers’ mission for the March 20 vote,” spokesman for the EU, Federica Mogherini said in the statement.

He said the Union considers that “the reforms to the electoral law that were introduced in January 23 appear limited” and do not fulfil the recommendations made by an EU mission to the country.

The controversial new charter removed a 70-year age limit and a ban on presidents serving more than two terms.

The charter was approved through a public vote, but opposition has dismissed it.

The 72-year-old Republic of Congo president Dennis Nguesso, has been leading the country from 1979 to 1992 and has since served two consecutive seven-year mandates. He said he wanted to bring the election forward to usher in a “new dynamic” after the referendum.

The Congolese government has responded through the Information Minister Thierry Mougalla saying: “I think the EU is free not to send observers. But this decision will prohibit them from judging the process when it comes to an end.”

“Whoever does not observe cannot judge,” he added.

CHINA/AFRICA :

INDIA/AFRICA :

BRAZIL/AFRICA

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