

DRC

Security, Army...

(RDC_1) Reuters – 10/12

When Congo's government army retreated in panic from the eastern city of Goma last month, many observers blamed the poor morale and leadership, ill discipline and corruption that have sapped its fighting capacity for years.

In the hours before Goma fell to M23 rebels on November 20, drunk and terrified Congolese soldiers roamed the streets or huddled in doorways before melting away, witnesses said.

M23's 11-day occupation of the city was one of the worst battlefield defeats for Democratic Republic of Congo's armed forces (FARDC), which at 150,000-strong are among the largest in Africa. They are also backed by 17,000 U.N. peacekeepers.

As recriminations swirl over the Goma defeat, which forced President Joseph Kabila to accept talks with a group he says is a creation of Rwanda, allegations have emerged that betrayal in the army's ranks may have precipitated the rout.

The government has launched an investigation but says it has reached no conclusions; little evidence has come to light beyond anonymous allegations against officers from subordinates who accuse their commanders of selling them out. The general blamed by some denies any such deals with rebels he once commanded. But the scandal alone shows how deep suspicion runs within an army that has absorbed successive waves of former enemies as a series of civil wars has ended.

One senior FARDC officer who fought the M23 uprising said he believed Goma was lost because of what he called sabotage of the army's fighting capability. "All of our intelligence was given to M23," the officer alleged, saying that throughout the fighting "there was intense communications with them" from within the government ranks.

Speaking on condition of anonymity because army regulations forbid him from commenting publicly, he said he was convinced former land forces commander, Major General Gabriel Amisi had been in contact with the rebel side. He said he had served alongside the general in the field.

Read the whole story under :

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/12/10/us-congo-democratic-army-idUSBRE8B90AQ20121210>

Lire aussi un bref portrait du nouveau chef d'Etat major des forces terrestres, François Olenga, sous :

http://www.jeuneafrique.com/ArticlePersonnalite/JA2708p038_039.xml1/Type:Portrait/rdc-francois-olenga-chef-oui-chef.html

- Oriental Province

(RDC_11) Enough Project and others – 5/12

Nearly six months on from the launch of a U.N. strategy aimed at ending 26 years of violence by the Lord's Resistance Army, or LRA, a joint report by a coalition of non-governmental organizations reveals today that the strategy has failed to make meaningful progress toward its core objectives. The report is released ahead of U.N. Security Council consultations on the LRA set for December 18th.

Tepid political commitment from regional governments, lack of urgency from the U.N., and an under-resourced African Union mission are the key causes of the failure. "For too long, the people of the central Africa have suffered from unspeakable atrocities committed by the LRA. Their children have been abducted and murdered. Their families have been forced from their homes and their livelihoods destroyed. The UN has shown great leadership, and invested a great deal, in developing a strategy to support these populations and respond to the horrors of the LRA. It must not fall short now. There is too much at stake and too much to lose," Ben Keesey, Chief Executive Officer of Invisible Children, said.

The report comes as violence is again escalating in the Democratic Republic of Congo and amid reports that the Sudanese government is harboring the LRA. Both of these developments could give the LRA the opportunity to reassert itself in the region. The evidence of ineffective U.N./African Union collaboration is also of concern in the light of a likely military intervention in Mali.

"This report is a wakeup call for the Security Council. Unless they reenergize the strategy and ensure that regional governments are effectively engaged then the whole process could fall apart. The Secretary General must publicly affirm his determination to see the UN Regional Strategy on the LRA implemented in full," said Ernest Sugule, National Coordinator of Solidarité et Assistance intégrale aux Personnes Démunies (SAIPED), in the DRC.

The international community also has a critical role to play to support the UN and AU's efforts. "The UN, in partnership with the African Union and international donors, should vigorously lead the effort to end the LRA conflict. To deliver on the UN strategy will require more troops, access for the troops to LRA safe havens, enhanced intelligence, and improved efforts to promote defections. At this critical moment, the UN must rise to the challenge," John Bradshaw, Executive Director of the Enough Project, said.

Read the report under :

<http://www.enoughproject.org/news/new-report-warns-un-and-au-are-failing-defeat-lra>

Lire aussi sous :

<http://radiokapi.net/actualite/2012/12/14/faradje-des-rebelles-lra-ont-enleve-5-personnes-lidjo-selon-la-societe-civile/>

- Politics

(RDC_19_3) AP – 13/12

The rebel group starting negotiations with the Congolese government wants the country's president to resign, according to a rebel document. The rebels' demand for Congolese President Joseph Kabila to step down comes as a leading advocacy group says the president is "unable to effectively govern the country."

Speaking from eastern Congo territory that the rebels control, Jean-Marie Runiga, the president of the M23, said if given the opportunity, the rebels could retake the city of Goma in eastern Congo. "The information that I have is that Kinshasa is reinforcing its positions. It is bringing troops, weapons and ammunition. If we are attacked, we grant ourselves the right to defend ourselves and go very far. And this time we will not retreat," Runiga told the Associated Press from his living room in the border town of Bunagana.

Since the beginning of the conflict, the M23 rebels have called for the Kabila government to fully implement the 2009 peace agreement. As the rebels gained ground in eastern Congo, including the seizure last month of the provincial capital Goma, their demands have increased to encompass a wide range of issues in Congo including governance, the economy and social matters.

The full list of M23's demands, seen by AP, includes the resignation Kabila and the dissolution of the national assembly. The rebels call for the creation of a transitional government that would run the country while new elections are organized, starting with local elections.

The president of M23 says the rebels' political branch should resume its control of the city of the Goma as a precondition to the negotiations. He and Gen. Sultani Makenga, the M23 troops commander, are staying in eastern Congo until the negotiations deal with substantial issues. "I think our members who are in Kampala represent us. In due time I will be there, too. I am waiting for things to be organized and when Kabila will be there, I will go, too," Runiga said.

The rebels' demands come as Congo's president faces growing criticism for his handling of the crisis in the country's east.

"President Kabila has now lost nearly all confidence among the Congolese people and is unable to effectively govern the country," the group said in a policy brief. "In order to restore political order, a national dialogue process must take place, in which leaders from across the country actively participate and decide on a national consensus to move the country forward," said the Enough Project report. "If he does not successfully build out such a process, Kabila may not survive politically."

- External Relations

(RDC_28) African Press Organization – 11/12

The Council adopted the following conclusions :

“1. The EU reiterates its Council conclusions of 19 November 2012, and remains gravely concerned about the situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The withdrawal of the M23 from Goma, as called for by the Leaders of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), is just a first step in re-establishing stability and tackling the intolerable suffering inflicted upon the people in the eastern DRC. The EU condemns all human rights violations and calls for those responsible to be held accountable. The EU reiterates that external support to the M23 is unacceptable and calls on those concerned to cease any such support. It underlines that the sovereignty and territorial integrity

of the DRC must be respected. It calls upon the Government of the DRC to promote effective efforts to establish security and the rule of law in the east.

2. The opening of a dialogue between the various parties to the conflict is an important step forward. Furthermore, the EU welcomes the high level contacts between Presidents Kabila of DRC, Kagame of Rwanda and Museveni of Uganda and the engagement of the ICGLR and the African Union (AU) to prevent a further deterioration of the crisis and to start work on a sustainable solution. It calls upon all states and organisations in the region to intensify their dialogue, to work constructively to implement agreements and to address impunity.

3. The EU welcomes UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolutions 2076 and 2078, including the renewal of the arms embargo and of the sanctions against armed groups and the leadership of M23. It awaits the Security Council's conclusions on the reports of external support to the M23 and proposals from the UN Secretary-General on how MONUSCO can best implement its mandate. Close cooperation and complementarity between the AU, ICGLR, SADC (Southern African Development Community), UN and EU is essential. In this context, the EU welcomes the appointment of Boubacar Gaoussou Diarra as Special Representative of the AU for the Great Lakes Region and encourages the UN Secretary-General to appoint a Special Envoy. The EU stands ready to contribute actively to initiatives to find a sustainable solution to the crisis and in this context reiterates its willingness to support the ICGLR Extended Joint Verification Mechanism.

4. It is vital that all those in the region as well as the international community contribute to a lasting solution to the cyclical crises in the eastern DRC addressing the underlying causes of the conflict.”

Lire aussi la résolution du Parlement européen (pp.90 et sv.) sous :

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2f%2fEP%2f%2fTEXT%2bTA%2b20121213%2bTOC%2bDOC%2bXML%2bV0%2f%2fFR&language=FR>