



(Police fired tear gas at opposition supporters in Congo Republic, witnesses said, after voting ended in a poll expected to see long-time leader Denis Sassou Nguesso extend his three-decade rule.)

BURUNDI :

RWANDA :

**KCB Bank Rwanda pre-tax profits surge to 3.2bn in 2015**

March 21, 2016/newtimes.co.rw

KCB bank Rwanda Ltd pretax profits increased by 165 per cent from Rwf857million in 2014 to Rwf3.2billion in 2015, the Bank's financial statements have indicated.

This marks the third year of consistent growth and profitability reported by the bank.

Pretax profit margin is a company's (Bank) earnings before tax as a percentage of total sales or revenues. The higher the pre-tax profit margin, the more profitable the company.

The Bank's total operating income increased by 28 per cent sustained by a 35 per cent increase in Net Interest Income.

The impressive growth was also attributed to increased lending activity in 2015.

For example, the Bank's total assets increased by 23 per cent to reach Rwf149 million up from Rwf121 million in 2015.

This increase was highly driven by an increase in customer deposits which increased by 14 per cent in 2015 and a rise in the Bank's external long term funding sources which increased by 34 per cent.

The Bank reported a 38 per cent decrease in net impairment for financial assets which indicates a significant improvement in the quality of its loan book.

Maurice Toroitich, the Bank's Managing Director, noted that the growth is a reflection of the significant efforts to improve innovation and product efficiency.

It is also our commitment to meet customers' needs in the most efficient and innovative way, he said. "The bank has made significant strides in offering solutions that address various needs in trade and Commerce, Manufacturing, Infrastructure, Agri-business and Housing", Toroitich said adding that the bank has significantly stepped up operations in supporting SME's in all sectors of the economy.

KCB Bank Rwanda Ltd is a 100 per cent subsidiary of KCB Group Ltd, a company that is quoted in the Nairobi Stock Exchange and cross listed in the Uganda, Rwanda and Tanzania stock exchanges. The Group operates in all the 6 EAC countries (including South Sudan) and has a representative office in Ethiopia. Recently, KCB Group Ltd reported a 16.5% increase in net earnings from \$ 165 million to \$192 million.

#### Rwanda prepares to unveil national forensic lab by 2017

By News Ghana/Mar 21, 2016

Rwanda sets to have its national forensic laboratory in place next year in a bid to cut down costs incurred when transporting DNA samples to Europe for testing and analysis.

Speaking to reporters on Saturday, Rwanda police spokesperson Celestin Twahirwa said transporting DNA samples abroad is challenging and costly to the government.

"We decided to embark on our own forensic lab that will be equipped with all tools needed to collect, test and analyze DNA samples to assist in crime investigations. The National Forensic Laboratory is currently under construction and will be operational by late 2017," he noted.

Rwanda has been spending huge sums of money to ship DNA samples to Germany and the UK, for tests and analysis to help in crime investigations back home.

According to reports from Rwanda Police, the country spends about 1,056 U.S. dollars to ship a single sample to Germany or the UK.

In order to cut costs, the government kicked off the construction of a 9.2 million U.S. dollars state-of-the art forensic laboratory in Kigali, the country's capital.

Twahirwa said the long-awaited forensic facility will be vital towards providing scientific evidence by significantly slashing down the cost of evidence-gathering, hence properly prosecuting criminals and giving justice to victims in a reasonable time.

According to the spokesperson, the procurement process of DNA test laboratory equipment, like forensic laboratory materials, is ongoing, and materials should be shipped to Rwanda as soon as all the paperwork is completed.

Rwanda had already dispatched people who will work in the laboratory to Germany for training and are about to complete the course, added Twahirwa.

RDC CONGO :

UGANDA :

SOUTH AFRICA :

### South Africa: Guptas Hit Back At Ex-GCIS Boss' Claims

20 March 2016/News24Wire (Cape Town)

Oakbay Investments on Sunday hit back at a report claiming President Jacob Zuma directly phoned ex-GCIS CEO Themba Maseko to ensure he helped the Gupta brothers.

Oakbay Investments is the holding company for the Gupta family's businesses in South Africa.

"We are bemused by Mr Maseko's six-year-old allegations, which are totally unfounded. It is clearly part of an ongoing, coordinated campaign involving others, to continue an already vicious politically-driven attack, using the Gupta family as a proxy," said Oakbay CEO Nazeem Howa in a statement.

The Sunday Times reported that the former head of the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) has fingered President Jacob Zuma as having played a key role in driving state business to the Gupta family.

The report said Maseko claimed Zuma had arranged a meeting for him to "help" the Guptas.

The allegations followed similar allegations the past week in which Deputy Finance Minister Mcebisi Jonas alleged he was offered Nhlanhla Nene's post ahead of 9/12 and former ANC MP Vytjie Mentor claimed she was offered the position of Minister of Public Enterprises in exchange for dropping the SA India route in favour of the Guptas.

Howa said as a senior government official at the time of the alleged incident, "surely Maseko would have followed the accepted regulations and responsibilities that came with his role and reported what amounts to serious allegations to the appropriate responsible officials, including his Minister".

The allegations came ahead of and as the ANC's National Executive Committee met to discuss among other things a possible recall of President Jacob Zuma.

The president's backers reportedly fought against those detractors who were expected to lead calls for Zuma's censure and possible recall.

"We are keen for Mr Maseko to confirm that this was done at that time in keeping with the legal responsibilities he had as an official of GCIS."

Maseko told the Sunday Times when he met the Guptas they asked the GCIS to spend state money on advertising in The New Age newspaper.

The family is purported to have said that they could exercise influence over ministers to buy advertising in the newspaper.

When Maseko declined a follow-up meeting, a heated exchange between him and Ajay Gupta is said to have ensued, with the latter saying: "I'm not asking you, I'm telling you."

Maseko was later shifted from his position as GCIS CEO.

"If Mr Maseko's allegations are to be believed, The New Age would have received an extraordinary amount of government advertising post its launch, which the statistics prove is totally untrue.

"For the period from The New Age's launch on December 6, 2010 to December 31, 2011, (the period that Mr Maseko refers to) the paper received 1.8% of national government's total advertising spend, which makes a mockery of alleged pressure to push revenue to The New Age.

"Despite TNA Media being a private company, we are taking the unusual step of releasing confidential company information, in the interests of full transparency. For the period December 6, 2010 to December 31, 2011 total advertising booked by GCIS into The New Age was under R2.5 million for the full period," said Howa.

He added that both Oakbay and the Gupta family have full confidence in the country's constitution, and appropriate judicial and political processes, to ensure that the truth is exposed for the South African people.

### South Africa's president faces accusations of corruption

[virginislandsdailynews.com/21/03/2016](http://virginislandsdailynews.com/21/03/2016)

JOHANNESBURG — South African President Jacob Zuma is facing allegations that he allowed a powerful family to engineer the hiring and firing of Cabinet ministers.

Members of his own ruling party, the African National Congress, have come forward in recent days claiming that members of the Gupta family offered them top government positions on the condition that they act to advance its commercial interests.

The country is in danger of becoming a "mafia state where all that the state will be doing is to nurse interests of family businesses," Gwede Mantashe, the party secretary-general, told reporters late last week.

Three Gupta brothers run a business empire that spans mining, media and aviation. They are friendly with Zuma, and have partnered in several ventures with his son and employed a daughter and one of his wives.

Zuma has denied the allegations. "I am in charge of the government," he told Parliament on Thursday. "I appoint in terms of the constitution. There is no minister here who was appointed by

the Guptas or anybody else. Ministers are appointed by me.”

For its part, the Gupta family published a statement that the claims are part of a plot to oust the president.

“These latest allegations are just more political point-scoring between rival factions within the ANC,” it said, adding that “any suggestion that the Gupta family or any of our representatives or associates have offered anyone a job in government is totally false.”

Zuma’s popularity has plummeted in recent months as the economy continues to dive and key members of his own party turn against him.

The party’s national executive committee — which has the power to fire the president — was holding a regularly scheduled meeting over the weekend. It was not clear whether Zuma’s fate or the scandal would be discussed.

The issue began in December when Zuma fired the finance minister, Nhlanhla Nene, who was widely respected by investors, and replaced him with the former mayor of a small municipality who had little experience in finance.

The move crashed the stock market and the national currency, the rand. Under pressure, Zuma installed another finance minister four days later.

This past week, the deputy finance minister, Mcebisi Jonas, said that days before Nene’s dismissal, members of the Gupta family offered him the finance minister’s job at a meeting at their house — and that he rejected it. Local media reported that the Guptas wanted Jonas to fire certain finance ministry officials.

Zuma told Parliament that he fired Nene because the rand was sinking.

Another party member, former legislator Vytjie Mentor, said on Facebook that the Guptas offered her the job of minister for public enterprises in 2010 on the condition that she ensure South African Airways drop its India route. She turned down the offer, she wrote.

TANZANIA :

**Tanzania: Zanzibar Decides Again - Peacefully**

21 March 2016/Tanzania Daily News (Dar es Salaam)

Pemba — Voters braved soaring temperatures and scorching sun on both Unguja and Pemba islands on Sunday in a fresh poll to elect the President of Zanzibar and Members of the Zanzibar House of Representatives.

As the exercise was underway, top Zanzibar government officials reiterated their appeals for "peace and unity as the Isles passes through testing times". The re-run was held following the decision by the Zanzibar Electoral Commission (ZEC) to annul last October election, citing "massive flaws".

Most registered voters woke up early and headed to their respective polling stations, which opened at 7am yesterday as security forces patrolled the ocean-side Unguja municipality.

Zanzibar President Ali Mohamed Shein, who is seeking another five-year term on CCM ticket, cast his vote at Bungi Centre in Central District, South Unguja Region. Speaking shortly after voting, Dr Shein called on all Zanzibaris to ensure they remain calm and united.

"I am very happy that I have fulfilled my constitutional right; I call upon all registered voters to come out in large numbers and cast their votes," he appealed. President Shein appeared confident of winning the election, calling on all his supporters to wait for the final results that would be announced by the Zanzibar Electoral Commission (ZEC).

Commenting on some opposition parties' stand to boycott the polls, Dr Shein said that he respected their decision and standpoint as they have the constitutional right to decide whether to participate or not.

"I don't have any problem with them. They took part in October polls and now they boycotted... no problem, it is their constitutional right," Dr Shein pointed out. The Second Vice-President, Ambassador Seif Ali Iddi, who cast his vote at Kitope, said that due to the big support the ruling CCM was enjoying, he was confident that the party was going to run away with a landslide victory.

He blasted those claiming that the Zanzibar component of Tanzanian Safari was not safe, insisting that the two islands, Unguja and Pemba, that make Zanzibar were 'all safe and will remain safe'. "I have been wondering at the information making the rounds that there is no peace in Zanzibar.

I urge them (tourists and other visitors) to come personally and see. We are peaceful and there isn't any element of a breach of peace," he asserted.

Union Vice-President Samia Suluhu Hassan underscored the significance of maintaining peace and unity shortly after voting at Kiembesamaki. She shared the same views with Ambassador Iddi and President Shein, insisting that every resident in Zanzibar should play a role in making the semi-autonomous country safe and peaceful.

The Minister in the Vice-President's Office in-charge of Union Affairs, Mr January Makamba, called on Zanzibaris to avoid being influenced by external pressures. He hinted that by succumbing to outside manipulations, the country's peace would be at the crossroads.

The day-long survey conducted by the 'Daily News' yesterday in Unguja witnessed tight security beefed up in all areas with security vehicles roaming the town. At the polling centres, voter turnout was minimal compared to previous elections. The low turnout, according to a number of observers and polling staff interviewed, was due to the fact that some opposition parties pulled out of the race.

At around 12.30pm, almost all polling centres remained empty with no queues. Election officers hinted that many voters reported in the morning and left as soon as they finished voting.

"This time around we have not experienced long queues. People come, vote and go," one of the officials said. The Zanzibar Deputy Director of Criminal Investigations, Mr Salum Msangi, told the 'Daily News' through a mobile phone interview that situation was generally calm as security forces were all out to ensure elections were held peacefully.

"As I am speaking to you know (around 3pm), there is no incident regarding to the election that has been reported; the situation is calm," he said. In Pemba, however, the low turnout of voters was witnessed in many polling stations due to the fact that it is a stronghold for the opposition Civic United Front (CUF), which boycotted the elections and campaigned extensively against them.

"The elections have been successful and well organised. It is obvious that we cannot have a big turnout in Pemba because it is a CUF. But the turnout was impressive and I expect to secure enough votes," Mr Hamad Rashid Mohamed, ADC party candidate said after casting his vote at Wawi School.

Mr Rashid thanked the police for ensuring that all those who intended to vote were free to move to the polling stations as the Minister of State in the Second Vice-President's Office, Mr Mohamed Aboud Mohamed, assured journalists here that all was well.

Mr Said Soud Said from Alliance for Farmers Party (AFP), who regarded himself at the main challenger to the CCM candidate (Dr Shein), also commended the police and the government for the good work of making sure that Pemba remained peaceful.

More than 500,000 people registered to vote for the 14 presidential candidates, Members of the Zanzibar House of Representatives, and councillors after last October's polls were nullified due to massive irregularities.

### Two Chinese ivory smugglers jailed for 35 years each in Tanzania

Monday, 21 March, 2016/scmp.com

Two Chinese men has been sentenced to 35 years each in jail by a court in Tanzania for smuggling 1.8 tonnes of ivory, one of the highest punishment ever imposed in such cases in the east African country, according to a newspaper report.

The Kisutu Resident Magistrate's Court in the commercial capital Dar es Salaam on Friday sentenced Huang Gin, 53, and Xu Fujie, 25, for illegal possession of elephant tusks valued at 5.4 billion shillings (HK\$17.6 million), Tanzania's state-run Daily News reported.

Tanzania charges Chinese woman dubbed the 'Queen of Ivory' for smuggling 700 tusks

The two were arrested at a house in Dar es Salaam in 2013 with 706 pieces of elephant tusks, according to the article.

They failed to pay a fine of 54.35 billion shillings each and have been in custody since, the report said.

"Considering the evidence adduced in court and the huge loss that the nation has suffered for the killing of 226 elephants, it is obvious the accused are a real threat to the elephant population," The Citizen newspaper quoted magistrate Cyprian Mkeha as saying in his ruling.

Xu nearly collapsed in the dock in shock after the court's verdict was given, the paper reported.

In a separate case in October, Yang Feng Glan, a Chinese woman in her 60s dubbed the "ivory queen" was charged with smuggling 706 elephant tusks worth US\$2.5 million from Tanzania to China. She is in custody and faces trial.

A court in southern Tanzania sentenced four Chinese men to 20 years in jail each in December after they were convicted of smuggling rhino horns.

Chinese police seize 600kg of elephant ivory after crackdown on mainland smuggling gang

Poaching has risen in recent years across sub-Saharan Africa where well-armed criminal gangs have



killed elephants for tusks and rhinos for horns that are often shipped to Asia for use in ornaments and medicines.

The elephant population in Tanzania shrank from about 110,000 in 2009 to about 43,000 in 2014, according to a census released in June. Conservationists blame “industrial-scale” poaching.

KENYA :

**Kenyan military says it has killed 34 Somali extremists**

ASSOCIATED PRESS/Sunday, 3/20/2016

NAIROBI, Kenya — The Kenyan military said Sunday its troops killed 34 fighters from the Islamic extremists of al-Shabab in clashes in Somalia.

The latest fighting raises the number of militants the Kenyan army says it has killed in the past week to 53.

Twenty one militants were killed in fighting in the southern city of Afmadow on Saturday, military spokesman Col David Obonyo said. He said two Kenyan soldiers were killed by a roadside bomb in the incident. Al-Shabab, according to SITE Intelligence Group which monitors Jihadi groups, says it killed a dozen Kenyan soldiers and captured two of them in the attack, but they have made exaggerated claims in the past.

Obonyo said the Kenyan soldiers killed another 13 militants Sunday near Ras Kamboni in southern Somalia.

Kenya is among five countries contributing troops to an African Union force that is bolstering Somalia’s government against al-Shabab’s insurgency and of the troop-contributing countries has borne the brunt of retaliatory attacks from al-Shabab.

Obonyo said on Wednesday Kenyan troops on patrol Tuesday night, in the southern city of Afmadow, killed 19 militants suspected to have been preparing to attack a Somali National Army camp.

Al-Shabab, which is allied to al-Qaida, is waging an insurgency against Somalia’s United Nations-backed government, carrying out deadly attacks on military and civilian targets in and out of Somalia.

Al-Shabab killed up to 200 Kenyan soldiers in a January attack, according to Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud.

ANGOLA :



AU/AFRICA :

### Protesters tear-gassed in Congo as President Sassou Nguesso clings to power

Date: March 21, 2016/smh.com.au

Brazzaville: Police fired tear gas at opposition supporters in Congo Republic, witnesses said, after voting ended in a poll expected to see long-time leader Denis Sassou Nguesso extend his three-decade rule.

The government ordered mobile phone and internet services cut for the day on Sunday across the oil-producing Central African country "for reasons of security and public tranquillity", a government official said. It also banned motor vehicle use nationwide.

Despite protests in which at least 18 demonstrators died, Mr Sassou Nguesso pushed through constitutional changes in October to remove term and age limits that would have prevented him from standing again. He is now heavily favoured to win the polls.

He faces eight opponents, including retired General Jean-Marie Mokoko, seen as the strongest challenger. "I want this to go well. I don't want war, which is often what happens after these elections," said Damien Kiongazi, who returned home to the capital Brazzaville from Paris to vote.

However, soon after polling stations closed, security forces moved in on crowds that had gathered in the capital's Bacongo neighbourhood, an opposition stronghold.

Witnesses who said they had been following the vote counting were then teargassed by riot police.

Mr Sassou Nguesso, who ruled from 1979 until he lost an election in 1992, regained power in 1997 after a brief civil war and then went on to win disputed polls in 2002 and 2009. His supporters credit him with restoring stability and developing the country's infrastructure.

"I think the vote marks progress for our democracy. And I can say that the new republic is setting out under a good omen," Mr Sassou Nguesso said after voting in Brazzaville.

The president's critics claim Congo's oil wealth has enriched and entrenched a small elite, while around half of the population of 4.5 million lives in poverty.

The polls will be watched closely by other leaders in Africa - notably in neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo - because several long-serving presidents are seeking to stay on beyond constitutionally mandated term limits.

The opposition said on Friday it had documented preparations for widespread vote rigging, including voters registered at multiple polling sites, individuals with multiple voter cards and the distribution of voter cards to non-citizens. The government rejected accusations it was preparing to cheat, claiming its opponents were laying the groundwork for post-election chaos.

Dileita Mohamed Dileita, a former Djibouti prime minister heading the African Union's elections observer mission, said around noon that he believed the polls were "going very well".

But at a polling station in Mafouta in southern Brazzaville, some of those waiting to cast their ballots on Sunday morning complained that the posted voter list contained the names of a number of people who had died years before. At the same location, a Reuters reporter saw three names repeated twice, listing the same birthdays and parents.

"I'm not confident. I see already that our voices are being stolen. The real results will not be given," said Boclelon Ganga, 28, as he smoked a cigarette while waiting to vote.

Candidate Brice Parfait Kolelas said the opposition would use satellite phones to circumvent the communications blackout in order to monitor the results.

"We are making a compilation," he said. "I don't encourage taking to the streets, but people need to protect their vote."

Former colonial power France criticised the conditions of October's constitutional referendum, saying they did not allow an accurate assessment of the result. The European Union decided not to send a mission to observe Sunday's vote.

**Ali Haddad retire le FCE de l'Africa CEO Forum d'Abidjan à cause d'un problème protocolaire**  
21/03/2016 /huffpostmaghreb.com

Les organisateurs de ce forum, dont les travaux commencent aujourd'hui, ont reçu un courrier explicatif du retrait du Forum des chefs d'entreprises. Détail gênant : les Ivoiriens comptent les gestes de solidarité après l'attentat du Grand Bassam qui a fait 18 victimes.

L'Africa CEO Forum d'Abidjan a-t-il manqué de considération à Ali Haddad, le président du Forum des chefs d'entreprises (FCE) en ne prévoyant pas son intervention dans sa session protocolaire inaugurale ? Il semble en tout cas que ce "manquement" a suffi à déclencher le courroux de l'homme d'affaires algérien qui a adressé un courrier aux organisateurs pour décliner l'invitation après l'avoir accepté pour le forum, qui se tient les 21 et 22 mars dans la capitale ivoirienne.

Une source proche de l'organisation patronale algérienne a évoqué également un changement d'agenda lié à la situation en Côte d'Ivoire après l'attentat du 13 mars dernier au Grand Bassam qui n'a pas permis au président Ivoirien Alassane Ouattara de recevoir le président du FCE et ses accompagnateurs. Une délégation du FCE présidée par Ali Haddad avait été reçue par le Premier ministre éthiopien en février dernier, en marge du 10 e Sommet économique Afrique-Etats Unis.

Un membre de la direction du FCE a affirmé à Maghreb Emergent que les organisateurs de l'Africa CEO Forum d'Abidjan, n'ont pas pris en considération l'importance de son organisation et de l'économie algérienne dans l'agencement de ses travaux.

"Si nous n'avons pas la parole en bonne position pour parler de l'attractivité de l'Algérie et des performances de ses produits, cela ne nous intéresse pas de faire seulement du networking dans ce forum comme ont l'air de nous le suggérer les organisateurs", a expliqué la source du FCE. Un courrier en bonne et due forme a été adressé au comité d'organisation pour déplorer cet état de fait et en tirer les conséquences : la non-participation de la délégation du FCE à cette édition.

Une mauvaise évaluation politique

La décision du FCE a-t-elle tenu compte du contexte particulier dans lequel a basculé la Côte-d'Ivoire depuis le dimanche 13 mars et l'attaque terroriste sur la plage du Grand Bassam, à 45 kilomètres d'Abidjan ? Il semble que non. Les autorités ivoiriennes ont assuré très rapidement les organisateurs du Africa CEO Forum 2016 de sa tenue en dépit de l'émotion soulevée dans le pays par cet attentat revendiqué par AQMI qui a fait 18 victimes.

Les ivoiriens sont très sensibles aux marques de solidarité africaines dans ce contexte tendu, et la participation à l’Africa CEO Forum en est une. Le président Ouattara aurait d’ailleurs demandé à être informé des désistements. La délégation du FCE et celle du patronat de l’Île Maurice étaient les seules à avoir annulé leur participation. Sans doute pas pour des raisons similaires.

Le membre du FCE a voulu dédramatiser la décision de ne pas aller à Abidjan : "D’autres chefs d’entreprises algériens, y compris des membres du FCE, seront présents". Il reste que le choix du président Haddad exprime assez clairement l’incapacité de l’Afrique subsaharienne à devenir une grande priorité pour les organisations patronales algériennes.

Le FCE avait prévu de lancer avant la fin de l’année 2015 un Forum d’affaires africain d’Alger sur le modèle de celui de Casablanca qui rassemble chaque année les acteurs de l’économie continentale. Plus personne n’en parle.

Pour sa part, l’Africa CEO Forum ne se manque pas pour toute organisation qui songe sérieusement à implanter des entreprises membres sur un terrain où "l’écart avec l’offre de produits et de services marocains ne peut être comblé avant deux décennies" selon un officiel algérien présent sur le continent. En 2015, l’Africa CEO Forum d’Abidjan a regroupé 1.300 entreprises africaines et 500 PDG venant de 63 pays.

UN/AFRICA :

US/AFRICA :

CANADA/AFRICA :

AUSTRALIA/AFRICA :

EU/AFRICA :

**The Libya refugee route threatens Europe**  
March 20, 2016/neurope.eu

While the European Union spent weeks scrambling to reach a deal with the Turkish government in order to control the refugee and migrant wave via Turkey, Greece and Balkans, the so called ‘Libya route’ has remained wide open.

Italian officials are blaming the good weather for a recent increase in migrant crossings from Libya. Just last week, at least 3,000 migrants made the journey from Libya.

As reported by The Associated Press, some 712 migrants were picked up on March 17. This is in addition to the 2,400 migrants from the two previous days. All of them were crowded in small, flimsy rubber dinghies and stranded in international waters near Libya. Three bodies were found during the rescue operations undertaken by mostly Italian ships on March 15.

Meanwhile, the United Nations refugee agency (UNHCR) reported that 9,800 migrants arrived in Italy this year through March 16, compared with 7,400 in the same period last year. UNHCR spokeswoman Barbara Molinaro said it is too early to speak of trends and this kind of concentration in short periods is not unprecedented — even if periods of calm seas in the winter are limited.

Most of the migrant arrivals so far this year are migrants from sub-Saharan Africa, Molinaro said. It is a flow that indicates that the closures along the route from Greece have not led to a shift of the people in that area toward Libya.

“They are the same that transited Libya last year, and not the Syrians, Afghan and Iraqis who go through Greece,” she explained. “There is no sign of a change of route although we don’t exclude that there can be one.”

The unresolved crisis in Libya threatens Europe for many reasons. Terrorism, drugs and cigarettes smuggling, as well as human trafficking are some of the issues that Europe needs to start worrying about in relation to the situation unfolding in Libya.

This North African state is in turmoil. It represents a route for human trafficking that connects the Mediterranean coast with the entire sub-Sahara region. As Islamic State advances and as the factions of the political establishment in Libya continue to fight each other, the land and the coasts are fertile for all kinds of illicit activities.

Meanwhile, war, famine, terrorism, environmental disaster, crime, unemployment and chronic poverty have formed in a lethal mix that is generating a constant human movement in most African states. A considerable part of them aim to reach Europe and the safety it offers.

And just because there is a massive wave of refugees and migrants arriving on the Greek island, does not mean that the other routes are closed and secure.

The Libyan route, as is the case with the other routes from Morocco, out of Ceuta, the Spanish territory in North Africa, is still open.

In the case of the Libyan route, it is necessary to be prepared for a refugee and migrant wave as soon as Turkey starts implementing the deal it reached with the EU.

And the solution in Mediterranean Sea is of course not to build one or many fences or to create ‘hot spots’ in southern Italy.

The solution can only be found at the end of the crisis in Libya. This is the direction the political forces must now move towards.

A political solution, however, is not yet possible because the two Libyan governments are nowhere near reaching an agreement. One obstacle is that foreign governments continue to play with the

Libyan crisis. As such, they are helping the jihadist forces become more and more dangerous.

It is in our interest, in terms of security, for Libya to find the exit from the current dead-end situation. Those who are responsible for the bloodshed and the chaos must be pressed to end their involvement in trying to shape the future of Libya and, to some extent, our future as well.

CHINA/AFRICA :

Beijing poached ally in Africa 'to put pressure on new president Tsai Ing-wen': Taiwan's security agency

Monday, 21 March, 2016/scmp.com

Taiwan's top security agency said on Monday mainland China's move to set up diplomatic ties with one of the island's former African allies was meant to put pressure on president-elect Tsai Ing-wen to "fall in line" before her inauguration on May 20.

Beijing resumed ties with the small west African state of Gambia last week, ending an unofficial diplomatic truce between the mainland and Taiwan following landslide wins in presidential and parliamentary elections by Tsai and her pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party.  
Gambia and Beijing rekindle ties, Taipei expresses regret at shift of allegiance

Gambia was one of only a few African countries, along with Burkina Faso, Swaziland and São Tomé and Príncipe, to recognise Taiwan, which Beijing regards as a wayward Chinese province to be recovered by force if necessary.

Mainland China and Taiwan have for years tried to poach each other's allies, often dangling generous aid packages in front of leaders of developing nations.

Taiwan's normally secretive National Security Bureau said in a report presented to parliament on Monday that the island's ties with its few remaining diplomatic allies were at risk of being undermined by financial aid packages from Beijing.

"The warning to our new government was thick with meaning," the bureau's report said.

"It had the intention of pressuring president-elect Tsai Ing-wen to respond in her May 20 inaugural speech in a way that falls in line with China's expectations," the bureau said.

Tsai said in an interview carried by one of Taiwan's biggest dailies, the China Times, on Monday that both sides should show good will in the period before she is sworn in.

"Through the expression of goodwill, the hope is to build a foundation of trust," Tsai said.  
Taiwan's first female president Tsai Ing-wen warns China after landslide victory

She said through a spokesman last week she hoped the Gambia case was not a "targeted move" by Beijing.

Mainland China has repeatedly warned her against any moves towards independence, while Tsai has stuck to her stance of maintaining the status quo without offering a clear policy.

Gambia broke its ties with Taiwan in 2013, but did not immediately establish ties with Beijing.

Taiwan has only 22 allies in the world, including the Vatican City.

INDIA/AFRICA :

BRAZIL/AFRICA :

EN BREF, CE 21 Mars 2016... AGNEWS/DAM, NY, 21/03/2016