



(Le président sud-africain Jacob Zuma a subi un revers cinglant jeudi avec un arrêt historique de la plus haute juridiction du pays qui l'a reconnu coupable d'avoir violé la Constitution en utilisant des fonds publics pour sa résidence privée et lui a ordonné de rembourser l'argent.)

BURUNDI :

Burundi: arrestation de l'humoriste Kigingi

Par RFI/le 01-04-2016

Nouveau signe de l'intolérance de plus en plus grandissante au Burundi : un célèbre humoriste burundais a été arrêté il y a quatre jours par le Service national de renseignement (SNR), alors qu'il était à l'intérieur du pays. Alfred-Aubin Mugenzi a été arrêté pour un sketch sur le président Pierre Nkurunziza, qu'il avait lancé en juin 2015, alors qu'il se produisait au Rwanda voisin, au tout début de la profonde crise que traverse le Burundi et qui est née de sa décision de briguer un troisième mandat.

Ce jour-là Alfred-Aubin Mugenzi plus connu sous son nom de scène Kigingi, avait dit en riant qu'il espérait que la vidéo de ce sketch n'atterrirait jamais à Bujumbura. Mais depuis quelques jours, il circulait sur les réseaux sociaux.

Et dans ce sketch, Kigingi raconte devant un public conquis comment Pierre Nkurunziza, grand amateur de football devant l'Eternel, refuse de quitter le terrain après avoir reçu un deuxième carton jaune, en expliquant que même pour la présidence du Burundi il a brigué un troisième mandat malgré la Constitution qui le lui interdisait.

Dix mois plus tard, le célèbre humoriste burundais et animateur de radio ne pensait plus à cette soirée lorsqu'il a été arrêté mardi soir à Muramvya, dans le centre du Burundi, au cours d'une tournée de promotion d'une bière locale.

Les agents de ce service, qui dépend directement de la présidence du Burundi, l'ont transféré, les bras liés dans le dos par une corde, vers l'un de leurs centres de détention à Bujumbura dès le lendemain, selon des témoins.

Depuis lors, sa famille qui a tout fait pour avoir de ses nouvelles était morte d'inquiétude, car depuis le début de la crise au Burundi, tortures, disparitions forcées et exécutions sommaires sont devenues monnaie courante dans ce pays, selon les organisations des droits de l'homme et l'ONU.

Contacté par RFI, un des grands responsables de ces très redoutés services secrets burundais a confirmé jeudi l'arrestation de l'artiste pour « outrage à chef d'Etat », en laissant entrevoir une possibilité de sa libération « pour cette fois ».

Exécutions extrajudiciaires au Burundi : le procureur général déconseille la saisine de la CPI
voaafrique.com/01/04/2016

Le procureur général du Burundi a appelé les familles de victimes d'exécutions extrajudiciaires présumées, qui viennent de saisir la Cour pénale internationale (CPI) et l'ONU, à plutôt déposer leurs plaintes auprès de ses services car ils seraient en train de se faire "manipuler".

M. Valentin Bagorikunda réagissait à la saisine de la CPI et du Haut commissaire de l'ONU aux droits de l'Homme vendredi par un collectif d'avocats agissant au nom de 60 familles, dont certains membres ont selon elles été victimes d'exécutions extrajudiciaires.

"Le procureur général invite toutes les familles des victimes (...) à venir déposer leurs plaintes et autres éléments de preuves afin que des enquêtes soient entamées", a-t-il indiqué dans un communiqué lu à la télévision nationale mardi soir et parvenu à l'AFP mercredi.

Bujumbura a nié jusqu'ici les cas d'exécutions extrajudiciaires dénoncés par plusieurs organisations des droits de l'Homme, accusant plutôt une partie de son opposition, désormais armée, d'être à l'origine de ces exactions.

"Si d'aventure certains faits infractionnels commis sur le territoire burundais n'ont pas fait l'objet de poursuites, c'est parce que (ils) n'ont pas été rapportés au ministère public", a justifié le procureur général, dénonçant "le risque de manipulation dont ils peuvent faire l'objet en confiant leurs plaintes à des gens qui ont d'autres agendas que la justice".

L'équipe d'avocats comprend Armel Niyongere, avocat au barreau du Burundi et grande figure de la société civile burundaise aujourd'hui en exil, Léon Lef Forster, avocat au barreau de Paris, et Bernard Maingain, avocat au barreau de Bruxelles très engagé dans de nombreux dossiers politiques. Selon M. Bagorikunda, Me Niyongere et Maingain font l'objet de poursuites judiciaires au Burundi.

Selon ces avocats, "la motivation des familles est de lutter contre l'impunité et d'amener un jour devant les cours et tribunaux les personnes qui ont participé à ces crimes, quelle que soit leur position actuelle dans l'appareil d'Etat burundais".

Le Burundi est plongé depuis plus de 10 mois dans une crise politique profonde, née de la volonté du président Pierre Nkurunziza de se maintenir au pouvoir pour un troisième mandat, qu'il a obtenu en juillet.

Les violences, désormais armées, ont déjà fait plus de 400 morts et poussé plus de 250.000 personnes à quitter le pays, alors que l'ONU et les organisations des droits de l'Homme ont dénoncé de nombreux cas d'arrestations arbitraires, de torture, de disparitions forcées, d'exécutions extrajudiciaires, ainsi que l'existence de fosses communes.

RWANDA :

Retired Rwanda Politician Dies While Jailed in Burundi as a Spy

By REUTERS/MARCH 31, 2016

NAIROBI, Kenya — A retired senior Rwandan politician has died in a Burundian jail where he was being held on suspicion of spying, both countries said on Thursday, adding to cross-border tensions that have escalated dangerously in recent months.

The politician, Jacques Bihozagara, a former Rwandan ambassador to France and Belgium, as well as a former government minister, died on Wednesday in a jail in Burundi's capital, Bujumbura, where he had been held on espionage charges since December.

"We assume he had a hypertension, and plan to carry out an autopsy today," Elie Ntungwanayo, a spokesman for Burundi's Justice Ministry said on Thursday.

Rwanda called the death suspicious.

"Jacques Bihozagara is one of many Rwandans in Burundi who died violently or suspiciously in the past months," said a Rwandan Foreign Ministry official, Eugene Ngoga.

In Washington, the State Department said Mr. Bihozagara's death highlighted concerns about reports of arbitrary arrests and torture in Burundi, and urged its government to allow monitors from the African Union and other organizations to investigate allegations of human rights abuses.

Burundi has been in political turmoil since last April, when President Pierre Nkurunziza decided to seek a third term, leading to street protests, a failed coup and an exodus of refugees across the border to Rwanda.

Burundi, where Mr. Nkurunziza eventually won re-election, accuses Rwanda of supporting a rebel group recruiting members in the refugee camps with the aim of bringing down the Burundian government, an accusation dismissed by Rwanda.

In February, a Human Rights Watch report described widespread abuses by Burundian security forces of suspected opponents.

Along with a border, Rwanda and Burundi share a legacy of violence and bloodshed between their two largest ethnic groups, the Tutsis and the Hutus.

Rwanda jails top military figures

2016-03-31 /news24.com

Kigali - A Rwandan military tribunal on Thursday condemned two senior army figures to 20 years in prison for inciting rebellion, an AFP correspondent at the Kigali court said.

"The court condemns Colonel Tom Byabagamba to 21 years in jail and a reduction in rank, and retired general Frank Rusagara to 20 years in prison," said Judge Narcisse Nsengiyumva.

Both men were once close to the inner circle of Rwandan President Paul Kagame.

Byabagamba, a serving colonel who was once head of the presidential guard, was also convicted of withholding evidence. And Rusagara, a retired brigadier-general and former secretary-general of the defence ministry, was also convicted of illegally possessing a firearm.

The two men were arrested in August 2014 and charged with inciting rebellion by "spreading rumours" and "tarnishing the image of the country and government". Both denied all the charges against them, and following the verdict, vowed to appeal.

According to military prosecutors, Byabagamba had attempted to turn military officials against the government, while Rusagara had been relaying "propaganda" from the dissident Rwanda National Congress (RNC), an exiled opposition group that includes several former top members of Kagame's ruling Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF).

During the trial, the prosecutor said Rusagara had been heard saying Rwanda "is a police state and a banana republic", and that he had described Kagame as a "dictator".

Critics of Kagame, however, say the trials expose the workings of a paranoid state that is increasingly nervous over the activities of the RNC.

Kagame, 58, has run Rwanda since his ethnic Tutsi rebel army, the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF), ended a 1994 genocide by extremists from the Hutu majority, in which an estimated 800 000 people were massacred, the vast majority of them Tutsis.

Elected first in 2003 and again in 2010, he recently announced plans to run for an exceptional third seven-year term in 2017, drawing criticism from the United States and the European Union.

Rusagara's driver, former army sergeant Francois Kabayiza, was also sentenced to five years of prison for withholding evidence. He had also denied the charges and vowed to appeal.

RDC CONGO :

UGANDA :

Uganda's Supreme Court Rejects Challenge to Presidential Election

nytimes.com/By JOSH KRON/MARCH 31, 2016

KAMPALA, Uganda — Uganda’s Supreme Court has rejected a challenge to the presidential election held in February, issuing a ruling on Thursday that secured President Yoweri Museveni a mandate for another five-year term. He has been in office since 1986.

The vote last month, seen as a pivotal moment in Uganda’s democracy as the last time Mr. Museveni will be legally allowed to appear on a presidential ballot, was marred with irregularities and widespread criticism.

The legal challenge by the third-place finisher, Amama Mbabazi, argued that Mr. Museveni was not validly elected and that Uganda’s electoral commission had disseminated false results, among other allegations. It requested a recount in more than 40 districts.

Under Ugandan law, which bars presidential candidates over the age of 75, it was the last election in which Mr. Museveni, 71, will be allowed to run.

The court said that there was not enough substantial evidence of irregularities in the election, or that the irregularities would have affected the result. Parties involved said that they were not surprised of the court’s decision.

The Supreme Court’s decision comes after a volatile month in which the case was nearly thrown out and the offices of Mr. Mbabazi’s lawyers were ransacked and physical and digital files were stolen.

Mr. Mbabazi’s legal challenge essentially represented the interests of the opposition leader, Kizza Besigye, who received roughly 35 percent of the vote, according to the electoral commission’s results, and who remains effectively under house arrest. Mr. Museveni received about 61 percent of the vote.

On the day of the vote, polling places in Kampala, the populous capital, where the opposition had significant support, opened only hours before they were meant to close because ballot papers were missing.

This meant that the polls were forced to reopen the next day, but that the electoral commission did not wait to begin announcing preliminary results. Critics have argued that this dissuaded some in the capital from voting.

When the official results were released by the commission, the numbers did not include data from much of the Kampala metropolitan area, possibly representing hundreds of thousands of votes, according to electoral observers.

Mr. Besigye was arrested on the first night of the vote, accused of trying to access a facility where ballot-stuffing is alleged to have taken place, and then released. He was arrested again the next day after tabulating and disseminating polling results himself.

The United States and the European Union urged the opposition to challenge the election results in court. On Thursday, the United States called for calm after the ruling by Uganda’s Supreme Court.

“We hope that the government will now address the grievances voiced by its own people in the wake of these elections,” a statement by the American Embassy in Kampala said. “Uganda’s future prosperity and democratic progress will depend on such actions.”

Bombastic Magazine moves Uganda another step forward

March 31, 2016/76crimes.com

The remarkable work of Bombastic Magazine continues this week with the publication of its second issue.

Along with its associated African LGBTI media site Kuchu Times, the Uganda-based magazine provides a place where the voice of sexual and gender minorities can be heard in a country, and continent, where they are often silenced or ignored.

The first edition of Bombastic Magazine appeared in late 2014. Since then its electronic version has been downloaded more than 2 million times.

Longtime Ugandan activist Kasha Jacqueline Nabagesera, the magazine's editor-in-chief, writes that, because of Bombastic Magazine, people "who have been stigmatised for so long are now opening up sharing their lives with the world like never before."

The first issue changed many minds of people who "were anti-LGBTI simply because all the information handed down to them made our community out to be nothing but immoral and out to get their children. We had parents asking u how best they could mend their relationships with their LGBTI-identifying children," she wrote in the introduction to the second issue.

She expressed her hope that the stories and commentaries of the second edition will produce similar changes.

"I believe that everyone should have the right to be who they are and not to be judged for it, and hopefully with this magazine more people will adopt this belief too," she wrote.

The free print version of Bombastic has been distributed to many markets throughout the country by a team of volunteers. The online version of the magazine is available via issuu.com, where it comes with a "Content warning: This publication may contain content that is inappropriate for some users, as flagged by issuu's user community."

In a press release, Kuchu Times Media Group stated, "In a world where media has been used to misconstrue queer narratives, the magazine is a beacon of hope and a symbol of our resilience and continued effort in 'Reclaiming Media' by amplifying queer voice in telling of their LGBTI stories. The magazine is an anthology of stories, poems, and testimonies on varied topics including but not limited to religion, culture and health, told by the sexual and gender minority community in Uganda. ...

"This publication is a humble call to all Ugandans to understand our plight and not judge us based on the misconceptions told to them. We are not calling on Ugandans to become LGBTI nor are we asking for special treatment, we are simply calling on our fellow society to recognize that we are part and parcel of the Ugandan society and any unfair treatment towards us simply because of who we love is an injustice to the whole society."

SOUTH AFRICA :

Afrique du Sud: le président Zuma reconnu coupable d'avoir violé la Constitution

le 31 mars 2016/AFP

Johannesburg (AFP)

Le président sud-africain Jacob Zuma a subi un revers cinglant jeudi avec un arrêt historique de la plus haute juridiction du pays qui l'a reconnu coupable d'avoir violé la Constitution en utilisant des fonds publics pour sa résidence privée et lui a ordonné de rembourser l'argent.

L'opposition a immédiatement appelé à la démission de Jacob Zuma, empêtré dans plusieurs scandales, et annoncé une procédure de destitution, qui a cependant peu de chance d'aboutir.

L'Etat a payé en 2009 quelque 20 millions d'euros au cours de l'époque, officiellement pour améliorer la sécurité de la résidence privée du président. Les travaux incluaient notamment la construction d'une piscine, d'un poulailler, d'un enclos pour le bétail, d'un amphithéâtre et d'un centre d'accueil des visiteurs.

L'affaire Nkandla, du nom de la luxueuse propriété en pays zoulou (est), empoisonne Jacob Zuma depuis plusieurs années. Dans l'hémicycle, les députés de l'opposition interrompent régulièrement le chef de l'Etat en lui lançant "Rends l'argent".

Jeudi, la Cour constitutionnelle, la plus haute instance juridique d'Afrique du Sud, leur a donné raison.

Elle a ordonné au président qu'il rembourse "les travaux non liés à la sécurité", c'est-à-dire "le centre pour visiteurs, l'enclos pour bétail, le poulailler et la piscine", a expliqué le président de la Cour constitutionnelle, Mogoeng Mogoeng.

Il revient désormais au Trésor de déterminer la somme à rembourser, a-t-il précisé.

Jacob Zuma n'a "pas fait respecter, ni défendu, ni suivi la Constitution", a encore insisté Mogoeng Mogoeng, en livrant pendant plus d'une heure son arrêt accablant, rendu à l'unanimité des 11 juges de la Cour.

En 2014, la médiatrice de la République, Thuli Madonsela, chargée de veiller au bon usage des deniers publics, avait déjà estimé que le président avait "indûment bénéficié" du chantier sur son domaine et devait "rembourser un pourcentage raisonnable des coûts".

Mais le président ne s'y était pas plié. "Le fait que le président n'ait pas obtempéré (...) est une violation de la Constitution", a asséné jeudi Mogoeng Mogoeng.

- Une piscine comme réservoir d'eau -

Thuli Madonsela a salué un jugement "historique".

Le parti de gauche radicale des Combattants de la liberté économique (EFF) - à l'origine de la saisine de la Cour constitutionnelle, avec la principale formation de l'opposition, l'Alliance démocratique (DA) - a lui exhorté le président "à démissionner immédiatement".

"Nous appelons l'ANC (Congrès national africain, parti au pouvoir) à faire la chose appropriée et démettre le président", a ajouté le bruyant leader de l'EFF, Julius Malema.

De son côté, la DA a annoncé le lancement d'une procédure de destitution contre le président, dont

le second mandat expire en 2019.

La destitution, qui requiert deux-tiers des voix au parlement, a toutefois très peu de chances d'aboutir: l'ANC dispose d'une écrasante majorité au parlement (249 des 400 sièges), et Jacob Zuma "jouit toujours du soutien d'au moins 60% du comité exécutif de l'ANC, l'organe de décision du parti", selon Robert Bessling, analyste au centre de réflexion ExAfrica.

L'arrêt de la Cour constitutionnelle intervient à un moment crucial pour le président, embourbé dans plusieurs scandales, dont le plus récent concerne une famille de riches hommes d'affaires d'origine indienne soupçonnés d'intervenir dans l'attribution de postes ministériels.

Jacob Zuma est également sorti très affaibli en décembre du fiasco au ministère des Finances: en l'espace d'une semaine, trois ministres ont occupé ce portefeuille, provoquant une chute vertigineuse de la devise nationale.

Le président "dispose de moins de pouvoir au sein de l'ANC depuis le limogeage des ministres des Finances", a déclaré à l'AFP Aubrey Matshiqi, analyste à la Fondation Helen Suzman. "Mais l'érosion de son pouvoir n'est pas suffisante et ne représente pas encore une menace directe encore pour sa position."

Jacob Zuma a dit jeudi "respecter le jugement" de la Cour constitutionnelle, et "décidera (...) de l'action appropriée", alors que l'ANC craint d'enregistrer des revers lors des élections locales prévues cette année.

La saga Nkandla, en plus d'alimenter les critiques de l'opposition, a fait le bonheur des humoristes. En 2015, le ministre de la Police, Nathi Nhleko, avait blanchi le président en justifiant de façon ubuesque les travaux de Nkandla: la piscine était ainsi "un réservoir d'eau" en cas d'incendie, et le poulailler destiné à éviter que les bêtes ne s'égarer près des systèmes de sécurité.

Zuma's guilt: South Africa holds its president accountable

April 1, 2016 /post-gazette.com

South Africa's Constitutional Court declared Thursday that President Jacob G. Zuma was guilty of making \$23 million in illegal expenditures on his private residence, a verdict that may spell the end of his political career.

In a unanimous decision, the court's 11 judges said Mr. Zuma had 60 days to pay up. Improvements to his residence, located in Nkandla and carried out in the ostensible name of security, included a visitors center, a cattle enclosure, a chicken run and a swimming pool.

The case against him was brought by two opposition parties, the Economic Freedom Fighters and the Democratic Alliance, which are now howling for his impeachment. He was first elected by the South African parliament after the electoral victory of his party, the African National Congress, in 2009 and re-elected after another ANC victory in 2014.

Mr. Zuma is considered to have been the worst of South Africa's post-apartheid, majority-rule presidents. The first was the famed Nelson Mandela. The second was Thabo Mbeki, a faint copy of Mr. Mandela. He was recalled by the ANC in 2008.

Mr. Zuma has been controversial from the start. His campaign song, which he regularly performed, was called "Bring Me My Machine Gun," playing on his struggle against apartheid credentials and

promoting racial hostility. He has four wives and an estimated 20 children.

Prior to this case, Mr. Zuma was accused of letting the Indian-born Gupta family wield undue influence in South Africa. The family's business has interests in computer equipment, media and mining of uranium and gold. Mr. Zuma and the Guptas have denied any impropriety.

Whether the ANC will dump Mr. Zuma now, or wait until after this year's local government elections is not clear. What is virtually certain is that the party will now attempt to distance itself from him. The main opposition party has launched impeachment proceedings.

The only positive element in this steamy scandal is the high court's demonstration of independence and its insistence that even the president be subject to South Africa's laws.

TANZANIA :

MCC: This is what Tanzania must do to lift aid suspension

SOURCE: THE GUARDIAN /1st April 2016

The government has been told to outline how it will address concerns about the disputed election re-run in Zanzibar if it wants to reopen a partnership with the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) which has cancelled financial aid worth 1 trillion/- to the country, a senior official of the US agency said yesterday.

The MCC said Tanzanian authorities must clearly explain how the country plans to fix the Zanzibar problem in order to unlock the agency's hefty aid package.

"I think we've been very clear about what the situation was that led to the (aid) suspension," said Beth Tritter, MCC's vice-president for policy and evaluation, in an interview with Devex, a media platform for the global development community.

"If Tanzania's government wants to re-enter into partnership with MCC, it must take the lead, with a plan to address those specific concerns," Tritter added.

She said Tanzania has to guarantee political inclusivity if it wants MCC aid money suspended largely due to the March 20 polls going ahead despite a boycott by Zanzibar's main opposition party, the Civic United Front (CUF).

"We don't provide checklists at MCC. We leave it to governments to demonstrate how they're going to show their commitments to these principles, and so we'll have to look at what we get from the government of Tanzania," Tritter explained.

At its quarterly meeting on March 28, MCC's board of directors decided to cease "all activities related to the development of a second compact" for assistance to Tanzania.

The board cited the elections in semi-autonomous Zanzibar that it described as "neither inclusive nor representative," and concerns that Tanzania's Cybercrimes Act is being "used to limit freedom of expression and association," as its main reasons for the decision.

A previous vote on the MCC compact to Tanzania in December was deferred over what the board described as "governance concerns" over corruption allegations linked to the Tegeta escrow account scandal.

Some local politicians have criticised MCC for appearing to shift the goal posts after initially citing corruption as its main worry, but then shifting focus to the Zanzibar elections and the Cybercrimes law after the country appeared to have passed the graft test.

Tanzania is a major US development partner, with nearly \$600 million in assistance from the State Department and US Agency for International Development (USAID) planned for 2016.

There are a number of flagship US development initiatives currently operating in the country, including Power Africa – a part of President Barack Obama’s efforts to double access to energy in sub-Saharan Africa.

Tanzania has also been a longtime partner of MCC, signing what was at the time the largest compact in the corporation’s history in February 2008 — nearly \$700 million aimed at increasing access to electricity.

The new MCC package under consideration was also expected to support President John Magufuli’s plan to increase rural electrification as the country continues to grapple with the problem of ensuring consistent access to power as a key component of genuine economic growth.

But MCC’s scorecard, which evaluates countries’ fitness for partnership according to indicators like “control of corruption,” has apparently been trending in the wrong direction for Tanzania, with the country’s eligibility for the second compact now being so seriously questioned.

Back in December, the US ambassador to Tanzania, Mark Childress, mentioned politically-motivated arrests carried out under the auspices of the Cybercrimes Act as a reason for the initial deferral by the MCC board.

According to Sarah Rose, a senior policy analyst at the Center for Global Development and former senior development policy officer at MCC, the suspension of the partnership with Tanzania altogether is consistent with similar decisions that the corporation has made in the past with other leading partners like Honduras and Armenia.

The elections in Zanzibar could have provided MCC with a “pivotal event,” on which to base their latest suspension decision, Rose said. With slower deteriorating governance issues — like worsening corruption or challenges to civil liberties — it can be harder to judge exactly when a red line has been crossed, she added.

The MCC’s aid suspension to Tanzania was closely followed by another announcement that some members of a group comprising 14 other western donor entities had also decided to withhold hundreds of millions of US dollars in general budget support (GBS) for the country.

According to the permanent secretary in the Ministry of Finance and Planning, Servacius Likwelile, only four members of the GBS group are still on board thus far - the European Union (EU), the World Bank, the African Development Bank (AfDB), and Denmark.

The other group members - Finland, Germany, Britain, Norway, Sweden, Ireland, Canada, and Japan - did not give reasons for their withdrawal, which effectively leaves President Magufuli's government having to deal with a substantial external aid shortfall just months before it unveils its maiden budget for fiscal year 2016/17.

Still, the Ministry of Finance and Planning said the aid withdrawals were not likely to affect

implementation of the upcoming budget, which starts on July 1. This is despite Tanzania having been one of Africa's biggest per capita aid recipients for many years, depending heavily on donor support for development projects.

President Magufuli on Tuesday this week responded to the MCC aid suspension by reiterating his call for Tanzanians to work harder and harder towards ending the country's dependence on foreign aid money which usually comes with "conditions".

KENYA :

I thank Jubilee for not reacting to Cord protest

Apr. 01, 2016/the-star.co.ke

First of all, the President's speech was very clear, of course, despite the unnecessary disruption by members of Cord. The din was not just an affront to the President as a person and Jubilee but to the State, because the address was an address to the nation. It was not the State of the Jubilee government: It was the State of the Nation, which we all subscribe to. In Kenya, we only have one President and the State of the Nation Address is a provision of our constitution.

I think the President was very clear, and, of course, I want to thank the Jubilee members for not having responded to the provocation. The President was clear that our nation is strong. He spoke about our nationhood, about the fight for Independence and what our founding fathers were trying to achieve. We must be a nation on the path of progress and he was able to demonstrate how Jubilee and how his government is turning promise into prosperity for each and every Kenyan. Of course the strength of the economy was something important.

Even as we transform our nationhood, our economy is underlined by one basic belief – that all Kenyans should have a fair shot at life. And this is done by equalizing opportunities for everyone. Our GDP is growing by 5.8 per cent and moving to 6 per cent, despite all the external threats. Our shilling has remained strong and there is a vote of confidence in our country from different institutions around the world.

For example, the World Bank Ease of Doing Business indicates that Kenya is the third most improved country in the world. But most important is the fact that we all remain Kenyans, despite different convictions and different religions. We must always remember that, at the end of the day, we are one people. One thing that stood out was the recognition of the late Salah Farah, who actually sacrificed his life when terrorists were trying to separate Christians and Muslims.

You know this is coming hot on the heels of David Ndi's article trying to question the existence of the nation: We must keep on believing. There are places, for example the road he mentioned in Marsabit – from Reile River to Moyale.

This is a road that reduces a journey of three to four days to eight hours. It is transformation. Every part of our country is actually receiving some form of development. One highlight was the clarity on the issue of the war on corruption.

Donald Trump to visit Kenya over lion's death

Apr. 01, 2016/the-star.co.ke

American presidential contender Donald Trump is to visit Kenya in the near future.

He wants to speak to the Kenya Wildlife Service about making celebrity lion Mohawk the new symbol for his presidential campaign, according to a story from the American News Agency.

Mohawk was shot dead by KWS rangers on Wednesday after it strayed from the Nairobi National Park.

A ranger killed the king of the jungle by spraying him with nine bullets.

They said they killed it because the KWS had run out of tranquiliser to sedate the animal.

The death caused a storm on social media.

Trump is expected to contact KWS chairman Richard Leakey this week through their mutual friend Angelina Jolie, who is making a film about Leakey's life.

“ This magnificent lion had so much in common with Donald,” Jason Linklater, a brand adviser to the Trump campaign, told ANA.

“ The lion was fearless, just like Donald. Mohawk was at the top of the food chain, just like Donald. And Mohawk had an extraordinary mane of hair, just like Donald.”

It is estimated Trump could pay up to US\$1 million (Sh100 million) for permission to use Mohawk's image in his marketing campaigns.

Maxine Watson, an adviser to the Clinton campaign, said: “Trump is making a mistake using Mohawk for his campaign.

The lion got shot dead just like Hillary will dump him. Using the lion shows Trump is a loser.”

And if you believe all this, you have forgotten that it is April Fool's Day.

ANGOLA :

AU/AFRICA :

UN/AFRICA :

More than 100 victims tell UN of peacekeeper sex abuse

Carole Landry/AFP/March 31, 2016

United Nations (United States) (AFP) - More than 100 victims have come forward in the Central African Republic with appalling new accounts of sexual abuse, including bestiality, by UN peacekeepers and French troops, the United Nations said Thursday.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon was "shocked to the core" by the allegations that emerged after a UN team traveled to south-central Kemo prefecture to interview the women and girls.

"We must face the fact that a number of troops sent to protect people instead acted with hearts of darkness," UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said.

UN rights officers have so far interviewed 108 alleged victims, "the vast majority" of whom are under-age girls who were raped, sexually abused or exploited by foreign troops, he said.

UN teams received accounts that troops from France's Sangaris force coerced girls to engage in bestiality in return for small amounts of money.

AIDS-Free World, a civil society group that tracks peacekeeper sex abuse cases, said three girls told a UN rights officer that in 2014 they were tied up and undressed by a Sangaris commander inside a camp and forced to have sex with a dog.

Dujarric stressed that "the facts have not been ascertained" in what could be the most serious wave of allegations to date to hit the troubled peace mission in the Central African Republic.

France's UN Ambassador Francois Delattre and US Ambassador Samantha Power both called the allegations "sickening."

French authorities are determined to "shed full light" on the reported cases and will take "exemplary disciplinary action" if the allegations are substantiated, said Delattre.

France sent its Sangaris intervention force to the Central African Republic in December 2013 and while the troops are not part of the UN mission, they have been mandated by the Security Council to help restore peace to the country.

- 'Widespread' abuse -

After the UN Security Council held a closed-door meeting on the latest allegations, US Deputy Ambassador David Pressman said they appeared to show that the abuse was "widespread and systematic."

Describing the claims as "extremely concerning", Pressman said they should be met with a "swift, full and urgent response."

UN rights chief Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein called for investigations that "leave no stone unturned."

Under UN rules, the responsibility for investigating and prosecuting peacekeeper sexual abuse lies with the countries that contribute the troops and police to the peace missions.

In a first, Dujarric said the United Nations would carry out joint investigations with Burundi and Gabon of the allegations that took place between 2013 and 2015.

The Central African peacekeeping operation, known as MINUSCA, counts about 12,600 foreign police and soldiers, as well as more than 500 foreign civilians.

The UN mission took over from an African Union force in September 2014 as the country was still reeling from a wave of sectarian bloodshed.

As disturbing allegations of sexual assault by troops targeting civilians mounted, Ban in August fired the mission chief, but new claims have continued to emerge.

Earlier this week, the United Nations reported two new cases of sexual abuse by Burundian and Moroccan troops, including one that involved a 14-year-old girl.

In an interview with AFP before the bestiality allegations were disclosed, UN peacekeeping chief Herve Ladsous denounced the wave of allegations as "abominable".

"I am pushing for two ideas: firstly, contributor countries must agree to hold court martials on the spot, where their troops are serving," he said in Central Africa's capital Bangui.

"Secondly, when Blue Helmets are recruited, DNA samples should be taken -- on a confidential basis," he added, explaining these biological records could prove crucial to establishing the truth of any future allegations.

Libya: UN to 'lift fund sanctions' if government regains control
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The UN has said it will consider lifting sanctions on Libya's sovereign wealth fund if a UN-backed government can regain control of the country.

The sovereign wealth fund contains an estimated \$67bn but has been restricted by sanctions since 2011.

The UN-backed unity government arrived in Tripoli on Wednesday but remains confined to the capital's port area after reports of gunfire in the city.

The new government is opposed by the coalition that controls Tripoli.

Over recent days, the city's airspace was intermittently closed to stop the new government, which has been based in neighbouring Tunisia, from arriving by air.

In a televised address, the head of the Tripoli authorities, Khalifa Ghweil, said he regarded the politicians as interlopers and said they were not welcome.

He urged "the illegitimate outsiders to surrender and be safe in our custody or to return to where they came from".

If the unity government can regain control of Libya, the UN's 15-member security council has pledged to lift an asset freeze on the Libyan Investment Authority (LIA).

The freeze was imposed in 2011 to prevent former leader Muammar Gaddafi removing funds from the country.

The security council unanimously renewed sanctions on Libya on Thursday and requested the new unity government confirm "as soon as it exercises sole and effective oversight" over the LIA,

National Oil Corporation and the Central Bank of Libya.

But it is not clear how the unity government will be able to take over state institutions in Tripoli, given the stiff opposition they face.

Libya has been in chaos since the 2011 overthrow of Gaddafi by Nato-backed forces.

From 2014 it has had two competing administrations, one in Tripoli backed by powerful militias and the other about 1,000km (620 miles) away in the port city of Tobruk.

Western powers have recognised the new unity government as Libya's sole legitimate government but it faces opposition in east and west Libya.

In December, some rival lawmakers signed up to the UN agreement to form a unity government, but the deal has not yet been backed by all the country's many militia brigades that formed after the uprising.

The deal saw the formation of a nine-member Presidency Council, which includes the unity Prime Minister Fayez Sarraj who arrived with some of his deputies at a naval base in Tripoli on Wednesday.

Mr Sarraj said it was time to turn a new page and reconcile, saying he intended to build state institutions and implement a ceasefire.

"Revenge, alienation, antipathy, and hatred don't build a state," the AP news agency quoted him as saying.

UN envoy Martin Kobler said the politicians' arrival in Tripoli - after at least two failed attempts to fly in - marked "an important step in Libya's democratic transition and path to peace, security and prosperity".

US Secretary of State John Kerry said it was "not the time for obstructionists to hold back progress".

US/AFRICA :

CANADA/AFRICA :

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CHINA/AFRICA :

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