

SOMALIA Suspension of EU funding

The African Union Peace Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) suffered a hard blow with the announcement on 2 October 2009 of the suspension of the financial support by the European Union (EU) apparently due to the African Union (AU), which deployed the force to pacify this country, but did not take responsibility for it. The EU's withdrawal has already left 1,500 AMISOM soldiers without pay for three months. The troops from Burundi which are committed there have already lost several soldiers in attacks by militant Islamists. Confronted by this situation, the Burundian army has made conditions if it is to stay in Somalia. The Chief of Staff of the Burundian National Defence Force (FDN) has asked the international community to revise and increase the mandate for this force within six months so as to guarantee the carrying out of the mission of the Burundian contingent in this country which has been devoured by civil war for more than 18 years.

Still on the subject of AMISOM, the Somali Islamists, in a communiqué of 23 October 2009, have threatened to launch attacks on the capitals of Uganda (Kampala) and Burundi (Bujumbura), according to them to avenge the death of civilians in Mogadishu who were killed by African Union bombardments of poor neighbourhoods. The spokesperson of AMISOM in Mogadishu has denied that AU soldiers bombarded the town and attributed the civilian deaths to armed action by insurgents. You will remember that Burundi and Uganda are the only countries contributing to AMISOM which has a total of 5,000 men deployed in several key sectors of Mogadishu in support of the transitional government of Somalia. Fighting in Somalia has caused 19,000 civilian deaths since January 2007 and has displaced 1.5 million people, creating one of the worst emergency humanitarian situations in the world.