

ARRIVEE DU DANGEREUX VACCIN COVID19 EN AFRIQUE POUR DEBUT 2020 | CHINA : Nation, AU pact to boost BRI (Belt and Road Initiative) in Africa | BURUNDI-ONU : 1 MILLION de BURUNDI marchent pour une victoire PANAFRICAINE | RDC CONGO : Union africaine - Félix Tshisekedi prendra les commandes en février 2021 | CENTRAFRIQUE : Sur Facebook, la guerre secrète de l'armée française en Centrafrique | LYBIA : Argent libyen: Hortefeux, «frère» de Sarkozy, est mis en examen à son tour



SOURCES : <https://www.digitalcongo.net> | global.chinadaily.com.cn | La Libre.Be | aa.com.tr | yenisafak.com | ecofinagency.com | mediapart.fr | Le Soir.BE | angop.ao | Agence Ecofin | inforos.ru | ethiotube.usmains.com | The New Times | monitor.co.ug | burundi-agnews.org | plenglish.com | Haïti Libre

L'ARRIVEE DU DANGEREUX VACCIN COVID19 EN AFRIQUE PAR L'INTERMEDIAIRE DE CES PAYS :

NIGERIA : Nigeria to acquire COVID-19 vaccine in January

SENEGAL : Les premières doses de vaccin contre le Covid-19 disponibles au Sénégal en mars 2021 (directeur de la prévention)

COTE D'IVOIRE : Coronavirus - Côte d'Ivoire to vaccinate its population from April 2021

KENYA : Kenya orders 24M doses of COVID-19 vaccine

SUDAN : Sudan to provide 8.4 million COVID-19 vaccines

HAÏTI : La PNH mobilise et déploie ses unités spéciales contre les gangs et bandits

BURUNDI / ONU : 1 MILLION de BURUNDI marchent pour une victoire PANAFRICAINNE - le Conseil de Sécurité de l'ONU retire le Burundi de son agenda

RWANDA : Regional military chiefs meet in Kigali

UGANDA : Why Museveni moved top army, police chiefs

KENYA : Kenya orders 24M doses of COVID-19 vaccine | East African nation to receive shots from Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance

RDC CONGO : Union africaine - Félix Tshisekedi prendra les commandes en février 2021

ETHIOPIA : EU suspends nearly €90M in aid to Ethiopia over internal conflict

BOTSWANA : De Beers' full-year diamonds sales down by a third in 2020

SOUTH AFRICA : BRICS' bank approves five new projects in Brazil, Russia, South Africa worth \$2.7 bln

ANGOLA : La Total Eren et Greentech construisent un parc solaire en Angola

MOZAMBIQUE : 250 millions \$ pour la centrale thermique de Temane (128MW), construite par l'Espagnol TSK, achevée fin 2021

CHINA : Nation, AU pact to boost BRI (Belt and Road Initiative) in Africa

UNION AFRICAINE : L'UA exhorte ses membres à adopter les tests antigéniques pour améliorer la capacité de test du COVID-19

CENTRAFRIQUE : Sur Facebook, la guerre secrète de l'armée française en Centrafrique

MALI : Debate on army's rule and presence of foreign forces

LYBIA : Argent libyen: Hortefeux, «frère» de Sarkozy, est mis en examen à son tour

MAROC : Le Maroc et Israël normalisent leurs relations, annonce Trump | La reconnaissance US de la marocanité du Sahara ouvre les perspectives d'un développement durable pour les pays du Maghreb (PVM)

***** DIASPORA *****

HAÏTI :

Haïti - Sécurité : La PNH mobilise et déploie ses unités spéciales contre les gangs et bandits

<https://www.haitilibre.com/article-32535-haiti-securite-la-pnh-mobilise-et-deploie-ses-unites-speciales-contre-les-gangs-et-bandits.html>

La Police Nationale d'Haïti (PNH) informe la population que des opérations policières sont en train d'être menées afin de pacifier les quartiers dits de « non-droit » en vue de rétablir la Paix et faire régner l'ordre, notamment dans des zones sensibles de la région métropolitaine.

Dans ce cadre, les forces de l'ordre, sur instruction du Commandant en chef Léon Charles, ont investi récemment le quartier de village de Dieu et ses zones avoisinantes <https://www.haitilibre.com/article-32453-haiti-flash-la-pnh-reprend-le-controle-de-village-de-dieu.html> dans le but de traquer et de déloger les bandits qui occupent ces zones et quartiers constituant l'entrée ou la sortie Sud de Port-au-Prince.

Le Commandant Charles est déterminé à remplir sa mission et mettra en œuvre toutes les stratégies régulières de police afin de libérer la population de ces assaillants.

Plusieurs structures dont la Direction des Renseignements Généraux (DRG), la Direction Centrale de la Police Administrative (DCPA), la Direction Centrale de la Police Judiciaire (DCPJ) et des unités spécialisées telles que le Corps d'Intervention et de Maintien d'Ordre (CIMO), les Unités Départementales de Maintien de l'Ordre (UDMO), la Brigade d'Opération et d'Intervention Départementale (BOID), les Garde-Côtes, l'Unité de Sécurité Générale du Palais national (USGPN), le Groupe d'Intervention de la Police Nationale (SWAT), le Service Départemental de Police Judiciaire, (SDPJ - Ouest) et la Brigade d'Intervention et de Recherches (BRI) sont mobilisées à cette fin.

La PNH souligne que les opérations se poursuivent et ne prendront fin que lorsque la population pourra tranquillement vaquer à ses occupations sans se préoccuper de sa sécurité. HL/ TB/ HaïtiLibre

GUADELOUPE :

Serge Gouteyron est le nouveau préfet de Saint-Barthélemy et de Saint-Martin

<https://la1ere.francetvinfo.fr/guadeloupe/saint-martin/serge-gouteyron-est-le-nouveau-prefet-de-saint-barthelemy-et-de-saint-martin-903920.html>

Les îles du Nord ont un nouveau préfet : Serge Gouteyron a pris ses fonctions, ce mardi 15 décembre 2020. Après les habituelles cérémonies protocolaires, le représentant de l'Etat est entré de plein pied dans sa fonction, en abordant le dossier du décès de la nageuse, la semaine dernière. (...)

MARTINIQUE :

L'arrivée massive des touristes en Martinique source de tensions

<https://la1ere.francetvinfo.fr/martinique/l-arrivee-massive-des-touristes-en-martinique-source-de-tensions-903490.html>

Mardi 15 décembre, six avions arrivent avec à leurs bords de nombreux touristes. Ces arrivées massives suscitent de nombreuses réactions au sein de la population. Un afflux qui ne suffira pas à sauver la fréquentation de l'aéroport qui a perdu presque 50% de voyageurs

La situation sanitaire est plus favorable en Martinique que dans l'hexagone, les libertés individuelles sont par conséquent plus grandes. De plus, de nombreux pays ont fermé leurs frontières. Les compagnies aériennes pratiquent des offres promotionnelles. Le comité Martiniquais du tourisme a lancé une vaste opération publicitaire pour faire connaître la destination. (...)

CARAÏBES :

Réunion entre la Chine et des pays des Caraïbes sur la réponse au COVID-19

http://french.china.org.cn/china/txt/2020-12/17/content_77022337.htm

La Chine et neuf pays des Caraïbes ayant des relations diplomatiques ont tenu mercredi leur deuxième réunion spéciale des vices-ministres des Affaires étrangères sur le COVID-19 par liaison vidéo.

Le vice-ministre chinois des Affaires étrangères, Zheng Zeguang, et Kenneth Darroux, ministre des Affaires étrangères du Commonwealth de la Dominique, ont coprésidé la réunion.

M. Zheng a présenté à ses homologues des Caraïbes la prévention et le contrôle du COVID-19 par la Chine ainsi que la situation concernant son développement social et économique.

Il a salué la coopération entre les deux parties pour lutter ensemble contre la pandémie et a souligné que la Chine prendrait des mesures plus concrètes pour soutenir les pays des Caraïbes dans leur réponse au COVID-19 et leur reprise économique.

Les représentants des pays des Caraïbes ont salué les réalisations de la Chine concernant la réponse au COVID-19 et la reprise du travail et de la production.

Ils ont exprimé leur gratitude pour l'aide désintéressée de la Chine et leur volonté d'approfondir la coopération avec la Chine dans tous les domaines, de renforcer la coordination et la communication sur les affaires internationales et de rétablir le développement économique et social dès que possible (...)

JAMAICA :

No party at infirmary, says McKenzie

http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/news/no-party-at-infirmary-says-mckenzie_210132?profile=1373

LOCAL Government Minister Desmond McKenzie yesterday blasted unnamed organisers who, he said, have been advertising an event to be held at the Portland infirmary in Port Antonio.

“This organisation had no discussions at all with the Portland Municipal Corporation. There is no permission that has been granted, but yet these individuals are out there soliciting money under the guise that they are putting on a treat for the homeless and the infirmary,” he said. “I want to advise the public that there is no such event that is planned to take place in any infirmary across the country.”

Under the Disaster Risk Management Act, one of the tools in the Government's arsenal against COVID-19, mass gatherings are not allowed, and certainly not at places that house vulnerable groups such as the elderly.

It has, generally, been a challenge getting full compliance with the regulations, and the authorities have been calling on the public to help report events being held in contravention of the rules. An appeal launched last Friday yielded more than 130 tips by Tuesday. – Brittny Hutchinson

BRAZIL :

The Legacy of Black Consciousness Day Resounds #BLM in Brazil

<https://www.africanews.com/2020/11/24/the-legacy-of-black-consciousness-day-resounds-blm-in-brazil/>

Another Afro-Brazilian Life Bites the Dust at the Hands of Police

João Alberto Silveira Freitas is the 40-year-old Afro-Brazilian man who was beaten to death by two white men in the French-owned supermarket franchise, Carrefour in Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. A violent incident that occurred following an argument between the three men and which was caught on video by onlookers filming on their smartphones. (...)

CUBA :

South Africa and Cuba strengthen trade relations

<https://www.plenglish.com/index.php?o=rn&id=62807&SEO=south-africa-and-cuba-strengthen-trade-relations>

Pretoria, Dec 17 (Prensa Latina) Mtho Xulu, president of the South African Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and his Cuban counterpart Antonio Luis Carricarte virtually signed an important cooperation agreement between the two entities.

According to the text, among other obligations, both Chambers of Commerce will disseminate to businessmen information on goods, services and possibilities of association, especially in the sectors of agriculture, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, industry/manufacturing, health and education.

According to the agreement, signed on Wednesday from both capitals, the company-to-company commitments will be extended, to promote trade associations, mainly in these sectors.

The two Chambers will collaborate in the promotion and participation in fairs and exhibitions, and will jointly organize trade missions and business visits, to increase investment, creation of joint ventures and advantageous business opportunities for the two countries, the text noted.

Addressing the meeting, Cuban Ambassador to South Africa Rodolfo Benitez Verson recalled how the two governments, at the highest level, agree on the need to rapidly increase and expand the economic and commercial relations, as well as investments, to equalize the very high level of excellent diplomatic and political ties.

The signing of a cooperation agreement between the Chambers of Commerce of Cuba and South Africa is another important practical step in that direction, the diplomat said.

Cuba and South Africa are currently implementing successful cooperation agreements in areas such as health, education, public works, human settlements, infrastructure, science, information and communication technologies, sports, the environment, water and sanitation, among others.

ef/iff/jcm/mv

VENEZUELA :

Iran using disguised ship to load Venezuelan oil

<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2020/12/iran-venezuela-oil-fuel-tanker-ship-disguised-sale-asia.html>

The tanker reportedly hid its real name. The United States sanctions the oil industries of both Iran and Venezuela.

***** AFRIQUE DE L'EST ******

BURUNDI :

BURUNDI / ONU : 1 MILLION de BARUNDI marchent pour une victoire PANAFRICAINE

<http://burundi-agnews.org/afrique/burundi-onu-1-million-de-barundi-marchent-pour-une-victoire-panafricaine/>

GEOPOLITIQUE DES GRANDS LACS AFRICAINS, ONU – GITEGA, NGOZI, BUJUMBURA – Samedi 12 décembre 2020 – Suite à un appel lancé par LA SOCIETE CIVILE BURUNDAISE (ACOPA-BURUNDI , AJAPAFRICAINE, CAPES Plus, PISC, ATRABU etc.). 1 Million de BARUNDI ont déambulé dans les rues de 3 grandes métropoles du pays. Manifestant leur joie. Car le Conseil de Sécurité de l'ONU venait de retirer le Burundi de son agenda. Permettant désormais, les BARUNDI a relancé LEUR ECONOMIE.

De nombreuses organisations de la Société Civile Burundaise et toutes les formations politiques du pays (excepté le CNL), étaient représentées à cette grande marche-manifestation panafricaine ... Venus avec des calicots exprimant cette victoire populaire contre L'IMPÉRIALISME !

Le BURUNDI était sous la loupe du Conseil de Sécurité de l'ONU depuis le coup d'état militaire raté du mercredi 13 mai 2015. Organisé par les USA (OBAMA – SOROS), la FRANCE (HOLLANDE), la BELGIQUE (MICHEL), le RWANDA (KAGAME), et l'ancien dictateur HIMA burundais (BUYOYA). Pour la raison d'une GUERRE GEOPOLITIQUE contre la CHINE dans la région des GRANDS LACS AFRICAINS.

Pendant LA COLONISATION BELGE, entre 1959 et 1966, LES USA, LE VATICAN, LA FRANCE, LA BELGIQUE, et LES HIMA BURUNDI avaient mis fin à L'ANCIEN ROYAUME millénaire des BARUNDI – INGOMA Y'UBURUNDI. Destinant le pays à plus de 40 ans de CRIMES CONTRE L'HUMANITE et de GENOCIDE.

L'AFRIQUE demande une place permanente à l'ONU. Car, pendant 5 ans, les USA et la FRANCE avaient utilisé leur siège au Conseil de Sécurité à l'ONU pour bloquer le BURUNDI, en asphyxiant son ECONOMIE.

TANZANIE :

Tanzania to resume oil, gas negotiations after a yearlong stall

<https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/tanzania/news/tanzania-to-resume-oil-gas-negotiations-after-a-yearlong-stall-3231636>

By Rosemary Mirondo | Dar es Salaam. The Tanzania Petroleum Development Corporation (TPDC) is optimistic that Host Government Agreement (HGA) negotiations between the government and International Oil and Gas Companies (IOCs) on the Liquefied natural gas (LNG) are set to resume in January 2021.

This is after they stalled for about a year following the government's decision to review Production Sharing Agreements (PSAs), which according to reports, Tanzania is seeking to scrap sections on the contract that seem tilted against it.

The government and project developers were initially expected to have concluded the negotiations September 2019, a key decision that could pave the way to the final investment decision to be made.

However, when contacted TPDC Communications manager Marie Msellemu told The Citizen that they were currently finalizing compensation for the land in Lindi for the LNG site including relocation.

“We accumulated interest for two years that we hope to finalize payment by end of this December,” she said. Though she declined to mention the amount.

Explaining further, she said once the payment was completed they would resume negotiations. This is while they would be awaiting final decision of the PSAs.

Advertisement

“We expect to finalize HGA negotiations on the East African Crude oil Pipeline (EACOP) this December and start negotiations on LNG in January, 2021.

The HGA negotiations have been on and off, after they initially stopped in 2017 due to technicalities and resumed in 2018 only to stall again.

Initially in 2017, they stopped because the IOCs could not agree on modalities together and therefore negotiations had to be stopped until it was agreed that they undertake it separately.

However, the negotiations resumed in April, 2018 but encountered a hitch after the PSA’s were taken to Attorney General (AG) for review.

Earlier, TPDC had been optimistic that the negotiations would be completed by September 2019 and they would move to another level known as the Preparation for Front End Engineering Design (pre-FEED).

They had explained that the HGA key terms negotiations were running on schedule and hoped to wrap up as planned and that the next stage would be the pre-FEED (Preparation for Front End Engineering Design).

According to TPDC the pre- FEED is actually the design of the project including all matters that would be involved in the construction of the LNG project.

Meanwhile, partners in the project include Shell Tanzania together with its partners Ophir Energy and Pavilion Energy. Others include Equinor, Block 2 operator together with partner ExxonMobil.

While Tanzania’s LNG project is being delayed, its southern neighbour, Mozambique, is progressing with development.

Total Oil reached a \$20 billion Final Investment Decision in 2019 and was working out to deliver LNG in 2024.

Total’s project is one of several projects being developed in the country’s northernmost province of Cabo Delgado after one of the biggest gas finds in a decade off its coast. Together, the projects are worth some \$60 billion.

Rival Exxon Mobil delayed the final investment decision on its nearby Ruvuma LNG gas project due to the coronavirus pandemic, and Mozambique expects the decision next year.

With 150 trillion cubic feet (TCF) of liquefied natural gas (LNG) reserves, equivalent to 24 billion barrels of oil, Mozambique is positioning itself as the world’s next big global energy player.

With about 57.7tcf of natural gas reserves, Tanzania also offers endless opportunities for investors in the oil and natural gas sectors.

RDC CONGO :

Néhémie Mwilanya et Jean-Pierre Lacroix évoquent la rupture de la coalition FCC-CACH et la destitution du bureau de Mabunda à l’Assemblée nationale

<https://www.digitalcongo.net/article/5fd897e10de9a8001799d7eb/>

Kinshasa 15-12-2020 Politique - Le coordonnateur du FCC a expliqué aux journalistes que la rupture de la coalition FCC-CACH et la déchéance du bureau Mabunda à l'Assemblée nationale était au menu des échanges entre Lacroix et sa plateforme politique.

La rupture de la coalition entre le Front commun pour le Congo (FCC), avec le Cap pour le changement (CACH) ainsi que la déchéance bureau de l'Assemblée nationale dirigée par Mme Jeanine Mabunda sont les sujets qui ont été abordés au cours des échanges lundi 14 décembre, entre le coordonnateur du FCC, Néhémie Mwilanya et le Secrétaire général adjoint des Nations unies chargé des opérations de maintien de la paix, Jean-Pierre Lacroix qui séjourne à Kinshasa depuis dimanche soir.

Néhémie Mwilanya, a indiqué après cette rencontre : « Nous avons quand même attiré l'attention du secrétaire général adjoint des Nations unies sur toutes ces ruptures qui arrivent et la nécessité de jouer à la prévention.

Vous avez entendu la position du Président de la République qui est autorité morale de CACH, qui a mis fin unilatéralement à la coalition».

Pour le coordonnateur du FCC, il y a des ruptures politiques graves, notamment des contrats de confiance au sein de la coalition, expliquant par ailleurs qu'ils ont aussi parlé de la crise institutionnelle à l'Assemblée Nationale, avec la destitution du bureau Mabunda.

« Il y a aussi la situation au sein de l'Assemblée nationale, du Parlement en général. Le parlement est le socle de notre démocratie qui est représentative. Aujourd'hui, lorsqu'on torpille la légitimité des élus issus des urnes et on pense que l'on peut fabriquer une autre légitimité et arriver à une nouvelle majorité, c'est quand même une rupture importante ».

Le secrétaire général adjoint des Nations unies chargé des opérations de maintien de la paix a également eu des entretiens le même lundi avec les leaders de Lamuka, une plate-forme de l'opposition.

Il est aussi attendu dans l'Est du pays, notamment au Nord-Kivu et Ituri, pour la supervision des actions de l'ONU. Boni T.

Pprd : Ramazani Shadary sur une chaise éjectable !

<https://www.digitalcongo.net/article/5fd788acb7023f0017ccd52a/>

Plusieurs griefs ont été reprochés à cet fils Pprd, entre autres, l'incompétence notoire mais aussi d'avoir failli à sa mission qui était principalement de conserver l'unité au sein du parti et le pouvoir dans toutes ses dimensions politiques.

C'est la colère au sein du Parti du peuple pour la reconstruction et la démocratie(Pprd), colère exprimée par les jeunes de ce parti cher au sénateur Joseph Kabila.

Après la déchéance du bureau Mabunda, le Pprd appelle à la démission de son secrétaire permanent, Emmanuel Ramazani Shadary.

C'est à travers une pétition initiée par les jeunes du Pprd que cette volonté a été manifestée de voir Shadary être éjecté de ce parti.

Plusieurs griefs ont été reprochés à cet fils Pprd, entre autres, l'incompétence notoire mais aussi d'avoir failli à sa mission qui était principalement de conserver l'unité au sein du parti et le pouvoir dans toutes ses dimensions politiques ;

De n'avoir pas garanti pendant l'exercice de ces fonctions l'unité tant attendue par tous et le manque d'initiative afin de faire émerger un air nouveau au sein du parti, de n'avoir pris aucune précaution pour éviter la chute de Mabunda à l'Assemblée nationale.

Ces jeunes appellent à l'organisation du congrès au sein du parti dans l'optique d'élire les nouveaux membres. Gisèle Tshijuka

Ituri : le gouverneur demande à la MONUSCO d'appuyer davantage les FARDC engagés au front

<https://www.digitalcongo.net/article/5fd8c7810de9a8001799d7f0/>

Le gouverneur de l'Ituri, Jean Bamanisa, a suggéré que la Monusco puisse renforcer les militaires des FARDC engagés au combat contre les groupes négatifs.

Lors d'un entretien à la Radio Okapi.net, Jean Bamanisa, gouverneur de la province de l'Ituri, a appelé la Monusco à renforcer les militaires des FARDC engagés au combat, pour naturaliser les groupes armés qui sont dans la province de l'Ituri.

Il a félicité aussi l'appui des casques bleus pour les soins médicaux apportés aux forces armées et a souhaité que cette collaboration puisse continuer. Il a aussi salué les opérations de patrouille, qui se font régulièrement pour sécuriser la population de sa province.

Le gouverneur a souhaité voir la collaboration entre la MONUSCO et son gouvernement provincial se consolider en vue de mieux répondre aux attentes de la population.

Sylvie Meta

Patrice Lumumba's remains to be repatriated to DR Congo

<https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/rest-of-africa/patrice-lumumba-s-remains-to-be-repatriated-to-dr-congo-3230484>

The remains of DR Congo's former Prime Minister Patrice Emery Lumumba will be repatriated from Belgium, President Félix Tshisekedi has announced.

In a national address to the country in front of Parliament on Monday, he said the national hero will be given an appropriate burial.

"In June 2021, on the sidelines of the celebration of the 61st anniversary of our independence, the homeland will show its gratitude to Prime Minister Patrice Emery Lumumba, one of the national heroes whose relics will be repatriated and to whom we will give finally a burial worthy of his sacrifice for the party," the President said.

The remains will be the teeth of the Congolese national hero.

Lumumba is one of the fathers of the independence of Congo-Kinshasa. He was assassinated on January 17, 1961.

Former President Joseph Kabila had erected a monument in Kinshasa in honour of Lumumba, and every year on January 17 Congolese would go to pay homage to him.

In June, Belgium announced its intention to return to Congo the teeth of its hero. Lumumba's daughter, Juliana Lumumba, had officially informed President Félix Tshisekedi of the family's decision to send a letter to the King of Belgium in the hope that he would help recover her father's remains "in order to end our interminable mourning." In turn, the Congolese head of state wrote to King Philippe, King of Belgium.

In June, King Philippe expressed "his deep regrets" about the atrocities committed by his country in the Congo.

UGANDA :

Why Museveni moved top army, police chiefs

<https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/why-museveni-moved-top-army-police-chiefs-3231826>

President Museveni yesterday re-appointed his son Muhoozi Kainerugaba, a Lieutenant General, to command the Special Forces and tapped Maj Gen Paul Lokech as the new deputy Inspector General of Police.

Maj Gen Lokech, a battle-hardened Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) commander, replaces Maj Gen Muzeyi Sabiiti, who until his deployment as deputy IGP 33 months ago, deputised Lt Gen Muhoozi as the commander of the Special Forces Command (SFC).

Maj Gen Sabiiti was recalled to the army general headquarters, pending deployment, in the mini-reshuffle that the Defence and Military spokesperson, Brig Flavia Byekwaso, last evening referred to as "normal changes".

As the Commander-in-Chief, the President has the power, sometimes with the advice of the army leadership, to appoint or designate any military officer to any command positions any time without giving reasons for the choices.

Yet, the tone of President Museveni in yesterday's radio message was starkly different: a warning to future protestors, a rebuke of the police and an expression of his displeasure with the force personnel.

"I congratulate the UPDF for defeating the insurrection that the traitors, with their foreign backers, attempted to stage a few weeks ago," he said, in reference to the November 18 and 19 protests over the arrest of presidential candidate Robert Kyagulanyi, aka Bobi Wine.

At least 54 people were killed, the police and Mr Museveni announced days later, with many of the victims succumbing to gunshot wounds after armed men in civilian clothing fanned out to subdue the two-day disturbances as police appeared restrained.

The President noted: "The police force must be made to do its duty of defending Ugandans from lawlessness, threat to life and property. Any police person that does not do this must leave the police. There are thousands ready to replace them."

Despite the displeasure, the President surprisingly renewed the tenure of IGP Martins Okoth-Ochola, a 62-year-old lawyer and career police officer who is serving on contract after official retirement. Yet, he dropped the 45-year-old Muzeyi, a career soldier, sent to police only about three years ago.

There are currently four other senior UPDF officers serving as directors in the Uganda Police Force, and yesterday's addition of Maj Gen Lokech shows army men will continue to retain a dominant foothold in the civilian force. It also remains to be seen how Mr Lokech will apply his battle-front skills to steward police whose responsibility is to protect life and maintain internal law and order.

The failure to assign Maj Gen Muzeyi, which in Ugandan military parlance is being placed on katebe, signals the commander-in-chief's probable displeasure with the deputy IGP, which is a cue to the replacement to do things differently if he is to avoid a similar fate.

Maj Gen Sabiiti's problem may have sparked on different terminals. On December 9, the chairman of the United States House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs, Mr Elliot Engel, named him and outgoing Special Forces commander, Maj Gen James Birungi, among senior UPDF officers that he asked the US government to sanction for alleged rights violations.

Mr Mike Pompeo in a rejoinder said they were closely monitoring the individuals. Shipping out the two officers early would prevent the Magnitsky Act sanctions, which includes travel and financial transaction blockades, from crippling operations of the key police and SFC offices they hold, if punished by Washington.

Maj Gen Birungi is heading to Juba to replace Maj Gen Lokech where a UPDF team is, on behalf of the guarantors of the South Sudan peace signed in February, working with Sudan forces to monitor the parties' compliance with the pact.

The former director of Intelligence for UPDF Land Forces, Col Paul Muwonge, who worked with Maj Gen Lokech, was recalled and early this month sent to the Democratic Republic of Congo where there is a reported infiltration by terrorists and threats of subversion.

Col Muwonge, who was cleared over unproven 2019 allegations of spying for Rwanda, has been replaced in South Sudan by Lt Col David Nyero, the former operations officer for Alpine Division.

Maj Gen Sabiiti's replacement by Maj Gen Lokech suggests that President Museveni is turning to older and more experienced commanders to make possible that he thinks the current police leadership failed to do.

Maj Gen Sabiiti and Lt Gen Muhoozi joined the military at the same time, in the famous Intake 6 of May 1999, and many in that cohort comparably rose through the ranks faster and now occupy key UPDF command positions.

Maj Denis Omara, the SFC spokesman, yesterday said Lt Gen Muhoozi's return to superintend the Special Forces is significant because modernisation of the Special Forces was brainchild of the First Son.

"As a former commander, he will fit in well and enable us achieve some of the things SFC needed since he pioneered our modernisation," Maj Omara said.

Lt Gen Muhoozi's return on an election eve to command SFC while doubling as Senior Presidential Adviser on Special Operations, is significant as it places him at the helm of Uganda's most sensitive security operations, high-value military assets and specialised branches such as marines, airforce, paratroopers and artillery brigades.

Highly-placed sources told this newspaper that the rebound of the First Son to mainstream military leadership, after nearly three years on the sidelines, may be to prepare him for other possible assignments.

The public says

"Museveni's appointments are reshuffles having nothing to do with Uganda. They have everything to do with himself," Mr Godber Tumushabe, the associate director of Great Lakes Institute for Strategic Studies, said.

Presidential candidate Robert Kyagulanyi, better known by his stage name Bobi Wine, who has had terse conversations with the First Son on Twitter, said while campaigning in Kabale yesterday:

"This (re-appointment of Muhoozi as SFC commander) tells Ugandans that he (President Museveni) has lost trust of other (UPDF) commanders."

Additional reporting by Derrick Wandera

Maj Gen Paul Lokech

When one mentions Maj Gen Paul Lokech, Somalia comes into mind.

He came into prominence during his tour of duty as the Contingent Commander of Ugandan troops in Somalia between 2011 and 2012.

His eloquence and successful offensive operations against the al-Shabaab in Somalia endeared him to the Somalis and they nicknamed him "the Lion of Mogadishu".

Sources close to him say he would at times go to the frontline and get dangerously close to the enemy positions which according to some commanders, bordered on being reckless.

That is why it was not surprising that the President of Somalia, Mr Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed, alias Fermajo, made a passionate plea to President Museveni in 2017 to redeploy him as the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) Contingent Commander in Somalia.

Before his return to Somalia, Maj Gen Lokech shortly served as the Commander of the 2nd Division Infantry in Mbarara and before that, he was the military Attaché to Russia.

During his second tour of duty in Somalia, there was little fighting but the UPDF had to deal with a fragile political situation in Somalia. In 2018, Maj Gen Lokech rushed to the Somali parliament and told the MPs who were fighting to sort out their issues before the situation gets out of hand.

When he returned from Somalia in 2018, he served as Commandant of the Uganda Rapid Deployment Capability Centre in Jinja.

In 2020, he briefly worked as the AirForce Chief of Staff before he was deployed to South Sudan.

Throughout his career, Maj Gen Lokech has fought battles in DR Congo, northern Uganda and South Sudan.

Maj Gen James Birungi

Maj Gen James Birungi the outgoing Commander of the Special Forces Command

The outgoing Commander of the Special Forces Command (SFC) served in this position for one year and six months. Before his appointment as SFC boss, Maj Gen Birungi served as the Chief of Staff of the Air Force.

Born in 1973 in Ngoma, Nakaseke District, he was among 11 men who joined the army in 1996 and did a one-year basic military training at Kasenyi in Entebbe, Wakiso District.

He later went to India for a cadet course where he spent a year and was passed out as a Second Lieutenant.

Upon his return from India, Maj Gen Birungi's first deployment was under the Armoured Brigade, a specialised unit of the UPDF Land Forces with its headquarters at Kasijjagirwa Barracks in Masaka District.

At the time, the late Gen Aronda Nyakairima was the commander of the Brigade, which has several tank battalions and also has a maintenance unit at Armoured Warfare Training School in Karama, Mubende District.

A source close to Maj Gen Birungi said he later undertook different tank courses at Karama and was deployed to Kitgum District in 2002. He was commanding tanks and Armoured Personnel Carriers (APCs) to escort supplies for soldiers in the Forward Operating Bases.

Maj Gen Birungi was then moved to Karamoja to fight cattle rustling.

From Karamoja, Maj Gen Birungi was sent to Karama at the rank of Major as the Commandant of the training school.

"From Karama, he joined the Presidential Guard Brigade, now SFC in 2008," the source said.

This was after attending Junior Staff courses at Gaddafi Barracks (Kimaka) in Jinja.

He was in 2013 promoted to Colonel and appointed acting Chief of Staff of the Air Force until he was taken back to SFC as the commander.

Maj Gen Muzeyi Sabiiti

Maj Gen Muzeyi Sabiiti the outgoing deputy Inspector General of Police

The outgoing deputy Inspector General of Police was born in 1975.

He has served in the military for more than two decades.

Before his appointment as the deputy Inspector General of Police, Maj Gen Sabiti briefly commanded the Military Police.

He previously served as Commander of the Presidential Guard Brigade, which later became Special Forces Commander when Lt Gen Muhoozi Kainerugaba went to South Africa for a military course.

He later served as Second in Command of Special Forces before he went to Russia for a military course and upon his return he was appointed commander of military police in 2017.

He has done several military courses in Jinja, America and Russia.

Lt Gen Muhoozi Kainerugaba.

Lt Gen Muhoozi Kainerugaba the commander of the Special Forces Command (SFC)

Lt Gen Muhoozi Kainerugaba, 46, joined the army in 1999.

He did a cadet course at Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in Britain.

Upon his return to Uganda in 2000, Lt Gen Muhoozi joined the Presidential Protection Unit as 2nd Lieutenant and in 2001, he was promoted to the rank of Major.

He later went to Fort Leavenworth in the US and upon his return, he was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel.

He has been influential in the training and formation of the Special Forces.

He has also trained in South Africa, Egypt, and Israel.

Gen Muhoozi commanded a unit of Special Forces during Operation Lightning Thunder in 2008 against the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels in DR Congo.

He has also been in the planning and overseeing of Special Forces operations in South Sudan and Somalia. Sources close to him say he has been passionate about the military even when he was still young and that is why he chose to serve.

Uganda asks Google to close 14 YouTube channels over deadly protests

<https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/uganda-asks-google-to-close-14-youtube-channels-over-protests-3230396>

By DAILY MONITOR | The Ugandan government, through the Uganda Communications Commission (UCC), has written to US-based Google, that owns YouTube, a global video sharing platform, asking it to close at least 14 channels for allegedly mobilising riots.

The riots in November resulted in at least 50 deaths and several injuries.

The channels include TMO Online, Lumbuye Fred, Trending Channel UG, Uganda Yaffe, Uganda News Updates, Ghetto TV, Busesa Media Updates and Uganda Empya.

Others are Map Mediya TV, KK TV, Ekyooto TV, Namungo Media, JB Muwonge 2 and Bobi Wine 2021.

According to the UCC, the channels were used to mobilise riots that resulted in the loss of lives and property in Uganda.

The riots broke out in Kampala on November 18 and spread to other parts of the country following the arrest of National Unity Platform (NUP) presidential candidate Robert Kyagulanyi, popularly known as Bobi Wine.

RWANDA :

Rwanda responds to US congresswoman on Rusesabagina

<https://www.newtimes.co.rw/news/rwanda-us--congresswoman-rusesabagina>

The Government has told Carolyn B. Maloney, a member of the US Congress that the Rwandan justice system is independent and terror suspect Paul Rusesabagina's arrest was based on key facts that not only are in the public domain but that he has not disputed (

The response comes after the Congresswoman wrote a letter addressed to President Paul Kagame on December 14 requesting for the release and return to the United States of Rusesabagina.

In his letter December 16, the Minister of Justice and also Attorney General Johnston Busingye reminded Maloney that the Rwanda Investigation Bureau (RIB) and the National Public Prosecution Authority (NPPA) have in the past clarified in court and to the media that Rusesabagina was not kidnapped or extradited.

"He departed Dubai voluntarily by private jet and when his plane landed in Rwanda and he voluntarily alighted he was placed under arrest pursuant to a 2018 arrest warrant," he wrote. (...)

Regional military chiefs meet in Kigali

<https://www.newtimes.co.rw/news/regional-military-chiefs-meet-kigali>

Eastern Africa Standby Force (EASF) member states are meeting in Kigali to among other tasks draft a concept on countering security threats that have regional and international dimensions.

The 28th Ordinary Policy Organs Meetings, which started earlier this week with a meeting of experts, has attracted defence chiefs and later convene the Council of Ministers of Defence and Security.

Opening the session of Chiefs of Defence and Security, on Wednesday, December 16, Lt Gen Jean Jacques Mupenzi, the Chief of Staff of Rwanda Defence Force (RDF), admitted that the region continues to face challenges of conflict that impact peace and stability in some of our member states.

Acts of violence, terrorism, and violent extremism, especially in the horn of Africa region and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, he said, continue impacting the region and call for concerted effort.

"The EASF had made several achievements during the last thirteen years, including attaining full operational capability and contributing to capacity building of our forces in terms of training. It is important that these achievements are maintained and consolidated," Mupenzi said.

The EASF is a regional organisation whose mandate is to enhance peace and security in the Eastern Africa region. It comprises 10 active member states: Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda.

All partner states are represented at the meeting apart from Burundi and Seychelles.

"It is therefore in our interest that we move forward speedily but in a pragmatic and professional manner in order to reinforce the larger efforts of our continental organisation, the AU," Mupenzi said.

In the spirit of shared responsibility and in recognition of the fact that the security of one state is inextricably linked to that of the other, Mupenzi said, "we must spare no effort to collectively address the problems" related to peace and security.

The regional Standby Force is one of the five regional multidimensional forces of the African Standby Force (ASF) comprising military, police and civilian components. The components stay on standby for rapid deployment at appropriate notice as provided for in the peace support operations scenarios of the ASF.

In an August 2014 pledging conference, held in Kigali, countries committed to raise a military fighting force of 5,000 troops.

EASF declared full operational capability in December 2014 with an equipped multidimensional and multinational force of 5,200 personnel - military, police and civilian components.

Wednesday's session was the start of the CDFs' policy organ meeting.

Ministers will meet on Friday.

Financial constraints

According to Brig Gen Fayisa Getachew, the EASF Director said they have been able to achieve several objectives including maintaining force readiness for deployment, but "the financial status of the organisation is currently poor."

Each member state is required to contribute an annual assessed contribution. Lately, Rwanda's assessed contribution is 9.3 percent of the total annual assessed contribution by all countries.

"Only two member states have so far submitted their annual assessed contributions for 2020. However, I am glad to have received information that the Republic of Rwanda has dispatched their contribution and is expected in our accounts soon," Getachew said.

"We understand the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on our economies. However, as we allocate the little resources we have, I kindly request that we also consider EASF."

According to the EASF's 2019 annual report, the approved budget for the financial year 2019 was \$7.4 million.

But member states' actual remittances for the same financial year totalled \$4.5 million.

On September 25, military, police and civilian personnel from seven member states completed a two-week training course that integrated mission planning at the Rwanda Peace Academy in Musanze District.

KENYA :

Kenya orders 24M doses of COVID-19 vaccine

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/kenya-orders-24m-doses-of-covid-19-vaccine/2077651>

East African nation to receive shots from Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance | Andrew Wasike | 15.12.2020
Kenya has joined other countries in the race to secure COVID-19 vaccines, and has ordered 24 million doses from Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, local media reported on Tuesday.

Patrick Amoth, the acting director of health, told The Star newspaper that each dose will cost about \$3.

He said that the first to be vaccinated will be frontline health workers, followed by the vulnerable and the elderly. He did not specify a timeframe but vaccines are expected early next year.

Amoth said Gavi has signed agreements with manufacturers of about nine vaccine candidates but the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine will be ideal for Kenya because it fits within its cold chain supply system.

Kenya launched clinical trials for the same antigen in October. An emergency use approval, however, is yet to be granted by the Health Ministry.

The East African country's economy, which mainly depends on agriculture and tourism, has been severely affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

It has seen over 92,000 confirmed virus cases, with 1,593 deaths, according to data from the Johns Hopkins University.

Msambweni shocker throws Uhuru, Raila back to drawing board

<https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2020-12-17-msambweni-shocker-throws-uhuru-raila-back-to-drawing-board/>

Seen as outfoxed and cornered, Ruto makes a dramatic comeback with a major by-election victory. Deputy President William Ruto's decisive victory in the Msambweni by-election has inflicted a political wound on the handshake and deflated the BBI momentum.

The surprise win by independent candidate Feisal Bader against the ODM political machine—with the blessing of the state machinery—has also sent President Uhuru Kenyatta and Orange party leader Raila Odinga back to the drawing board over 2022 political calculations.

Bader, an ally of the DP, crushed ODM's Omar Boga after garnering 15,251 votes against 10,444, ending Raila's 13-year grip on the Coastal constituency.

Boga had been presented as the handshake candidate, with the backing of both Raila and Uhuru. Uhuru met Boga alongside Mombasa Governor Hassan Joho last week in what was seen as a public display of endorsement.

The high-stakes by-election was couched as a political duel pitting Building Bridges Initiative proponents, led by Uhuru and Raila, against Ruto's 'hustler nation'.

Raila had framed the by-election as a contest against politicians opposed to the BBI process and insisted that a loss would signal turbulence for the BBI.

"This election will be a control experiment to show if the BBI will succeed or not. If ODM will be defeated here, then the BBI will have a problem," Raila said in Msambweni on December 10.

Ruto did not personally campaign for Bader. However, he deployed a strong team of Tangatanga politicians, including a host of his allies from the Coast led by Kwale Governor Salim Mvurya.

Political analysts say the outcome has tested the BBI spirit and the prospects of the proposed referendum sailing through.

Raila has also been smoked out of his comfort that the Coast region remains his 'bedroom'.

Political commentator Martin Andati warned that the push to amend the Constitution now sits at a precarious position.

"Even without proper leadership at the NO front, masses are likely to very easily reject the BBI," Andati said.

"The masses are obviously not happy with the priorities, so it appears they (Uhuru and Raila) are forcing the thing down the throat of the masses."

The next battlefront will be Matungu (Kakamega) and Kabuchai (Bungoma) constituencies where ODM would be seeking to stamp its authority in Western.

Those fronted by ODM, a party born out of a referendum victory of 2005, will still square it off against candidates fielded by Ruto, Musalia Mudavadi (ANC) and Moses Wetang'ula (Ford Kenya). Voters in Matungu go to the polls on March 4 next year (...)

SOUTH SUDAN :

South Sudan's Machar calls for reconciliation

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/south-sudans-machar-calls-for-reconciliation/2079704>

JUBA, South Sudan | South Sudan's First Vice President Riek Machar has called for the healing and reconciliation process to start in order to implement the 2018 peace deal.

"We are convinced that it's time to consolidate peace, justice and stability in our country. It's time for us to champion peace, reconciliation and healing in our society, we must not allow peace spoilers to turn the clock back to violence," said Machar in a statement issued in Juba on Wednesday to mark the start of the 2013 war.

He said that the transitional Government of National Unity will soon start the process of healing and reconciliation.

"The Government of National Unity is now kicking off the process of reconciliation, forgiveness and national healing with Upper Nile state before the end of this month, and extend it to other states as well.

"This year we declare the week starting December 15th as a week for reconciliation and forgiveness amongst our people worldwide," said Machar.

The signatories to the peace deal last week ended a stalemate on formation of state and county governments, a move which Machar said has raised optimism for the upcoming appointment of officials to run these institutions.

Chapter five of the peace deal signed by President Salva Kiir, Machar and other parties calls for healing and reconciliation, besides establishment of a hybrid court to try war crimes committed during the more than six years of conflict which started on Dec. 15, 2013.

South Sudan descended into conflict in December 2013, after a disagreement between Kiir and his then-deputy Machar caused a split in the army leading to fighting between soldiers loyal to their respective leaders.

SUDAN :

Sudan to provide 8.4 million COVID-19 vaccines

<https://www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/sudan-to-provide-8-4-covid-19-vaccines>

The Sudanese Ministry of Health announced that 8.4 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine will be provided to specified target groups. The distribution of the vaccine is planned to take place in the first quarter of 2021, depending on global production and waiting lists.

Dr Amal Abdallah, Director General of the Global Health Department at the Ministry of Health, said at a press conference yesterday that the distribution mechanism will depend on the registration of those who meet the required criteria.

She said that the vaccines will be given to the most vulnerable people who risk severe complications when they contract the virus: the elderly and people having chronic diseases. Front line medical and health care professionals workers will be vaccinated as well. Next in line are employees and workers in essential sectors, such as schools, banks, the civil service, transport and insurances. Finally high-risk groups, such as displaced people and asylum seekers, will be vaccinated. The vaccine will be voluntarily.

The distribution of the vaccine will also depend on the epidemiological situation of each state, Abdallah said.

New cases

The Directorate General of Emergency and Epidemic Control of the Sudanese Ministry of Health's reported that 273 new cases of COVID-19 have been registered on Saturday and Sunday. 17 patients died and 215 recovered.

Most of the new cases come from Khartoum (235), followed by El Gedaref (13), Kassala (7), and El Gezira (4). The total number of recorded COVID-19 cases rose to 21,864. 1,372 people died and 12,667 have recovered.

A report published by the Imperial College London (ICL) COVID-19 Response Team two weeks ago showed that only an estimated two per cent of all COVID-19 deaths have been reported in Sudan. ICL estimates that around 16,090 deaths may have been missed as of November 20.

Radio Dabanga's editorial independence means that we can continue to provide factual updates about political developments to Sudanese and international actors, educate people about how to avoid outbreaks of infectious diseases, and provide a window to the world for those in all corners of Sudan. Support Radio Dabanga for as little as €2.50, the equivalent of a cup of coffee.

Tensions between military and civilian governance in Sudan over USA bill

<https://www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/tensions-between-military-and-civilian-governance-in-sudan-over-usa-deal>

Disagreements between the military and civilian components of Sudan's government resurfaced last week over a bill presented by the US Congress on Friday. The bill supports the democratic transition in Sudan and advocates tightening the monitoring of the Sudanese army, security forces, and intelligence services.

The bill is called the Sudan Democratic Transition, Accountability, and Fiscal Transparency Act of 2020 and was supported by both Democratic and Republican politicians in the USA.

The bill requires the USA State Department to, among other things, submit a strategy that includes "an assessment of security sector reforms by the Sudanese government, such as demobilizing militias and fostering civilian control of the armed force". The act also included the Defence Financing Bill and elements that allow the USA to financially support Sudan. (...)

ETHIOPIA :

1000 Ethiopian refugees live in 'extremely difficult conditions' in eastern Sudan

<https://www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/1000-ethiopian-refugees-live-in-extremely-difficult-conditions-in-eastern-sudan>

Acting governor of Kassala, El Tayeb El Sheikh, warned of the effects on eastern Sudan of the war in Tigray in Ethiopia and the influx of tens of thousands of refugees into the region on Friday.

1,000 refugees live in “extremely difficult humanitarian conditions,” the acting Governor said during his visit to the refugee reception camp in Hamdayet in Wad El Helew locality in the southern part of Kassala.

“The war in Ethiopia is having repercussions on the region, including an increase in smuggling of weapons and drugs, human trafficking, and overwhelming pressure on the 6,000 residents of Hamdayet and services,” he said in a joint press conference following the visit.

The governor also pointed out that many Ethiopian soldiers are fleeing the battle fronts.

The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) should provide more support to the children, the handicapped, and the elderly among the refugees, he said, noting that 65 children have arrived in Hamdayet unaccompanied (...)

EU suspends nearly €90M in aid to Ethiopia over internal conflict

<https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-commission-suspends-nearly-90-million-euros-in-aid-to-ethiopia-over-internal-conflict/>

The bloc wants Ethiopia’s government to cease hostilities and allow humanitarian access to the Tigray region. The European Union has suspended nearly €90 million in budgetary aid to Ethiopia because of the internal conflict in the country’s Tigray region, according to a Commission document seen by POLITICO.

The delay in financial support is aimed at addressing the EU’s concerns related to “immediate, unconditional, unrestricted and unimpeded humanitarian access to all areas in Tigray to respond to the dramatic humanitarian situation,” according to the two-page document that was verified by two EU officials. They asked not to be identified because the information isn’t public yet.

The conflict in Ethiopia has driven tens of thousands from their homes, killed hundreds — possibly thousands — and dragged in neighboring countries. (...)

4 Sudan soldiers die in clashes with Ethiopia militias along border

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20201217-4-sudan-soldiers-die-in-clashes-with-ethiopia-militias-along-border/>

Ethiopian militias raided a Sudanese region along the countries' border, leaving a brigadier general dead.

A senior official at Sudan's eastern border province of Al-Qadarif told Russia Today (RT) that the Sudanese army had launched an "attack and fierce battles along the border with Ethiopia that have left three Sudanese soldiers killed."

The sources stressed that the Sudanese army had recaptured "a number of Sudanese areas which were occupied by Ethiopian farmers in recent days."

Sudan deployed more than 6,000 troops to the border at the start of fighting in Ethiopia's Tigray region that pitted the federal government against regional authorities last month.

Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed declared victory in the fight. However, clashes between federal and regional forces have continued.

The fighting in Tigray has led to more than 52,000 Ethiopian refugees fleeing to Sudan, mostly in Al-Qadarif.

SOMALIE :

Kenya, Somaliland agree on direct KQ flights, consulate as ties deepen

<https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/kenya-somaliland-ties-deepen-3230524>

Kenya on Tuesday reached a deal for direct Kenya Airways flights to Hargeisa in Somaliland, in what could be the first destination for the national carrier into a Somali region, following years of trying.

The move came hours after Somalia, which sees Somaliland as its territory, severed ties with Kenya in protest against what it called constant interference with its internal affairs.

While making an “unwavering commitment” to deepen their ties, Presidents Uhuru Kenyatta and visiting Muse Bihi of Somaliland on Tuesday agreed that the flights will begin by March 2021.

Nairobi also agreed to set up a consulate in Hargeisa by the first quarter of 2021, joining Ethiopia and Djibouti, which have diplomatic outposts in the Somaliland capital.

“The two leaders agreed to timelines for implementation of a number of activities,” said a statement from the Foreign Affairs ministry in Kenya. “Kenya [agreed] to open its consulate in Hargeisa by end of March 2021. Somaliland [will] also upgrade its liaison office in Nairobi within the same timeframe.”

Somaliland declared independence from Somalia in 1991 and is routinely treated as separate from that country but Somalia has never recognised it. (...)

****** L'AFRIQUE DU SUD ******

MADAGASCAR :

SANTE PUBLIQUE – Le difficile chemin vers la couverture sanitaire universelle

<https://2424.mg/sante-publique-le-difficile-chemin-vers-la-couverture-sanitaire-universelle/>

A Madagascar, la santé pour tous est loin d'être une réalité. Alors que la moyenne mondiale de la couverture sanitaire universelle est de 66%, à Madagascar ce taux n'est que de 28%. Une situation due à un manque d'infrastructures de santé, à une insuffisance de personnel de santé, mais aussi à un coût peu abordable des soins de santé. Le point de la situation avec les données publiées par le ministère de la Santé et par un cabinet spécialisé en développement durable et inclusif, le cabinet Avahi.(...)

SOUTH AFRICA :

BRICS' bank approves five new projects in Brazil, Russia, South Africa worth \$2.7 bln

<https://tass.com/economy/1235985>

The Russian project envisions extension of a loan worth \$300 mln to Mobile TeleSystems for cellular network and cloud services expansion

SHANGHAI, December 17. /TASS/. The board of directors of BRICS' New Development Bank (NDB) has approved five new investment projects in Brazil, Russia and South Africa totally worth \$2.7 bln, press service of the financial institution said in a statement on Thursday.

"The Board of Directors of the New Development Bank held its 29th meeting in a virtual format on December 15, 2020. At the meeting, the Board approved five investment projects with a total commitment aggregating to approx. \$2.7 billion," the statement said. The issue is about three projects in Brazil, one project in Russia and one in South Africa.

The Russian project envisions extension of a loan worth \$300 mln to Mobile TeleSystems (MTS) for cellular network and cloud services expansion. "The loan will be used to finance a part of the company's capital expenditure program aimed at the expansion of its cellular network and deployment of cloud services infrastructure in Russia. The project will support equitable access to faster internet for the Russian population in addition to providing enterprises access to a wide range of cloud services," according to the statement.

BOTSWANA :

De Beers' full-year diamonds sales down by a third in 2020

<https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/companies/mining/2020-12-17-de-beers-full-year-diamonds-sales-down-by-a-third-in-2020/>

The world's largest source of rough diamonds by value shows the scars of a virus-battered year. At the end of a difficult and disrupted year, De Beers, the largest seller of rough diamonds by value, recorded a one-third drop in revenue for 2020 because of the global economic downturn caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

De Beers, which is 85% owned by Anglo American and 15% held by the Botswana government, reported sales of \$440m in its 10th and final sales event of 2020, which was below the \$462m achieved in the ninth event. In the same period a year ago, De Beers realised sales of \$426m...

ZIMBABWE :

Senior Cop dies 3 days into retirement

<https://www.thezimbabwemail.com/zimbabwe/senior-cop-dies-3-days-into-retirement/>

Harare- Retired ZRP Commissioner Adolf Moyo who retired on December 8, 2020 died three days into his retirement, Commissioner General Godwin Matanga confirmed the sad news.

Matanga said Moyo died at Westend Clinic on December 11, 2020 where he was admitted.

The Mirror has gathered that Moyo will be buried in Plumtree tomorrow (Wednesday) and Matanga will be in attendance together with other senior officers.

Moyo left the country in November 1977 via Botswana into Zambia where he received military training. He worked under the tutelage of the late ZIPRA commander, Dumiso Dabengwa and later as an instructor as well.

After Independence Moyo joined the Police until the time of his retirement.

He is survived by his wife Josphine Marisa, five children, three girls and two boys and six grandchildren. (...)

How South Africa Can Nudge Zimbabwe toward Political and Economic Stability

<https://www.thezimbabwemail.com/politics/how-south-africa-can-nudge-zimbabwe-toward-stability/>

For years, South Africa trusted in behind-the-scenes contacts to alleviate Zimbabwe's political and economic problems. But those troubles have continued to mount. By stepping up pressure, and by working with Washington on reform guidelines, Pretoria can help Harare find a way out of its crisis. by crisisgroup. org

What's new? As Zimbabwe's political and economic crises worsen, South Africa is moving beyond its policy of "quiet diplomacy" with its northern neighbour and applying more pressure on Harare to open up political space and reform its economy.

Why does it matter? With Zimbabwe's people slipping further into destitution, crackdowns fostering a growing sense of grievance within the opposition, and political divisions pitting ruling-party members against one another, the country could tip into even greater crisis through mass unrest or another coup.

What should be done? Pretoria should press Harare to halt repression and start dialogue with the political opposition to address Zimbabwe's economic woes. It should work with Washington on a roadmap for reforms that the U.S. and others can use to guide decisions on reversing sanctions and supporting debt relief for Zimbabwe (...)

ZAMBIA :

Serve the people of Zambia, President Edgar Lungu, urges Patriotic Front (PF) members

<https://www.mwebantu.com/2020/12/13/serve-the-people-of-zambia-president-edgar-lungu-urges-patriotic-front-pf-members/25558/>

PRESIDENT Edgar Lungu says all Patriotic Front (PF) members countrywide should get back to the party's philosophy of serving people and national interest alone and avoid seeking to serve personal interests.

And President Lungu has urged all Zambians to love one another and refuse to drink from the bitter cup of tribalism.

https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=3745528942233840&id=203462316440538

Speaking during a PF Southern Province Conference which was held at Choma Secondary School today, President Lungu said: "Atuyandane! and let us refuse to drink from the bitter cup of tribalism, regionalism, hypocrisy and greed. We are one Zambia one Nation under God."

President Lungu further called on all party members in Southern Province and across the 10 Provinces to get back to the grassroots and mobilize.

"As your team captain, I re-affirm my commitment to uphold our cherished party ideals, and work for the most vulnerable people in our society to uplift their standards of living. I encourage you all to join hands with me to entrench the Patriotic Front's enduring identity as a pro-poor party working to create a better life for all," he said.

And President Lungu urged those taking part in the PF intra-party elections in the province as well as other Provinces to maintain discipline.

Army, Turkey strike defence deal

<http://www.daily-mail.co.zm/army-turkey-strike-defence-deal/>

DARLINGTON MWENDABAI, Lusaka | STAYING in tandem with the changing times, the military has increasingly become involved in the maintenance of defence goods and services.

It is in this spirit that Zambia has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Turkey to improve its capabilities to develop and produce the commodities.

The agreement further aims to improve the defence industry's potential in the two countries through more effective cooperation in the fields of development and production, among others. (...)

MALAWI :

Economist names Malawi country of the year

<https://www.newsday.mw/index.php/2020/12/17/economist-names-malawi-country-of-the-year/>

Malawi has been named as the country of the year by The Economist.

The world-respected publication carried an article titled Admiration nation; which is the Economist's country of the year? which uncovers various features which are put into considerations when deciding the country of the year.

According to The Economist, the most-improved country is one where people stood up for democracy.

The article brings together various countries such New Zealand, Taiwan, Bolivia, United States of America and Britain but fell out from topping the list based on their responses to Covid-19 pandemic.

The Economist says although Malawi is still poor, its people are citizens, not subjects. It cites the country revived its democracy in an authoritarian region, hence it is the country of the year.

"This year's prize goes to a country in southern Africa. Democracy and respect for human rights regressed in 80 countries between the start of the pandemic and September, reckons Freedom House, a think-tank. The only place where they improved was Malawi," The Economist reports.

The Economist continues with appreciating the progress which the country has made in reviving its democracy.

It draws its attention from the year 2012 when Bingu wa Mutharika died of cardiac arrest.

According to the Economist, the ruling party then wanted to break the country's constitution by allowing Bingu's brother to take over presidency, which did not materialize.

The Economist further cites the nullification of the 2019 presidential election results which were marred by irregularities.

It says Judges in the case stood for justice by turning down bribes, and went on to nullify the results and ordered for fresh presidential polls which the then opposition parties under the Tonse Alliance banner emerged victors.

"Malawians launched mass protests against the 'Tipp-Ex election'. Malawian judges turned down suitcases of bribes and annulled it. A fair re-run in June booted out Mr Mutharika and installed the people's choice, Lazarus Chakwera," reports the Economist.

This comes barely a week after another Forbes included Malawi among top five tourism hotspots in 2021.

NAMIBIE :

Govt to tighten Covid-19 rules

<https://www.namibian.com.na/97414/read/Govt-to-tighten-Covid-19-rules>

PRESIDENT Hage Geingob is set to announce a new raft of regulations today to combat the spread of the coronavirus, but a lockdown is unlikely to be introduced.

The pending presidential announcement today has left Namibians waiting to learn of the way forward in dealing with the country's spiking Covid-19 cases.

The government has for the past two months eased regulations as the infection rate dropped from 317 in a day at its peak at the end of August to 63 a day in mid-September (...)

ANGOLA :

Ambassador says Angola welcomes Chinese investment in renewables

<https://macauhub.com.mo/2020/12/18/20201218002/>

Angolan Ambassador to China João Salvador dos Santos Neto has said his country welcomes Chinese investment in its solar power, wind power and biodiesel industries, so it can generate more electricity and thus increase its manufacturing output, the China-Lusophone Brief website reports.

The report quotes Mr dos Santos Neto as telling the International Conference on Energy Cooperation in Beijing that development of its renewable energy industries can help Angola diversify its sources of power and become more energy-efficient.

"Angola has many natural energy resources, including oil, gas, solar, wind and water sources," the China-Lusophone Brief website quotes the ambassador as saying. "However, it still lacks investment for the sustainable exploitation of this potential, taking into account industrialisation, digitalisation, regional integration and the need to respond to the challenges of globalisation."

Le ministre de la Défense appelle au renforcement des mesures de biosécurité

<https://www.angop.ao/fr/noticias/sociedade/ministro-da-defesa-apela-ao-reforco-das-medidas-de-biosseguranca/>

Luanda - Le ministre de la Défense nationale et des Vétérans de la Patrie, João Ernesto dos Santos, a appelé mercredi le personnel des Forces armées angolaises (FAA) à redoubler de respect des mesures préventives, en vue de couper la chaîne de transmission du Covid-19 dans les unités respectives et autres institutions.

L'appel intervient dans le cadre de la célébration du 29^e anniversaire de l'armée, qui se célèbre ce jeudi (17), selon un communiqué du ministère de la Défense nationale et des Vétérans de la Patrie, parvenu mercredi à l'Angop.

"Il est nécessaire le strict respect des mesures préventives, telles que l'utilisation de masques faciaux, le lavage fréquent des mains avec du savon et de l'eau, du gel alcoolique et le respect de la distanciation physique", indique la note.

Le document souligne qu'en raison des restrictions imposées par le Covid-19, l'institution ne tiendra pas la cérémonie habituelle de vœux de fin d'année.

"Nous devons continuer à donner la priorité à l'instruction des cadres permanents et des troupes, au perfectionnement de la préparation technico-militaire et au développement des qualités patriotiques, civiques, morales et du culte des vertus militaires, pour un service parfait à la Patrie", souligne le ministre, encourageant le personnel des FAA à l'accomplissement continu de la mission.

La Total Eren et Greentech construisent un parc solaire en Angola

<https://www.angop.ao/fr/noticias/economia/total-eren-e-greentech-constroem-parque-solar-em-angola/>

Luanda – La Total, en partenariat avec la Greentech-Angola, prévoit de construire et d'exploiter un projet d'énergie solaire de 35 MWc, dont l'usine sera située à Lubango, chef-lieu de la province de Huíla.

Dans cette initiative, la Total Eren détient 75% des parts et la Greentech 25%, pour développer, financer, construire et exploiter le projet.

Selon une note de la Total Eren parvenue à l'ANGOP, un protocole d'accord a été signé avec le ministère de l'Énergie et des Eaux d'Angola (Minea).

Le document indique que, actuellement, une option est en cours de discussion pour que la Sonangol, une société pétrolière et gazière publique angolaise, rejoigne le projet.

«Le projet s'inscrit dans les objectifs de promotion des investissements étrangers et de promotion des énergies renouvelables, pour atteindre 800 MW de capacité installée dans le pays d'ici 2025», souligne la note.

Lors de sa mise en service, le parc solaire fournira une énergie compétitive au réseau angolais et permettra d'importantes économies de carburant par rapport aux centrales thermiques existantes.

Concernant cette initiative privée, Fabienne Demol, vice-présidente exécutive et directrice globale du développement d'affaires de la Total Eren, a déclaré qu'elle était ravie de faire partie du développement du secteur des énergies renouvelables en Angola.

Selon la responsable, le protocole d'accord marque une étape importante et concrète pour la mise en œuvre du projet, trois mois après une étude de faisabilité détaillée en étroite collaboration avec les autorités angolaises et les principales parties prenantes.

«Nous attendons avec impatience les prochaines étapes du développement du projet», a-t-elle souligné.

À son tour, l'exécutif et co-fondateur de la Greentech - Angola Environment Technology, Jorge Salvador, a assuré que «le projet fournira une électricité propre et accessible à la population de la province de Huíla, tout en apportant des avantages économiques immédiats à l'Angola.

Il a également indiqué qu'ils étaient désireux de travailler avec les équipes techniques de Minea, du Réseau national de transport (RNT), la société publique de production d'électricité (Prodel) et l'Institut de régulation des services d'eau et d'électricité (Irsea).

"Le travail conjoint sera déterminant pour maîtriser les défis qui découlent de la mise en œuvre de l'un des premiers projets photovoltaïques à l'échelle solaire à être utilisé, financé et exploité par des partenaires indépendants en Angola", a ajouté le gestionnaire.

La Total Eren est l'un des principaux producteurs indépendants d'énergie renouvelable basé à Paris, et la Greentech - Angola Environment Technology, Ltd (Greentech) est une société de développement énergétique expérimentée basée à Luanda.

MOZAMBIQUE :

Mozambique : 250 millions \$ pour la centrale thermique de Temane (128MW)

<https://www.agenceecofin.com/centrale/1612-83600-mozambique-250-millions-pour-la-centrale-thermique-de-temane-128mw>

(Agence Ecofin) - Le Mozambique a mobilisé 250 millions \$ auprès des USA et du fonds de l'OPEP, pour la construction de la centrale à gaz de Temane (128 MW). La centrale qui sera achevée fin 2021 sera approvisionnée par la production des sites gaziers de Pande-Temane Inhassoro.

Electricidade de Moçambique (EDM), la compagnie publique de l'électricité a reçu un prêt de 250 millions \$ pour la centrale thermique de Temane, de la part de la Société américaine de financement du développement international (DFC) qui a fourni 200 millions \$ et du fonds de l'OPEP (50 millions \$).

L'infrastructure qui fonctionnera au gaz est prévue pour être opérationnelle d'ici fin 2021. Elle sera alimentée par les champs gaziers de Pande-Temane Inhassoro exploités par Globeleq et Sasol. La centrale de Temane sera conçue et construite par l'Espagnol TSK. Sa production sera cédée à EDM pour une durée de 25 ans.

« Le Mozambique a l'un des taux d'électrification les plus bas au monde. Ce projet réduira le coût de l'électricité et accroîtra la capacité de production électrique du pays tout en permettant de relever le défi du développement. Nous sommes fiers de notre partenariat pour faire avancer ce projet majeur », a affirmé Edward Burier, le vice-président exécutif de DFC. Gwladys Johnson Akinocho

Over 3,000 farmers attend Sino-Mozambican training centres

<https://macauhub.com.mo/2020/12/16/20201216002/>

The Sino-Mozambican agricultural technology demonstration centres in the Mozambican provinces of Maputo, Gaza and Sofala have given training to over 3,000 farmers, the People's Daily reports.

Chinese experts on agriculture have helped test over 80 varieties of crops such as rice, maize, cotton, soybeans and sesame on the show farms, the Chinese state-run newspaper says.

The China Council for the Promotion of International Trade says the agricultural technology demonstration centres in Mozambique are among the first the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture set up abroad to show off Chinese farming techniques.

Some RMB418 million (US\$63.8 million) has been invested in the show farms in Mozambique, including RMB151 million invested in infrastructure, the council says.

GUINEA BISSAU :

Guinea-Bissau: Agreement with Republic of Congo to boost bilateral cooperation

<https://www.macaubusiness.com/guinea-bissau-agreement-with-republic-of-congo-to-boost-bilateral-cooperation/>

Guinea-Bissau and the Republic of Congo have agreed to strengthen political cooperation and align their positions within international bodies, according to a statement released during a visit by the latter's president to Bissau.

The president of the Republic of Congo, Denis Sessou Nguesso, on Wednesday concluded an official visit to Guinea-Bissau whose main goal was said to have been to honour his former comrades in the wars of independence, Amilcar Cabral and João Bernardo 'Nino' Vieira, as well as to salute efforts being made to improve stability in the country.

In the joint statement, the two heads of state stressed that in their meetings they had discussed cooperation between Brazzaville and Bissau and the "need to strengthen and increase them" for "mutual benefit" of both countries.

"The two Heads of State reviewed issues related to the promotion of peace, security and sustainable development at a global level, particularly on the African continent," the statement reads.

Umaro Sissoco Embaló of Guinea-Bissau and his guest also reaffirmed the "need to strengthen political and diplomatic relations, as well as the coordination and harmonisation of position within international forums."

On bilateral cooperation, the two presidents stressed the importance of strengthening institutional and business relations.

CABO VERDE / CAP VERT :

Le Cap-Vert accédera aux capacités d'un nouveau câble sous-marin de fibre optique au 1er trimestre 2021

<https://www.agenceecofin.com/internet/1112-83440-le-cap-vert-accedera-aux-capacites-d-un-nouveau-cable-sous-marin-de-fibre-optique-au-1er-trimestre-2021>

(Agence Ecofin) - Pedro Lopes, le secrétaire d'Etat adjoint à l'innovation, annonce un gain de connectivité à haut débit au Cap-Vert dès l'année prochaine. Le débit supplémentaire sera apporté par le câble sous-marin EllaLink sur lequel le pays a démarré sa connexion depuis 2019.

Les populations du Cap-Vert accéderont bientôt à une capacité data supplémentaire qui devrait améliorer grandement leur expérience de connectivité Internet à haut débit. Cette augmentation du débit est annoncée pour le premier trimestre 2021. C'est le secrétaire d'Etat adjoint à l'Innovation et à la Formation technique et professionnelle, Pedro Lopes (photo), qui l'a déclaré le mercredi 9 décembre à Praia.

Il s'exprimait sur le sujet lors du 1er Forum sur la sécurité Internet, organisé du 9 au 10 décembre par l'Agence de régulation multisectorielle de l'économie (ARME) sous le thème : « Internet, pandémie et durabilité ».

Le nouveau câble à travers lequel le Cap-Vert obtiendra du débit supplémentaire devrait être le système sous-marin de fibre optique EllaLink dont la station d'atterrissage, en construction par Cabo Verde Telecom depuis août dernier, est achevée. Le terminal technique est installé dans la zone industrielle d'Achada Grande Frente, dans la capitale.

Le système EllaLink est un câble sous-marin de dernière génération, composé de quatre paires de fibres conçues pour répondre à la demande de trafic entre l'Europe et l'Amérique latine. Le Cap-Vert a bénéficié en 2019 d'un financement de 25 millions de dollars de la Banque européenne d'investissement (BEI) pour mobiliser les 60 millions de dollars nécessaires pour s'y connecter.

Envoy sees potential for more Cabo Verdean exports to China

<https://macauhub.com.mo/2020/12/16/20201216001/>

Chinese Ambassador to Cabo Verde Du Xiacong considers the potential for greater Cabo Verdean exports to China to be enormous, and his country will welcome them, the Chinese Embassy in Praia says.

The embassy issued a written statement quoting Mr Du as saying so in an article he wrote for a Cabo Verdean newspaper, Expresso das Ilhas.

Mr Du wrote that Cabo Verdean exports to China were worth a mere US\$28,700 last year, just 0.047 percent of the value of all Cabo Verdean exports.

He said representatives of the government and enterprises in Cabo Verde had attended the annual China International Import Expo in Shanghai in an effort to increase exports to China.

Cabo Verde hopes Chinese enterprises can help develop a maritime special economic zone on and around the island of São Vicente, and China can be trusted to play its part, his embassy quotes the ambassador as saying.

SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE :

China donates medical equipment to São Tomé e Príncipe

<https://macauhub.com.mo/2020/12/17/20201217001/>

China has given São Tomé e Príncipe an assortment of medical equipment, including ventilators, under the auspices of their arrangement to cooperate in countering the Covid-19 pandemic, the Chinese Embassy in São Tomé says.

The embassy issued a written announcement saying São Toméan Minister of Health, Edgar Neves, and Chinese Ambassador to São Tomé e Príncipe, Xu Yingzhen, officiated at the turnover of the equipment.

The embassy quotes Ms Xu as saying China regularly sends medical missions to São Tomé e Príncipe and has donated many resources since the Covid-19 pandemic began, including know-how. São Tomé e Príncipe still faces difficulties in countering the pandemic, and is hoping for more Sino-São Toméan cooperation, the Chinese Embassy quotes Mr Neves as saying.

Sao Tome: Covid-19 situation in Europe prompts renewal of state of calamity

<https://www.macaubusiness.com/sao-tome-covid-19-situation-in-europe-prompts-renewal-of-state-of-calamity/>

The government of Sao Tome and Principe has extended the state of calamity in the country for another 30 days due to the epidemiological situation with Covid-19 in Europe, particularly Portugal, announced the prime minister, Jorge Bom Jesus.

“We have decided that by January 15 we will still maintain the state of the disaster, taking into account the evolution of the disease both in our sub-region and, above all, in relation to the Portuguese territory and even in the European area,” explained the Prime Minister of San Tomean, at the end of a cabinet meeting at the presidential palace on Tuesday.

Europe, he went on, “is our gateway, we have two weekly [flight] connections with Portugal and so we are still going to maintain the state of disaster, given the level of relaxation of our population.”

The current state of calamity ended on Tuesday.

The government takes the view that in Sao Tome indicators show that “there is some stability, the disease is relatively under control,” but there are also fears that with the festive season approaching and people expected to flock to the country’s beaches for the traditional New Year’s bath, we must be cautious and maintain the sanitary measures in place.

“We think it is urgent and pertinent to intensify the campaign of awareness, monitoring, surveillance and of course coercion will have to become operational”, he said. “We had already announced joint patrols by armed forces and police, but this time we will make the means available so that we have control.”

This action was, he said, to avoid “more serious consequences with the spread of the pandemic in the country”.

Sao Tome is the Portuguese-language country in Africa that has recorded the fewest deaths associated with Covid-19 and fewest infections with the new coronavirus that causes it: 17 deaths and 1,009 confirmed cases.

Worldwide, the Covid-19 pandemic has caused at least 1,621,397 deaths as a result of more than 72.7 million cases of infection worldwide.

In Portugal, 5,733 people have died out of 353,576 confirmed cases of infection, according to latest recent bulletin of the Directorate General for Health.

TIMOR-LESTE :

Envoy promises Chinese help for Timorese economic recovery

<https://macaohub.com.mo/2020/12/17/20201217002/>

Chinese Ambassador to Timor-Leste Xiao Jianguo has said China will cooperate ever more closely with Timor-Leste to stem the Covid-19 pandemic and spur the recovery of the Timorese economy from the disruption the pandemic has caused, the Chinese Embassy in Dili says.

The embassy issued a written statement quoting Mr Xiao as saying so when he met Cidália Lopes Nobre Mouzinho Guterres, the wife of the Timorese president.

The statement quotes Mr Xiao as telling Ms Guterres that his embassy would support projects envisaged by her foundation in the fields of education, health and social welfare.

Ms Guterres lauded China for being the first country to help Timor-Leste to counter the Covid-19 pandemic, the Chinese Embassy says.

A separate statement issued by the embassy quotes Mr Xiao as telling Timorese Minister of Petroleum and Mining Victor Soares when they met that he was urging Chinese enterprises to look for opportunities to extract oil or minerals in Timor-Leste.

****** AFRIQUE DU NORD ******

EGYPT :

Egypt welcomes UAE joining Eastern Mediteranean Gas Forum

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/1778976/middle-east>

CAIRO: Egypt has welcomed the UAE's entry into the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum (EMGF), according to a spokesman for President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi.

Bassam Radi said the Egyptian leader had also expressed the importance of the added value that the UAE would bring to the group.

“The president welcomes the UAE's accession to the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum as an observer, along with the founding member states, expressing the importance of the added value that the UAE will contribute to the forum's activities to serve strategic interests and enhance cooperation and partnership between the forum countries,” said Radi.

Talks were held on Wednesday between the Egyptian president and Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed to discuss issues in the region and issues of cooperation between the two countries.

A high-level EMGF working group held its eighth meeting to discuss organizational matters to activate the forum's activities, including reviewing the position of the headquarters agreement to be concluded between Egypt and the forum, and procedures for adding new members and observers.

The Egyptian Ministry of Petroleum said the meeting also discussed the forum's road map during 2021. It included the work plan of the Gas Industry Advisory Committee and the detailed plans of its three technical, economic and organizational subcommittees.

The meeting approved the requests for two additional members to join the committee, bringing the number of members to 29 from the most important companies and institutions concerned with the region's gas industry, compared to 16 members when it was launched in November last year.

It was the first meeting to be held after the final signing of the forum's charter by the seven founding countries — Greece, Cyprus, Italy, Israel, Jordan, Palestine and Egypt — in September and its ratification by Egypt's parliament on Tuesday.

On Sept. 22, the Egyptian Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources announced the signing of a charter to convert the EMGF into a regional organization based in Cairo. The signing was attended by ministers of the forum.

The organization is interested in strengthening cooperation and developing the political dialogue on natural gas in order to contribute to the economic exploitation of the countries' reserves of the resource.

The Turkish Foreign Ministry spokesman, Hami Aksoy, described the EMGF as an anti-Ankara bloc considering its transformation into an international organization.

Turkey is in a dispute with Greece over maritime and energy rights in the eastern Mediterranean.

ALGERIE :

L'Algérie a engagé des moyens considérables pour sécuriser ses frontières

<http://www.aps.dz/algerie/114388-l-algerie-a-engage-des-moyens-considerables-pour-securiser-ses-frontieres>

ALGER- L'Algérie a engagé des moyens humains et matériels "considérables" afin de sécuriser ses frontières terrestres et ses accès maritimes, de même qu'un processus de coopération avec certains pays limitrophes a été mis en place à cet effet, a soutenu mercredi, le secrétaire général du ministère de la Défense nationale (MDN) le Général-Major, Abdelhamid Ghriess.

"Mon pays, de part sa stratégie sécuritaire, et tenant compte de l'instabilité prévalant dans la zone du Bassin Ouest-Méditerranéen et dans la bande sahélo-sahélienne, a engagé des moyens humains et matériels considérables afin de sécuriser ses frontières terrestres et ses accès maritimes, de même qu'un processus de coopération avec certains pays limitrophes a été mis en place à cet effet, et ce, conformément aux principes de notre politique extérieure et dans le cadre de la légalité internationale", a-t-il affirmé lors de la 16e réunion des ministres de la Défense des pays membres de l'Initiative "5+5 Défense", a indiqué un communiqué du MDN.

Cette séance a été présidée par le ministre maltais des Affaires intérieures et de la Sécurité nationale depuis La Valette, dont le pays assure la Présidence tournante de l'Initiative pour l'année en cours, a ajouté la même source

Lors de cette réunion, le Secrétaire général du MDN a souligné, dans son allocution, "le contexte international et régional particulier" qui caractérise la tenue de cette rencontre, en mettant l'accent sur "l'engagement" de l'Algérie au principe de la coopération dans le cadre de l'espace 5+5 défense.

Etaient inscrits à l'ordre du jour de cette réunion, les enjeux régionaux et les défis communs des pays membres de l'Initiative, en l'occurrence l'Algérie, la France, l'Italie, la Libye, Malte, la Mauritanie, le Maroc, le Portugal, l'Espagne et la Tunisie.

Il était question également d'évaluer le taux d'exécution du Plan d'Action de l'Initiative pour l'année en cours et l'approbation du Plan d'Action pour l'année 2021.

Les travaux de cette réunion ont été sanctionnés par l'approbation de la Déclaration conjointe, définissant les axes de coopération militaire multilatérale pour la coordination des actions visant à promouvoir la sécurité et la stabilité en Méditerranée occidentale.

Abdelkader Taleb Omar. Ambassadeur de la RASD en Algérie : «Les Sahraouis n'abdiqueront pas, ils poursuivront la lutte armée»

<https://www.elwatan.com/edition/international/abdelkader-taleb-omar-ambassadeur-de-la-rasd-en-algerie-les-sahraouis-nabdiqueront-pas-ils-poursuivront-la-lutte-armee-16-12-2020>

-Contre toute attente, le président américain, Donald Trump, en fin de règne, reconnaît la souveraineté marocaine sur le Sahara occidental. Comment avez-vous accueilli cette décision ?

Le gouvernement sahraoui a rendu publique une déclaration dans laquelle il dénonce cette position américaine, qui est inacceptable et dénuée de toute légitimité. Il a à cet effet demandé au monde entier de rejeter cette position contraire à la légitimité internationale. Et nous avons enregistré de bons échos, notamment auprès de l'Organisation des Nations unies qui s'est exprimée à travers son secrétaire général, de l'Union européenne et de certaines grandes puissances, telles que la Russie qui a condamné et rejeté cette décision qui sort du consensus au sein du Conseil de sécurité. Il y a bien d'autres pays, comme la Suède, la Norvège, la Grande-Bretagne et l'Espagne qui ont affirmé qu'aucun pays au monde, quelle que soit sa puissance, ne peut changer la réalité de ce conflit. L'Espagne, ancienne puissance coloniale du Sahara occidental, dit avoir pris contact avec l'équipe du nouveau président américain, Joe Biden, pour lui demander de corriger cette erreur, de mettre fin à l'unilatéralisme par lequel s'est distingué Donald Trump et de privilégier le travail multilatéral dans le traitement des conflits. Tous ces pays voient cette façon de faire en dehors des règles et lois

régissant le monde comme un danger pour les relations internationales. Les peuples des pays arabes et musulmans ont découvert l'hypocrisie et la trahison du Maroc à la cause palestinienne (...)

Quand l'armée française cible l'Algérie

<http://moroccomail.fr/2020/12/17/quand-larmee-francaise-cible-lalgerie/>

Souvent critiqué sur les aspects liés à la désinformation et la propagande sur le réseau, Facebook a annoncé, dans la soirée d'avant-hier, la suppression de trois réseaux, deux basés en Russie et le troisième en France appartenant à des personnes proches de l'armée française, et qui versent dans la désinformation. Plusieurs pays, dont l'Algérie, sont ciblés et les spécialistes de la cybersécurité estiment que les activités de propagande en ligne de la France orientées vers la sous-région et l'Algérie devraient faire l'objet d'un suivi.

Karim Aimeur – Alger (Le Soir) – Le réseau social le plus populaire du monde accuse ces comptes d'enfreindre sa politique et de mener des campagnes d'ingérence dans plusieurs pays africains dont l'Algérie.

Deux réseaux de comptes ont été attribués à des personnes associées à l'organisation russe Internet Research Agency (IRA) et un troisième s'est avéré avoir « des liens avec des personnes associées à l'armée française », a affirmé Facebook dans un long communiqué.

Ces trois campagnes ont été supprimées parce qu'elles enfreignaient la politique du réseau social qui interdit « un comportement inauthentique coordonné au nom d'un gouvernement étranger », ont déclaré le responsable de la politique de sécurité de Facebook, Nathaniel Gleicher, et le chef de l'équipe mondiale de perturbation des menaces, David Agranovich, dans un billet de blog.

Dans les pays ciblés, ces comptes menaient des campagnes de propagande en faveur de l'armée française.

Concernant le réseau basé en France, celui-ci visait essentiellement la Centrafrique et le Mali, et dans une moindre mesure le Niger, le Burkina Faso, l'Algérie, la Côte d'Ivoire et le Tchad, a précisé le réseau social. Il explique qu'en donnant la parole à de faux habitants de ces pays, ces comptes commentaient par exemple la politique française sur place ou exprimaient un soutien à l'armée française.

MAROC :

Le Maroc et Israël normalisent leurs relations, annonce Trump

<https://plus.lesoir.be/342986/article/2020-12-10/le-maroc-et-israel-normalisent-leurs-relations-annonce-trump>

Le président américain ne cache pas sa satisfaction : pour prix de la reconnaissance par les USA de la souveraineté du Maroc sur le Sahara occidental, Rabat a accepté de reconnaître Israël.

Morocco-Israel normalisation is a slap in the face of the African Union

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20201211-morocco-israel-normalisation-is-a-slap-in-the-face-of-the-african-union/>

Les hostilités de l'Algérie ont précipité le rapprochement Maroc-Israël

<https://www.bladi.net/hostilites-algerie-maroc,77442.html>

L'Algérie bloque le Maghreb en alimentant une guerre contre le Maroc (Ahmed Ounaies)

<https://www.medias24.com/l-algerie-bloque-le-maghreb-en-alimentant-une-guerre-contre-le-maroc-ahmed-ounaies-15115.html>

L'ancien ministre tunisien des Affaires étrangères, Ahmed Ounaies, a dénoncé le rôle que joue le régime militaire algérien pour alimenter une guerre contre le Maroc et bloquer l'unité du Maghreb (...)

Le Maroc, un partenaire « important » des États-Unis dans la lutte antiterroriste

<https://www.bladi.net/lutte-antiterroriste-le-maroc-est-un-partenaire-important-selon-david.77486.html>

Le Maroc et les États-Unis entretiennent une bonne coopération en matière de lutte contre le terrorisme, a indiqué l'ambassadeur américain David Fischer.

Cette coopération de lutte contre le terrorisme entre les deux pays est « robuste et de longue date », a précisé le diplomate américain dans une interview à la MAP. Il a également évoqué la feuille de route pour la coopération sur le plan de défense signée en octobre dernier entre les deux pays. Selon M. Fisher, cet accord vise à « guider » la coopération bilatérale dans des domaines prioritaires, y compris le renforcement des efforts de modernisation entrepris par le Maroc. Il vise également à « faire face, ensemble et d'une manière plus efficace, aux menaces régionales ».

L'ambassadeur américain a aussi rappelé les nombreuses participations du royaume aux engagements militaires avec les États Unis. Il a cité l'African Lion- un « exercice militaire annuel le plus large » en Afrique qu'abrite le Maroc. David Fisher a par ailleurs assuré que le royaume demeure un partenaire « majeur » dans le programme international US d'éducation et de formation militaires.

Au dire du diplomate, le Maroc utilise une stratégie « globale » mise en place pour lutter contre le terrorisme, qui prend en compte des mesures vigilantes de sécurité, la coopération régionale et internationale et des politiques de lutte contre la radicalisation.

La reconnaissance US de la marocanité du Sahara ouvre les perspectives d'un développement durable pour les pays du Maghreb (PVM)

<http://www.mapexpress.ma/actualite/activites-partisanes-et-syndicales/reconnaissance-us-marocanite-du-sahara-ouvre-les-perspectives-dun-developpement-durable-les-pays-du-maghreb-pvm/>

Rabat – La reconnaissance de l'administration américaine de la pleine souveraineté du Royaume du Maroc sur son Sahara ouvre les perspectives à l'Union du Maghreb pour réaliser un développement durable dans le cadre d'une stabilité et d'une paix pérennes, a souligné le Parti Vert marocain (PVM).

A l'issue d'une réunion d'urgence de son bureau politique consacrée aux derniers développements de la question nationale, le parti a relevé dans un communiqué que les mesures « sages » prises par l'administration américaine renforcent la voie pour rendre justice au Maroc et mettre fin à ce conflit, ouvrant ainsi des perspectives pour l'Union du Maghreb à réaliser un développement et une paix durables.

À cet égard, le bureau politique a renouvelé son appel au Conseil de sécurité et aux Nations Unies à mettre en place les mesures nécessaires en tenant compte des récentes décisions audacieuses sur la

question du Sahara marocain, invitant le mouvement des Verts mondiaux à prendre en considération les nouveaux développements pour soutenir la récente résolution des Nations Unies concernant l'intégrité territoriale du Royaume.

Après avoir souligné que l'intégrité territoriale et la cause palestinienne "sont deux questions n'acceptant ni marchandage ni mercenariat", le Parti Vert marocain a appelé la communauté internationale à assumer ses responsabilités en apportant un soutien sérieux au peuple palestinien pour établir son État indépendant, protéger les lieux saints, promouvoir la coexistence et la tolérance entre juifs, chrétiens et musulmans, et assurer une paix durable dans la région.

TUNISIE :

Tunisie: un groupe parlementaire présente un projet de loi pour incriminer la normalisation avec Israël

<https://www.i24news.tv/fr/actu/international/1608104230-tunisie-un-groupe-parlementaire-presente-un-projet-de-loi-pour-incriminer-la-normalisation-avec-israel>

"Ce texte permettra de distinguer les forces nationales qui se prononcent contre la normalisation avec Israël"

Le bloc démocratique, un groupe parlementaire tunisien, a annoncé mardi avoir présenté un projet de loi avec d'autres élus visant à incriminer une éventuelle normalisation des relations diplomatiques entre Tunis et Jérusalem, a rapporté l'agence de presse Anadolu.

"Une fois adopté par le Parlement, ce projet de loi permettra de distinguer les forces nationales qui se prononcent contre la normalisation avec Israël, des traîtres et des collaborateurs", a assuré le député Haykel Mekki lors d'une conférence de presse du bloc démocratique dans la capitale tunisienne.

Ces propos interviennent alors que le Premier ministre tunisien, Hichem Mechichi, avait affirmé la veille que l'établissement de liens diplomatiques entre son pays et Israël n'était "pas une question à l'ordre du jour".

"C'est un choix pour lequel le Maroc a opté librement. Nous respectons le choix du Maroc, le Maroc est un pays frère, un pays que nous aimons beaucoup. Pour la Tunisie, ce n'est pas une question à l'ordre du jour", a déclaré M. Mechichi dans une interview sur la chaîne France 24.

Après les Emirats arabes unis, Bahreïn et le Soudan, le Maroc est le quatrième pays arabe depuis août à promettre une normalisation des relations avec l'Etat hébreu.

Selon les médias israéliens, le Sultanat d'Oman et l'Indonésie seraient par ailleurs les prochaines nations à établir des liens avec l'Etat juif.

Tunisie-immigration clandestine: Suite à la controverse, la Présidence du gouvernement clarifie les propos de Mechichi

<https://www.tunisienumerique.com/tunisie-immigration-clandestine-suite-a-la-controverse-la-presidence-du-gouvernement-clarifie-les-propos-de-mechichi/>

La Présidence du gouvernement a annoncé, dans un communiqué rendu public le 17 décembre 2020, que le Chef du gouvernement, Hichem Mechichi et sa délégation d'accompagnement ont

terminé une visite de travail de trois jours en France du 13 au 15 décembre 2020, en réponse à une invitation de son homologue français, le Premier ministre Jean Castex.

Les entretiens entre les deux Premiers ministres ont porté sur leurs excellentes relations bilatérales entre les deux pays et sur la nécessité de les développer, sur la base du concept de «coopération solidaire».

Le gouvernement français a exprimé sa volonté de doubler ses investissements en Tunisie en menant à bien les projets en cours (un hôpital multi-spécialités à Gafsa, un hôpital de santé à Sidi Bouzid, le projet de l'Université française de Tunis pour l'Afrique et la Méditerranée).

La question de l'immigration et du développement solidaire a été l'une des questions les plus importantes abordées, Mechichi a expliqué que la migration organisée représente une opportunité pour les deux pays d'approfondir les liens historiques entre eux, ainsi que leur rôle dans la réalisation d'un développement conjoint, rappelant le rôle de la communauté tunisienne et sa contribution active dans de nombreux secteurs économiques français.

Quant au sujet de la migration irrégulière, le Premier ministre a souligné la nécessité d'adopter une approche développementale et solidaire pour y faire face, indiquant qu'elle cause beaucoup de souffrances sociales et économiques, d'autant plus qu'elle pourrait être liée au crime organisé, à la traite des humains et aux risques d'infiltration de certains individus terroristes par ses voies.

Cette approche ne se base pas uniquement sur des solutions sécuritaires à l'immigration clandestine mais propose aussi de traiter ses causes profondes, liées principalement au développement, à la multiplication des opportunités d'emploi et à l'espoir en un avenir meilleur.

De son côté, le Premier ministre français a affirmé le soutien de la France à la Tunisie dans tous les domaines de coopération avec l'Union européenne, notamment économiques et financiers.

LYBIA :

Argent libyen: Hortefeux, «frère» de Sarkozy, est mis en examen à son tour

<https://www.mediapart.fr/journal/france/081220/argent-libyen-hortefeux-frere-de-sarkozy-est-mis-en-examen-son-tour?onglet=full>

L'ancien ministre est mis en examen pour « association de malfaiteurs » et « financement illégal de campagne électorale ». Après Nicolas Sarkozy, Claude Guéant et Éric Woerth, il est désormais la quatrième figure politique de premier plan à être mise en cause par les juges d'instruction dans l'affaire des financements libyens (...)

Méditerranée : les corps de quatre enfants retrouvés au large de la Libye

<https://www.infomigrants.net/fr/post/29166/mediterranee-les-corps-de-quatre-enfants-retrouves-au-large-de-la-libye>

Le Croissant rouge Libyen a annoncé avoir retrouvé mercredi les corps de quatre enfants sur une plage à l'ouest de la capitale libyenne Tripoli, à la suite du naufrage de leur embarcation.

Les drames de l'immigration n'épargnent pas les plus jeunes. Les corps de quatre enfants migrants âgés de cinq à dix ans ont été retrouvés mercredi 16 décembre sur une plage à l'ouest de la capitale libyenne Tripoli, a annoncé le Croissant rouge libyen.

"Nous avons été informés de la présence d'une embarcation en train de couler en haute mer avec 30 personnes à bord" dans la région de Zawiya, à 45 km à l'ouest de Tripoli, a dit à l'AFP Hassan Mokhtar al-Bey, du Croissant rouge. (...)

Libya rejects equal inclusion of Haftar in political process plagued by disagreements

<https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/libya-rejects-equal-inclusion-of-haftar-in-political-process-plagued-by-disagreements/news>

Libya's internationally recognized government voiced its support for U.N.-led talks promoting peace and dialogue but underlined that putschist Gen. Khalifa Haftar should not have an equal role in the country's future

The Libyan government rejects any attempt to place the aggressors and defenders of Tripoli on an equal footing, Libyan Defense Minister Salahaddin Namroush stated Wednesday as differences and disagreements plague the United Nations-led political process aiming to end the chaos in the oil-rich North African nation.

"We support every dialogue aimed at lasting peace in Libya and for its people to enjoy security and safety, but at the same time we reject any attempt to make the aggressors and defenders of Tripoli equal," Namroush wrote on Twitter, adding that any political settlements not based on renouncing violence, condemning aggression, reparation for harm and holding perpetrators accountable, remain fragile.

Forces loyal to the U.N.-recognized Government of National Accord (GNA) based in Tripoli and its rival, putschist Gen. Khalifa Haftar, formally agreed on a cease-fire in October. The deal included the departure of foreign forces and mercenaries from Libya within three months, after Haftar's failed offensive on the capital launched in April 2019. (...)

Libya: Mercenaries for Haftar brought from Syria

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/libya-mercenaries-for-haftar-brought-from-syria/2078246>

Libyan army says Haftar mobilizing mercenaries and arms

The Libyan army said Tuesday that a plane carrying Syrian mercenaries landed in Benghazi to support Libyan warlord Khalifa Haftar.

In a statement to Anadolu Agency, Abdul Hadi Dara, the spokesman for the Sirte and Jafra operation of the Libyan armed forces, said they "received solid information of mercenaries on board a plane that belongs to [Syrian-owned] Cham Wings Airlines which arrived from Syria to Benina airport."

Dara also questioned the role of the United Nations, which is supervising a cease-fire, noting that no action has been taken against Haftar, who is mobilizing mercenaries and weapons.

The Libyan army said Saturday that it was monitoring the mobilization of Haftar's militia in areas of Sirte and al-Jafra as well as in southern Libya.

Last week, the army also said that a Russian plane landed at Ghardabiya Airbase in Sirte with a shipment of weapons and ammunition for Haftar.

On Oct. 23, the UN announced a permanent ceasefire agreement between Libya's warring rivals during a meeting of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission in Geneva.

Since the ouster of late leader Muammar Gaddafi in 2011, two seats of power have emerged in Libya: one in eastern Libya supported mainly by Egypt and the United Arab Emirates, and another in Tripoli, which enjoys UN and international recognition.

*Ahmed Asmar contributed to this report from Ankara

**** AFRIQUE DE L'OUEST ****

COTE D'IVOIRE :

Côte d'Ivoire: President Ouattara inaugurated for third term

<https://newsaf.cgtn.com/news/2020-12-15/C-te-d-Ivoire-President-Ouattara-inaugurated-for-third-term-WdYKh4HLuU/index.html>

Coronavirus: Côte d'Ivoire to vaccinate its population from April 2021 (government)

<https://www.ecofinagency.com/public-management/1012-42155-coronavirus-cote-divoire-to-vaccinate-its-population-from-april-2021-government>

(Ecofin Agency) - Côte d'Ivoire will begin a vaccination campaign of its population against covid-19, from April 2021. This was announced by the government on Wednesday, December 9, 2020, in a communiqué issued at the end of the Council of Ministers.

This measure is one of the actions undertaken by the Ivorian authorities since the beginning of the pandemic. After the massive screening campaign, prevention, and management of positive cases, the government had decided to take part in the initiative which aims to provide two billion doses of several vaccines in development to people around the world by the end of 2021.

According to the Ivorian authorities, the vaccination campaign will begin with frontline personnel, meaning health workers, defense and security forces, and teachers. It will then target people over the age of 50, those with chronic conditions, and finally international travelers.

"About 5 million people, or 20% of the Ivorian population, are targeted by this vaccination, which is scheduled to start in April 2021," the government said in its communiqué. For the time being, no indication has been given on the vaccine that will be used in the country.

According to the latest assessment by the African Union (AU), Côte d'Ivoire currently has 21,547 confirmed cases of covid-19, including 133 deaths and 21,176 recoveries.

Moutiou Adjibi Nourou

MALI :

Mali: Debate on army's rule and presence of foreign forces

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/mali-debate-on-army-s-rule-and-presence-of-foreign-forces/2071819>

Experts question intentions of army-led transitional government and strategic interests of foreign forces | The continuation of the military-led transitional government and the presence of foreign forces has become a topic of a raging debate in the West African nation of Mali, as the country continues to confront terrorism and political instability.

A few months ago, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres had called for continued international support as the landlocked country continues to deal with numerous obstacles.

Since Aug. 18, when the military ousted President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, the transitional government largely comprises of military officers. Four key ministries and the National Transitional Council, which acts as a legislative body are also headed by army officers.

"Since the beginning, the willingness of the military to control the entire process with the choice of a former military officer as president of the transition demonstrates in more than one way their intention, which has been countered by the Economic Community of West African States [ECOWAS]," said Seyni Cisse Diop, a security expert, and a former Senegalese military officer. Doubting the intentions of the military, Justice Simango, Zimbabwean political strategist, said he has a suspicion, whether the army wanted just change the government or rather to appoint a person of their choice as ruler.

"It is not surprising that ECOWAS has condemned the coup in Mali. Similar military actions with similar purposes have taken place in West African countries and they have not kept their promise," he said.

According to Simango, not only in Mali but in all African countries, the politics needs to be demilitarized and soldiers should remain in barracks.

He said the military coups undermine democracy and strongly affect the political-economic stability and security of the country.

Growing terrorist threat

More so, due to the terrorist threat, it becomes more important for the military to confront the threat, rather than remaining concentrated in the capital Bamako.

"The terror threat is growing more and more in a large territory that is difficult to control. Particularly when the security apparatus is more deployed in the center. The country has seen recent attacks in Kidal, Menaka, and Gao which means that the whole Malian territory is affected by the threat," said Diop.

Responding to the UN secretary-general's call, recently 300 British soldiers arrived in Mali to secure the country. There is already a UN Integrated Multidimensional Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). French forces are also engaged in the operation of Barkhane against armed Islamists in West Africa.

While welcoming this military help to confront terrorist threats, Diop said, after all, it must be borne in mind that these courtiers are not friends, but have their interests.

"The proximity of the region of Kidal in Mali with that of Arlit in Niger easily explains France's energy interests in this country. And the new soldiers arriving are consciously looking for goods, energy, and so on. They seek to feed themselves under the pretext of aid," said the security expert.

Role of French army

According to Simango, the presence of the French military in Mali does not contribute to the political and economic stability of the country.

He also blamed foreign forces for collaborating in the military coup.

"It takes time to orchestrate a military coup, we have seen it in Zimbabwe and Nigeria, where military coups are planned for years before being successfully implemented," he added.

He said the country needs a civilian government and the restoration of democratic processes along with a redefinition of the role of the military, external forces, and civil society's involvement.

The political strategist also recommended that Mali should urgently devise a strategic roadmap to plan political and economic transformation and initiate a dialogue reinforced by ECOWAS to bring out competent leaders.

Diop asked for exploring more strategic partners, who are sincere and help the country in its transformation.

TOGO :

Togo president appoints new chief of general staff

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/togo-president-appoints-new-chief-of-general-staff/2068061>

Gen. Dadja Maganawe replaces Gen. Felix Abalo Kadanga after his 7 years in post

Alphonse Logo | Togolese President Faure Gnassingbe on Sunday appointed Gen. Dadja Maganawe as chief of staff of the Army.

Colonel until then and secretary general of the Ministry of the Armed Forces, Maganawe was first promoted by Gnassingbe as brigadier general and then as chief of general staff of the Togolese Armed Forces.

He replaced Gen. Felix Abalo Kadanga who had been in office since 2013.

Local media referred to the appointment as a "double-speed promotion."

In the past, Maganawe was the prefect of Dankpen, a town located 417 kilometers (259 miles) north of the capital Lome.

The Togolese military has seen a series of appointments in recent months.

In October, Colonel Kodjo Apedo was appointed the deputy chief of general staff. New officials were also appointed in the Army and Air Force.

SENEGAL :

France's Restitution of Art to Benin and Senegal Has Hit a Snag

<https://observer.com/2020/12/frances-restitution-of-art-to-benin-and-senegal-has-hit-a-snag/>

In November, two years after President Emmanuel Macron of France announced his intention to eventually return artworks looted by France from the city of Abomey in Benin to their country of origin, 343 French senators approved a bill that guarantees the return of these colonial-era objects within the span of one calendar year. However, as of this week, the French Senate has reportedly blocked the passing of this bill due to arguments over its specific terms.

According to The Art Newspaper, the dispute is based around the French Senate's need to establish a national council that would advise the government on restitution claims, as well as facilitate similar processes in the future.(...)

Les premières doses de vaccin contre le Covid-19 disponibles au Sénégal en mars 2021 (directeur de la prévention)

<http://www.aps.sn/la-une/article/les-premieres-doses-de-vaccin-contre-le-covid-disponibles-au-senegal-en-mars-2021-directeur-prevention>

Dakar, 16 déc (APS) - Des pays membres de l'Alliance GAVI dont le Sénégal vont disposer de leurs premières doses du nouveau vaccin contre le Covid-19 en mars 2021 après homologation par l'Organisation mondiale de la santé (OMS), a annoncé le directeur de la prévention, docteur El Hadj Mamadou Ndiaye.

L'Alliance GAVI est une alliance des acteurs majeurs de la vaccination, dont des gouvernements de pays donateurs ou en voie de développement, l'OMVS, l'Unicef, la Banque mondiale, l'industrie du vaccin dans les pays industrialisés et en voie de développement, des agences techniques et de recherche, ainsi que des ONG.

Les pays membres de l'Alliance GAVI ont "la garantie" qu'ils disposeront de leurs premières doses à la fin du premier trimestre 2021, dans le cadre d'un partenariat incluant l'OMS, l'Unicef la Banque mondiale et l'Union européenne, a-t-il déclaré sur la radio privée sénégalaise Sud FM.

Selon le directeur de la prévention, avant cette date, l'OMS aura au préalable homologué ce vaccin pour s'assurer de son efficacité et donner les garanties de son utilisation sur le plan de la sécurité sanitaire.

Depuis 1976 et le début du Programme élargi de vaccination, le Sénégal n'a jamais utilisé de vaccin qui n'ait été préalablement homologué par l'OMS, rappelle El Hadj Mamadou Ndiaye.

BURKINA FASO :

Soixantenaire de l'indépendance à Banfora : Les déplacés internes n'ont pas eu la tête à la fête

<https://www.burkina24.com/2020/12/18/soixantenaire-de-lindependance-a-banfora-les-deplacés-internes-nont-pas-eu-la-tete-a-la-fete/>

Banfora a accueilli la célébration des 60 ans de l'indépendance du Burkina Faso le vendredi 11 décembre 2020. Entre défilé, buffets garnis et autres activités fastes, la fête se vit dans tous les coins et recoins de la ville. Sauf les sites d'accueil temporaires habitant les déplacés internes comme à « Flabougououni », la zone non lotie de l'ex cimetière où Burkina24 a rencontré des dizaines de femmes.

Dans la zone non lotie de l'ancien cimetière de Banfora, les habitants n'ont pas la tête à la fête. Plutôt préoccupés par la recherche de leurs pitance quotidienne, ils vivent ce vendredi 11 décembre à l'image des autres jours : Tristesse, incertitude, privation, une vie hantée par le seul souci de trouver de quoi tromper la fin. Et ce depuis qu'ils ont fui la mort en abandonnant proches et biens il y a de cela 10 mois qui de Djibo, Arbinda, Guorgadji, Combory et autres localités situées dans « la zone rouge ».

Il est 9h quand nous arrivons au domicile de A.D. Assise sur une natte, la trentenaire s'attèle à coiffer sa fille. Sur la raison de leur présence sur les lieux, elle en appelle aux témoignages de Adja, une petite fille de quatre ans qui répond aussitôt par « Mayédé » qui est l'expression de la mort en langue Fulfuldé. Elle est désormais ancrée dans tous les esprits.

« A Guorgadji. Les terroristes ont tué plusieurs des nôtres », confie cet enfant dont la famille ne vit que de faibles revenus issus des services de prestations d'aide boucher que son père offre à l'abattoir. « Nous sommes venus en catastrophe. Nous avons du mal à joindre les deux bouts. Le mois passé nous avons des boites de céréales de la part des services sociaux », confie Dame A. La mère de sept enfants avait reçu plus tôt, un foyer amélioré de l'Initiative de coopération et d'appui aux actions humanitaires et de développement (ICAHD) international.

Les adultes non plus n'ont pas encore oublié les horreurs subies. K.B du haut de ses 60 ans se rappelle comme hier de la série noire qui l'a éloignée de son Combory natal un lundi matin. « Les hommes armés ont tué mon frère aîné et mon fils à l'aube ».

A.M, une autre déplacée a vu de ses deux yeux, le corps ensanglanté de sa belle-mère dont « la balle a transpercé les deux oreilles ». (...)

BENIN :

Nigeria's Buhari orders reopening of borders with Benin, Niger, and Cameroon

<https://www.ecofinagency.com/public-management/1712-42192-nigeria-s-buhari-orders-reopening-of-borders-with-benin-niger-and-cameroon>

(Ecofin Agency) - Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari ordered yesterday Dec 16 the immediate reopening of land borders with Benin, Niger, and Cameroon.

“President Buhari has directed the immediate opening of four land borders: Seme, Illela, Maigatari, and Mfun,” an official tweet by the Presidency indicated. This announcement comes as an end to more than a year of trade tensions between Buhari's country and its neighbors, especially Benin.

In August 2019, Nigeria closed its land border with Benin to “fight against rice smuggling” and other products from outside that were flooding the Nigerian market. A few days ago, the Nigerian President said this measure was to some extent also aimed at controlling weapon and drug smuggling at borders. “Now that the message has sunk in with our neighbors, we are looking into reopening the borders as soon as possible,” he said.

However, some may believe that this new decision reflects a failure by the government to uphold the protectionist measures undertaken in recent years. If the government wanted to achieve food self-sufficiency through these measures, it's obvious it missed its target. Rather, not only have the measures had immediate economic consequences, affecting even other countries in the region, notably Togo, they have also led to higher inflation in Nigeria, as commodity prices have soared considerably in the country. By November 2020, inflation had reached 14.9%, its highest level in nearly 3 years.

This border reopening does not guarantee a definitive resolution of trade tensions between the parties. In November 2019, a tripartite Benin-Niger-Nigeria committee was created to find solutions for the reopening of borders between these three countries. For the moment, the latter has not yet made any official comments, in the sense of a definitive solution to avoid the repetition of such a scenario in the future. Moutiou Adjibi Nourou

NIGERIA :

Nigeria to acquire COVID-19 vaccine in January

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/nigeria-to-acquire-covid-19-vaccine-in-january/2079560>

Committee founded to select most suitable vaccine for country, says health minister

Adam Abu-bashal | Nigeria said Wednesday it expects to obtain its first shipment of a COVID-19 vaccine in January.

A committee has been set up to select the vaccine most suitable for the country against the virus, Health Minister Osagie Ehanire said in a statement.

He said that since different temperatures are required to protect vaccines, they must choose the most appropriate one from the existing vaccines.

Nigeria has signed up with the Global Vaccine Alliance Initiative (Gavi) for access to vaccines, said Ehanire, adding they have also registered for COVID-19 vaccines with the Global Access Program (COVAX) co-led by the World Health Organization (WHO).

The minister had earlier announced that the government would receive 20 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine.

More than 75,000 cases have been detected in Nigeria so far while 1,200 people have died due to the virus.

The director of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), John Nkengasong, said last month that vaccination in Africa may not begin until the second quarter of 2021, adding the need for cold storage of vaccines would be the biggest challenge for the continent. Since first emerging in Wuhan, China in December last year, COVID-19 has claimed over 1.64 million lives in 191 countries and regions.

More than 74 million cases have been reported worldwide and nearly 42 million recoveries, according to figures compiled by US-based Johns Hopkins University.

While the US, India and Brazil remain the worst-hit countries in terms of the number of cases, Europe is in the grip of a devastating second wave of infections.

*Writing by Merve Berker

Nigeria in talks with school boys kidnappers: Official

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/nigeria-in-talks-with-school-boys-kidnappers-official/2079462>

Ransom payments not part of negotiations with Boko Haram terror group following mass abduction Friday, says local official

Olarewaju Kola | Nigerian authorities have entered into negotiations with the kidnappers of about 500 students at a public school in the northwestern Katsina State, an official said Wednesday. Aminu Bello Masari, Governor of Katsina State, asserted that the negotiations would not include ransom payments.

"We've started discussing with the abductors. We're using our local security outfit, Macaba, but we will not negotiate with money," he said in a televised interview. The Macaba is a local vigilante group helping officials in contacting Boko Haram, the terror group that admitted Tuesday to the kidnapping.

Masari noted that 402 students were yet to be accounted for after the massive abduction last Friday at the Government Science Secondary School, Kankara in Katsina State.

"As a governor, I have a responsibility for the rescue of 402 students that are missing," he said, adding that the government regularly updated the parents on the kidnapped school boys' whereabouts.

Nigerian military forces on Wednesday said all the abducted school boys were alive.

A spokesman for military operations, Maj Gen John Eneche said troops were monitoring the location of the schoolboys, as well as the terror group.

The incident marked the third abduction of students in over a decade of Boko Haram terror attacks in the country following the 2014 kidnapping of 270 Chibok schoolgirls and the 2018 abduction of 110 girls from a school in the northeast.

80 die of Lassa fever in southwest Nigeria

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/80-die-of-lassa-fever-in-southwest-nigeria/2080880>

More than 300 people have lost their lives to the disease since the beginning of this year

Adam Abu-bashal | A total of 80 people in Nigeria's Ondo State have died from Lassa fever, an official said Thursday.

Despite the deaths and fears caused by the novel coronavirus outbreak, Lassa fever is more dangerous, said Ondo State Health Commissioner Jibayo Adeyeye, noting that the number of people dying from the disease in the state is more than from COVID-19.

"In Ondo, 41 people died from COVID-19, but more than 80 died from Lassa fever," Adeyeye said.

Lassa fever is a contagious viral disease that can be passed from animals to humans and humans to humans. The disease, which is usually transmitted by contact with mouse feces, can lead to a fatal hemorrhagic fever.

Authorities are warning the public to be careful about hygiene and not to come into contact with mice and other rodents.

In Nigeria, more than 300 people have died from Lassa fever in 29 states since January.

During the last dry season from November to March, an outbreak of Lassa fever killed 129 people.

Lassa fever, seen in many African countries such as Mali, Togo, Ghana, Liberia and Sierra Leone, was first observed in Nigeria in 1969 in northeastern Borno state.

The Nigerian government declared a state of emergency due to Lassa fever in 2019.*Writing by Merve Berker

NIGER :

Turkey condemns terrorist attack in Niger

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/turkey/turkey-condemns-terrorist-attack-in-niger/2077992>

28 people die in terrorist attack in Niger's Diffa region on late Sunday

Gozde Bayar | Turkey on Tuesday condemned the recent terrorist attack in southeastern Niger, which left 28 civilians dead.

“We are deeply saddened by the news that 28 people lost their lives and hundreds were injured in a terrorist attack carried out against civilians at the night of Dec. 13 2020, in the southeastern region Toumour (Diffa) of Niger,” the Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

“We deeply condemn this brutal attack,” the ministry said.

It also extended condolences to the families of those who lost their lives, as well as to the “friendly and brotherly” people and the government of Niger, and wished a speedy recovery to the injured.

Niger’s government has declared a three-day national mourning starting Tuesday.

Bordering northern Nigeria, Niger's Diffa region has been plagued by Boko Haram attacks since 2015. The entire region has been under a state of emergency for several months.

Over 450 acts of killing, kidnapping, sexual and gender-based violence, and other serious incidents were reported in Diffa region in the first nine months of 2020, according to UNHCR.

GHANA :

Ghana elections: A hung parliament could haunt Nana Akufo-Addo

<https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/features/Ghana-elections-A-hung-parliament-could-haunt-Nana-Akufo-Addo-1136444>

The tight outcome in Ghana's elections is down to perceptions of corruption, and could lead to a parliamentary majority for the Opposition. The pressures this places on the executive may haunt Akufo-Addo's second term. But it could provide the oversight that has hitherto been lacking.

Ahead of the just concluded Ghanaian elections, a strange and fascinated phenomenon emerged: the Opposition NDC party consistently beat the ruling NPP party in virtually all large online polls and sentiment surveys. Yet, most professional researchers and pollsters were predicting the opposite outcome: a handy defeat of the Opposition, often by a roughly 10% margin. (...)

GAMBIA :

UK slaps sanctions on The Gambia’s ex-President Yahya Jammeh

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/12/11/uk-slaps-sanctions-on-the-gambias-ex-president-yahya-jammeh>

Others named in the sanctions were security figures and officials from Russia, Venezuela and Pakistan.

The United Kingdom has slapped sanctions on The Gambia’s former president Yahya Jammeh, as it widened travel bans and economic sanctions for human rights abuses worldwide.

Jammeh, whose election defeat to Adama Barrow in December 2016 forced him to flee, was one of three from the West African nation on an updated list targeting 10 people across the globe.

“Today’s sanctions send a clear message to human rights violators that the UK will hold them to account,” said UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab on Thursday.

The former president, his wife Zineb, and the former director-general of the country’s National Intelligence Agency, Yankuba Badjie, are all now subject to asset freezes and a UK travel ban.

London said Jammeh was behind “inciting, promoting, ordering and being directly involved in extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, kidnappings, torture, rape, as well as wider human rights violations” after he seized power in a coup in 1994.

Zineb Jammeh was sanctioned for the same reason, and for using charities as a cover for the illicit transfer of funds between herself and her husband.

Both are already under similar sanctions from the United States.

Others on the list included three members of the Venezuelan military, the speaker of the parliament of the Russian region of Chechnya as well as the region's Terek Special Rapid Response Unit. In Pakistan, Anwar Ahmed Khan, a former Karachi police "encounter specialist" suspected of being behind more than 190 "hits" that led to more than 400 deaths, also faces restrictions. The UK, which left the European Union in January, introduced its own sanctions system in July, identifying 49 "notorious" individuals and organisations accused of human rights abuses. The first included 25 Russians allegedly involved in the death of lawyer Sergei Magnitsky, and 20 Saudis suspected of involvement in the killing of the journalist Jamal Khashoggi. Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko was sanctioned in September in response to the recent disputed election and following a crackdown on protesters. There are now 65 people on the UK sanctions list and three organisations. Meanwhile, the government is under pressure to impose similar sanctions on Hong Kong chief executive Carrie Lam over abuses by the police against pro-democracy protesters.

**** AFRIQUE CENTRAL ****

TCHAD :

Tchad : le gouverneur nigérian de l'Etat de Borno reçu à la Présidence

https://www.alwihdainfo.com/Tchad-le-gouverneur-nigerian-de-l-Etat-de-Borno-recu-a-la-Présidence_a98301.html

Le chef de l'État Idriss Deby a reçu mercredi le gouverneur de l'Etat de Borno, Prof. Babagana Umara Zulum. L'entretien a porté sur la situation des réfugiés nigériens établis à Bagassola et les perspectives d'un retour volontaire au Nigéria.

L'Ouest du Tchad accueille des dizaines de milliers de réfugiés nigériens ayant fui les exactions de Boko haram. Les échanges ont permis d'apprécier la situation des réfugiés nigériens et d'envisager des solutions durables, indique le gouverneur Babagana Umara Zulum à sa sortie d'audience.

La dignité de l'être humain est une valeur cardinale qui conditionne l'action du gouvernement tchadien qui a créé les conditions favorables à l'accueil des réfugiés malgré les défis sécuritaires et humanitaires considérables. Le Tchad restera fidèle à sa tradition d'hospitalité et de solidarité conformément à ses engagements internationaux, a fait savoir le président de la République.

Idriss Deby a réaffirmé la disponibilité du Gouvernement tchadien à poursuivre et intensifier les efforts avec le Gouvernement fédéral Nigérian sur tous les fronts pour pacifier le bassin du Tchad par un niveau de sécurisation et de développement élevé.

Récemment, le gouverneur nigérian s'est rendu à Bagassola pour constater les conditions dans lesquelles vivent les réfugiés et leur apporter des aides.

CENTRAFRIQUE :

Sur Facebook, la guerre secrète de l'armée française en Centrafrique

<https://www.lefigaro.fr/international/sur-facebook-la-guerre-secrete-de-l-armee-francaise-en-centrafrique-20201216>

RÉCIT - La France et la Russie mènent des opérations de désinformation sur les réseaux sociaux.

Centrafrique : Bozizé « accepte » l'invalidation de sa candidature à la présidentielle et appelle l'opposition à s'unir

<http://www.agenceafrique.com/27351-centrafrique-bozize-accepte-linvalidation-de-sa-candidature-a-la-presidentielle-et-appelle-lopposition-a-sunir.html>

L'ancien dirigeant de la Centrafrique, François Bozizé, a fait part mardi de sa décision de se « plier sans réserve au verdict de la Cour constitutionnelle » portant sur l'invalidation de sa candidature à la présidentielle du 27 décembre prochain.

Dans la foulée, il a appelé l'opposition à opter pour un candidat unique en vue d'assurer une défaite au président sortant, Faustin Archange Touadéra, qui veut briguer un deuxième mandat.

Bozizé s'est particulièrement adressé aux leaders de la coalition COD 2020, les invitant à choisir « un candidat unique de consensus, choisi en raison de ce qu'il dispose de la base électorale la plus étendue et de moyens financiers conséquents disponibles ». L'ancien numéro un centrafricain est

l'actuel président en exercice de cette plateforme qui regroupe en son sein plusieurs formations politiques.

D'après certaines sources, son souhait ne serait pas partagé par la majorité des candidats (au sein de la coalition) qui sont en lice. Bozizé serait exhorté à soutenir le candidat de son choix et à s'abstenir de demander aux autres de se retirer de la course à la magistrature suprême.

Le président sortant qui affrontera 16 adversaires est d'emblée considéré comme le favori du scrutin. Plusieurs observateurs ont estimé que Bozizé était le seul candidat qui pouvait véritablement rivaliser Touadera. Au cas où aucun candidat n'est élu dès le premier tour, les électeurs seront à nouveau invités aux urnes le 14 février prochain pour le second tour.

La Cour constitutionnelle a écarté, le 3 décembre dernier, la candidature de Bozizé en raison de ses soucis avec la justice nationale, ainsi que les sanctions prises à son encontre par l'ONU.

CAMEROUN :

Cameroon:Ngarbuh massacre case opens in Yaounde today

<https://www.journalducameroun.com/en/category/politics/>

The case against soldiers accused of killing children and destroying property on February 14, in Ngarbuh, Donga Mantung Division in the North West Region opened in Yaounde today. At least three persons accused of carrying out the attacks appeared before a judge at the Yaounde Military tribunal where they are...

The officers in question are sergeant Baba Guida, gendarme officer Sanding Sanding Cyrille and private first class soldier Haranga Guilbert.

They were arrested following the publication of the report of the inquiry commission ordered by the Head of State which indicted them with the killing of three women and ten children in Ngarbuh on February 14.

The report equally stated that in a bid to cover up their abuse, the soldiers burnt down houses and blamed Fulani rebels.

According to a report published three days ago by Human Rights Watch, their trial is a big step toward fighting impunity in the country.

"The trial of three security force members accused of being involved in the massacre of 21 civilians in Ngarbuh, in Cameroon's North-West region, is due to begin on December 17, 2020. It is expected to be an important step in tackling impunity..." The report partly reads

"Survivors and family members of those murdered in Ngarbuh are finally a step closer to getting justice," Said Ilaria Allegrozzi, senior Africa researcher at Human Rights Watch.

One of the lawyers defending claimants of the victims is Human right lawyer, Barrister Tamfu Richar.

CONGO BRAZZA :

Congo-Brazza : Sassou Nguesso candidat à sa propre succession

<https://www.digitalcongo.net/article/5fd4ce07562c9e0017ad36f0/>

A 77 ans d'âge, Denis Sassou Nguesso, président du Congo-Brazzaville a été désigné candidat à la présidentielle de 2021 par les partis politiques de son obédience.

C'est sans surprise que le président du Congo-Brazzaville, Denis Sassou Nguesso, a été choisi pour briguer un autre mandat en mars 2021, par les 17 partis qui composent sa majorité présidentielle dans ce pays d'Afrique centrale, ont rapporté les médias internationaux.

Il est recommandé à chaque parti de la majorité présidentielle à opter pour la candidature du président Sassou Nguesso. Et cette majorité présidentielle pense que de tous ses chefs, seul le

président Sassou Nguesso réunit tous « les atouts », a déclaré Pierre Moussa, président par intérim de la Majorité présidentielle au cours d'une conférence de presse, tenue le jeudi dernier. « Nous nous battons vaillamment avec courage pour convaincre le président de la majorité pour qu'il accepte les implorations et les exhortations de sa base politique », a précisé M. Moussa qui est également le secrétaire général du Parti congolais du travail (PCT).

Pour rappel, le principal parti de la majorité présidentielle, le PCT avait investi M. Sassou Nguesso dès son congrès de décembre 2019 à Brazzaville. L'intéressé ne s'est pas encore prononcé, selon une source sûre.

La date du scrutin prévu en mars 2021 par la Constitution reste à fixer, et le président pourrait annoncer la date du scrutin et officialiser sa propre candidature lors d'un discours à la Nation le 19 décembre. Gisèle Mbuyi

UNION AFRICAINE :

L'UA exhorte ses membres à adopter les tests antigéniques pour améliorer la capacité de test du COVID-19

http://french.china.org.cn/foreign/txt/2020-12/18/content_77024556.htm

Alors que le continent africain est témoin de nouveaux pics de cas et de décès dus au COVID-19, la Commission de l'Union africaine (UA) a appelé ses États membres à donner la priorité au déploiement des tests antigéniques rapides dans le cadre d'un effort urgent pour augmenter les capacités nationales de dépistage du COVID-19 et mieux gérer la pandémie, en vue d'atteindre des taux de positivité des tests inférieurs à 5%.

Selon un communiqué du Centre africain de contrôle et de prévention des maladies (CDC Afrique) publié jeudi, la Commission, par l'intermédiaire de son agence de santé spécialisée, le CDC Afrique, et de ses partenaires, a publié un nouveau guide sur l'utilisation des tests antigéniques rapides pour la réponse au COVID-19, dans le cadre d'une stratégie visant à développer rapidement ces tests du COVID-19 en Afrique.

Avec le Cadre d'assurance de la qualité pour les tests antigéniques rapides du SRAS-CoV-2 pour le diagnostic du COVID-19 et le matériel de formation sur les tests de diagnostic rapide de l'antigène SARS-CoV-2, les experts espèrent que le document aidera à augmenter les capacités de dépistage rapide des antigènes à travers l'Afrique aussi vite que possible.

"Nous avons fait des progrès significatifs en Afrique en termes de tests, mais nous devons reconnaître que nous n'en sommes pas encore là. Le test antigénique change la donne et les États membres devraient l'adopter pour renforcer les capacités des pays à intensifier et augmenter rapidement les tests avec un délai d'exécution plus rapide pour obtenir les résultats des tests", a déclaré John Nkengasong, directeur du CDC Afrique.

En septembre 2020, l'Organisation mondiale de la santé (OMS) a recommandé l'utilisation de tests de diagnostic rapide des antigènes en réponse aux défis auxquels les pays sont confrontés avec l'intensification des tests en utilisant les tests d'amplification des acides nucléiques (TAAN).

Toutefois, les TAAN sont coûteux et nécessitent souvent plus de deux jours pour renvoyer les résultats, ce qui limite sérieusement leur utilisation généralisée, en particulier dans les communautés difficiles à atteindre. La rapidité des tests et de la communication des résultats aux individus et aux autorités de santé publique pour l'isolement et la recherche des contacts est essentielle pour arrêter la propagation du COVID-19.

Dirigé par le CDC Afrique, ce réseau mondial de partenaires travaille avec acharnement depuis septembre 2020 pour trouver plus de 11 millions de kits de tests antigéniques rapides à distribuer aux États membres de l'Union africaine. Les tests antigéniques sont plus abordables, plus faciles à utiliser et fournissent des résultats en 15 minutes au point de service.

Le nouveau document d'orientation fournit des recommandations aux autorités sanitaires ainsi qu'au personnel de laboratoire et hospitalier en Afrique sur l'utilisation des tests antigéniques rapides.

Le test antigénique rapide du COVID-19 est recommandé en tant que test hautement performant pour les personnes présentant des symptômes, les populations à haut risque, les agents de santé ou les travailleurs essentiels et les contacts dans les milieux où les TAAN ne sont pas disponibles ou lorsque le délai de traitement des résultats des TAAN est prolongé.

Il est également recommandé pour une utilisation dans des contextes tels que les frontières ou les points d'entrée, les lieux de travail, les établissements d'enseignement, les établissements pénitentiaires ou d'autres établissements fermés avec des cas suspects ou confirmés.

Union africaine : Félix Tshisekedi prendra les commandes en février 2021

<https://www.digitalcongo.net/article/5fca3a2dbd76400017ae4463/>

Le président de la République congolais Félix-Antoine Tshisekedi, va présider l'Union africaine (UA) à partir du mois de février 2021, a confirmé Moussa Faki Mahamat le président de la Commission de cette organisation panafricaine.

Le chef de l'Etat congolais, Félix-Antoine Tshisekedi, a reçu en audience jeudi 03 décembre, au Palais de la Nation, le président de la Commission de l'Union Africaine(UA), le Tchadien Moussa Faki Mahamat.

Au cours de cette rencontre, Moussa Faki Mahamat a confirmé au président de la République qu'il va présider, comme prévu, à la tête de l'UA l'année prochaine, plus précisément au mois de février. Ce sera lors de l'Assemblée générale ordinaire de l'organisation panafricaine à Addis-Abeba, en Ethiopie, où se trouve son siège.

Félix Tshisekedi qui est actuellement premier Vice-président de l'UA va succéder au Sud-africain Cyril Ramaphosa. Il sera ainsi le deuxième président congolais à occuper la présidence tournante de la plus grande organisation africaine, après Joseph-Désiré Mobutu en 1967. Socrate Nsimba

CHINA :

Nation, AU pact to boost BRI in Africa

<http://global.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202012/18/WS5fdc0081a31024ad0ba9c8a9.html>

China and the African Union have signed an agreement to promote the Belt and Road Initiative in Africa. This marks China's latest move to boost bilateral economic cooperation, according to the country's top economic regulator.

The agreement defines the scope and content of key cooperation projects in fields like communication policies, facilities and connectivity, facilitating unfettered trade and smoothing access to funds, mapping out the timetable and roadmap, said Meng Wei, a spokeswoman for the National Development and Reform Commission. To date, China has signed 202 cooperation agreements with 138 countries and 31 international organizations.

"It is the first cooperation plan document signed by China and a regional international organization to jointly advance the building of the Belt and Road Initiative," Meng said during a news conference in Beijing.

According to Meng, the cooperation plan will effectively promote the joint building of the Belt and Road Initiative, which is in line with Africa's Agenda 2063, a blueprint for transforming Africa into a global powerhouse of the future.

"It will give play to complementary advantages of both parties, help deal with global challenges, promote high-quality development of Belt and Road cooperation, create new opportunities for global cooperation and inject new impetus for common development," Meng said.

To implement the plan, China will work with the African Union Commission to establish a coordination mechanism for Belt and Road cooperation, she said.

Liu Chunsheng, an associate professor of international trade at the Central University of Finance and Economics in Beijing, said the Belt and Road Initiative is a win-win solution for promoting common development and achieving common prosperity, and China's new move will help bolster the confidence of overseas investors.

"It is sending a clear signal that China will continue to support the multilateral trading system and globalization despite facing rising trade protectionism across the world. It shows that China will continue to enhance cooperation despite the COVID-19 outbreak."

Chinese-African People's Friendship Association celebrates 60th anniversary

<https://news.cgtn.com/news/2020-12-10/China-Africa-Friendship-Association-celebrates-60th-anniversary-W6IgIW96W4/index.html>

China is willing to work with people from all walks of life in African countries, further strengthen the friendship with African countries based on mutual understanding and win-win cooperation, and enhancing cultural exchanges and medical partnership between the two sides, Li Bin, president of Chinese-African People's Friendship Association said on the 60th anniversary of CAPFA on Wednesday.

In her keynote speech on the ceremony, Li stressed that the concluded fifth plenary session of the 19th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China not only drew a blueprint for China's future economic and social development, but also provided new opportunities for countries in Africa and beyond. (...)

Burundi welcomes its removal from UN Security Council's agenda

http://www.china.org.cn/world/Off_the_Wire/2020-12/08/content_76991668.htm

BUJUMBURA, Dec. 8 (Xinhua) -- The Burundian government on Monday evening said it welcomed the decision taken by the United Nations (UN) Security Council of removing Burundi from its political agenda.

The UN Security Council on Friday ended mandatory of reporting on the central African nation and encouraged its international partners to continue dialogue towards resumption of development assistance.

"Burundi has received, with joy, the noble decision taken by the UN Security Council of withdrawing Burundi from its political agenda," government spokesman Prosper Ntahorwamiye said in a statement at the National Radio and Television of Burundi.

Ntahorwamiye called the decision "historic" and said UN "has finally acknowledged" significant progress in various sectors made by Burundi. (...)

China's industrial production rises at fastest rate this year

<https://www.ft.com/content/9e1e4e6b-c19b-446a-bf78-733c3445a4fe>

Analysts upgrade full-year growth forecasts on rapid coronavirus recovery

Biden's pick for top U.S. trade official will continue tough line on China, says ex-Trump official

<https://www.cnbc.com/2020/12/18/bidens-ustr-pick-katherine-tai-will-be-tough-on-china-ex-trump-official.html>

Canada's ties to China's military underscore the weird contradictions in its foreign policy

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/canada-china-pla-peoples-liberation-army-1.5838658>

The military and diplomats were at odds over the PLA training program — and no one should be surprised

It's been obvious for some time that there is something weird about the way Canada approaches its relationship with China — a disconnect brought into sharp relief this week by the news that Global Affairs and the Department of National Defence were not on the same page when it came to military ties and training involving the People's Liberation Army.

In some respects, the volcanic online political eruption which followed stories in The Globe and Mail and other media outlets, based on exclusive access to information documents, was predictable, as was the flurry of finger-pointing in the House of Commons on Thursday and Friday. (...)

INDIA :

India strengthens health cooperation with Africa

<https://www.ecofinagency.com/public-management/1412-42168-india-strengthens-health-cooperation-with-africa>

(Ecofin Agency) - India's healthcare federation NATHEALTH and that of Africa -AHF- signed on Dec 12 an agreement to ramp up their cooperation in the health sector. The document, which was initialed during the India-Africa Health summit, has three key focuses namely investment, technology sharing, and public-private partnerships.

Through this collaboration, India wants to help Africa improve its healthcare services. The country plans to do this through fund injection in various areas including the development of innovative technologies, skills transfer, artificial intelligence, infrastructure construction, mobility programs, and research.

The Asian nation, known for its innovative health system, already has a strong presence on the continent via its pharmaceutical companies, such as Ranbaxy, Cipla, and Dr. Reddy's, which export or produce drugs locally.

Another area where India has invested well is training. As part of the e-VidyaBharati and e-ArogyaBharati Network projects, which aim to establish a network for skills development in Africa, the Indian government has pledged nearly 100 online courses and 15,000 scholarships in the fields of tele-education and telemedicine. Vanessa Ngono Atangana

USA :

USA – Africa: President Biden's top three challenges

<https://www.theafricareport.com/51806/usa-africa-president-bidens-top-three-challenges/>

Africa, in the eyes of some political analysts, has been an after-thought for Washington these last four years. But that's not necessarily a bad thing; it speaks to the political and economic stability that dominates most of the 54 countries on the continent.

The reality of the conflict in Libya dominates US discussions and overshadows the removal of Sudan from state sponsors of terrorism and the growing strength and vitality of African-led institutions, such as the Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU), to address regional conflicts.

Thereby, President Joe Biden will be encountering a 'better' Africa than when he was vice president to President Barack Obama. He should also enjoy what feels like strong bipartisanship on Africa in Washington with programmes on African leadership, partnerships in public health, and trade preferences.

That said, Biden will encounter a few major issues that may not test bipartisanship but will surely require more than an after-thought approach.

Ethiopia's Tigray war

An ongoing conflict between Ethiopia's federal government and the Tigray regional leadership, the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF), could destabilise the eastern region of Africa. Both sides blame each other for firing the first shot in the conflict with Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who is of Oromo descent, also arguing that the Tigray leadership is still bitter since their ethnic group no longer holds the position of Prime Minister. Both also cannot agree on interpretation of the Ethiopian constitution and the powers bestowed upon the central government versus regions like Tigray.

Despite the Ethiopian army claiming early victories against the TPLF, the TPLF's firing of rockets over the border at the Eritrean capital of Asmara can only expand the sphere of war and conflict versus contain it.

If Eritrea gets involved in this conflict, other international powers will have to pay attention. Though the response from international institutions, including the African Union and the United Nations, may be moderated with a simple request for violence to stop. It is not clear how any outside can be helpful with (or survive) a federal constitutional interpretation debate and process with Abiy and the TPLF.

Tigray: The AU failed Ethiopia, while US calls the shots

<https://www.theafricareport.com/52105/tigray-the-au-failed-ethiopia-while-us-calls-the-shots/>

It is almost three weeks since a large-scale war started in the Tigray region of Ethiopia involving a multitude of internal actors and external military players. That this is happening in a country where the African Union (AU) is rooted, with its overarching slogan 'silencing the guns in Africa', is puzzling, to say the least.

ONU / UN :

RDC: l'ONU revient sur sa « stratégie de sortie »

<https://afrique.lalibre.be/56683/rdc-lonu-revient-sur-sa-strategie-de-sortie/>

L'ONU est revenue sur sa possible « stratégie de sortie » de la République démocratique du Congo (RDC), mardi, à quelques jours d'une décision du Conseil de sécurité sur l'avenir de sa mission présente depuis vingt ans au Congo. « C'est une stratégie de sortie qui doit se mettre en oeuvre en fonction des progrès réels et concrets obtenus sur le terrain, dans les différents domaines où nous intervenons », a déclaré à la presse le secrétaire général adjoint pour les opérations de maintien de la paix, Jean-Pierre Lacroix.

Des convois humanitaires de l'ONU gagnent le Tigré

<https://afrique.lalibre.be/56708/des-convois-humanitaires-de-lonu-gagnent-le-tigre/>

Des convois humanitaires de l'ONU commencent à gagner le Tigré en Ethiopie, a indiqué mercredi l'Organisation alors que cette zone lui était interdite depuis le lancement début novembre d'une opération militaire par le Premier ministre éthiopien Abiy Ahmed contre un parti défiant son pouvoir.

DAM, NY, AGNEWS, <http://burundi-agnews.org>, Vendredi 18 décembre 2020