

**WORSENING****CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC: The serious crisis in the country persists, according to the United Nations, the EU and humanitarian organisations**

The UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Valerie Amos, together with the EU Commissioner for International Cooperation, Kristalina Georgieva, have alerted that the population as a whole is being affected by the ongoing political crisis in the country. Both have urged the authorities to restore the rule of law so that humanitarian assistance can reach the population. Some 1.6 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, a situation aggravated by the last six months of fighting, which have interrupted basic services and the various humanitarian programmes carried out by the NGOs and UN agencies in place in the territory. The FIDH reckons at over 400 the figure for fatalities since the rebel coalition Séléka took over government in March. The organisation undertook a mission at the beginning of July to find out the extent of the violence. Despite the fact that the regional mission, the Central African Multinational Force, increased its force to 1,200 that is totally insufficient to attempt to ensure the security of a country as large as France and Belgium together. Five NGOs (MSF, ACH, MDM, PU-AMI and SI) issued a joint communiqué denouncing the international community's abandonment of the Central African Republic. The new special representative of the UN secretary-general in the country, General Babacar Gaye, has taken possession of his post, affirming that he felt honoured to assume that responsibility at the historical moment the country was experiencing. (UN, 11/07/13; RFI, 18, 19/07/13)

**DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (EAST): Fighting intensifies between the armed forces and the rebel group M23**

Recent weeks have seen an escalation of the clashes between the armed forces and the M23 armed group near Goma, the capital of North Kivu. The locality of Mutaho has been the epicentre of the clashes, in which more than 120 members of the M23 and a dozen military personnel have died, according to army sources, denied by the armed group and unconfirmed by the United Nations. The M23 even launched several missiles on Goma, according to the United Nations, which warned that no further attacks on the city would be permitted. The arrival of the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) has hindered peace initiatives, and the Kampala talks between the government and the M23 are at a standstill. Moreover, a report by the Group of Experts which is supervising the exploitation of natural resources in the country found in June that the M23 had recruited combatants in neighbouring Rwanda with the collaboration of the Rwandan army, while the Congolese army had collaborated with the Rwandan Hutu armed group FDLR. Those accusations heightened the tension between the two countries. Furthermore, the MONUSCO is reviewing its support for the army following accusations of abuses by the army against M23 combatants and the bodies of dead combatants. Finally, the UN has stressed that the army is ready to enter into combat with the armed groups, by means of the Intervention Brigade, following accusations that the UN had been permissive of the situation. The UN secretary general has stated his concern at the situation. Although the Brigade is not yet up to strength, since it has only 2,000 of the 3,000 soldiers it should comprise (from South Africa, Tanzania and Malawi), it has already conducted patrols around the capital, though without as yet launching any offensive operation, according to the mandate laid down by the UN Security Council. (BBC, AP, 15, 16/07/13; Reuters, 16 and 17/07/13, UN, AFP, 16-18/07/13)

## **DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (EAST): An escalade of attacks by the Ugandan armed group ADF-Nalu causes 66,000 Congolese citizens to flee to Uganda**

ADF-Nalu carried out various attacks against the locality of Beni and its surrounding area, one of the main cities in the province of North Kivu, provoking a response from the armed forces. The governor of the province, Julien Paluku, stated that radical Islamist combatants linked to the Somali armed group al-Shabab may be taking part alongside ADF-Nalu and even alongside the M-23 also. Paluku has been criticised for considering any Congolese citizen of the Muslim confession to be a radical Islamist, a stance he has denied, although he has in fact noted that the armed groups, in reference to ADF-Nalu, may be recruiting its members from within the Muslim community. ADF-Nalu was formed in the mid-1990s from the merger of two groups opposed to the regime of Yoweri Museveni, in power since 1986. The ADF had received support from Sudan and made up of militants of the Tabliq, a Muslim missionary movement, had been approved of by the Congolese government due to its changing relations with Uganda. With the passing of the years, the group's members had become radicalised, and is now said to be composed only of Islamists, being led since 2007 by Jamil Mukulu. The International Crisis Group (ICG) has nevertheless pointed out that the collaboration of al-Shabab is only a hypothesis, despite it being the only group that can be considered a terrorist organisation belonging to the nebulous Islamist east Africa. The Ugandan government has made use of the terrorist threat for political purposes, according to the ICG. A further five localities in the north of the province were attacked and looted by the group, leading to the forced displacement of over 66,000 persons to Uganda, while the group also attacked a MONUSCO detachment. This armed group kept a low profile and was located in the Great North, the northerly part of the province of North Kivu, between Lake Albert and Lake Edward, a frontier zone with Uganda and stronghold of the Nande community, which feels marginalised by Kinshasa. The United States placed ADF-Nalu on its list of terrorist organisations in 2001. (Jeune Afrique, 16 and 17/07/13, AFP, 17/07/13)

## **KOREA, Republic of: Negotiations aborted on the reunification of families separated by the Korean War**

The government of North Korea announced that it would not in the end be taking part in the negotiations that it had itself proposed some days earlier on the reunification of families separated by the Korean War (1950-53), which negotiations would have been facilitated by the Red Cross. This announcement by Pyongyang came shortly after a failure to reach agreement during parallel talks on an eventual re-opening of the Kaesong industrial complex, operated jointly by both countries and seen as one of the symbols of a rapprochement of stances between the two countries. In April, North Korea withdrew from the complex the 53,000 people who worked in it, alleging military tensions and a hostile policy by South Korea. In the recent talks, Seoul called upon its neighbouring country for certain guarantees for re-opening of the industrial complex, such as not closing it unilaterally and not linking its activity to possible changes or incidents in the bilateral relations between the two countries. Despite those demands, both parties committed themselves to holding talks about the matter, as well as about the possible recommencement of tourist visits by South Korean citizens to the Monte Kumgang tourist complex (in North Korea), which visits had been suspended by Seoul in 2008 after a South Korean citizen had been shot dead by a North Korean soldier. (Rappler, 11/07/13; UPI.com, 13/07/13; Channel News Asia, 10/07/13)

## **EGYPT: The army deposes the government of Mohamed Mursi**

Protests at the end of June and beginning of July calling for the resignation of the president, Mohamed Mursi, extended throughout Egypt and culminated in an uprising by the leaders of the armed forces, forcing the downfall of the government. In the face of the chaos that

had been unleashed, the army gave Mursi and the opposition parties an ultimatum. However, the president and leader of the Muslim Brothers (MB) held out against the ultimatum, while several leaders of his party encouraged its supporters to go down onto the streets. Once the ultimatum had expired, the army mobilised and dispersed several pro-Mursi demonstrations. On 3 July, the commander-in-chief of the army and minister of defence, general Abdel Fatah al Sisi, appeared flanked by opposition and religious leaders and by the staff officers of the armed forces to tell the nation that the country would have a new stand-in president, the head of the Supreme Constitutional Court, Adly Masour, who would lead a transitional period that would culminate in new presidential and parliamentary elections. The military also suspended the Islamist-style Constitution put in place by Mursi and approved at the polls in 2012. On 5 July some 2,000 Mursi followers demonstrated and were dispersed under gunfire by the army, causing the deaths of three of them. Some days later, on 16 July, the new stand-in government was sworn in. The followers of the MB rejected the new government and continued to demonstrate, denouncing the coup d'état. The new stand-in government has announced a decree so that a group of ten legal experts could begin to work on amendments to the Constitution, suspended since the beginning of July. (BBC, 01-05/07/13; El Economista, 17/07/13; BBC, 18/07/13; All Africa, BBC, Reuters, 20-21/07/13)

## **GUINEA: An increase in inter-community violence causes the death of 60 people**

Inter-community clashes in the south-east of Guinea have forced the government to deploy the security forces in the area. Over the course of the three days of violence some 60 people died and a further 160 were wounded in fighting between the militias of the Konianke and Guerze communities. Historically, these two ethnic groups have been in confrontation, with continuous fighting between them. This latest outbreak of violence arose as a result of an altercation between two Guerze security guards and a young Konianke man which ended in the death of the latter. In the face of the high number of dead and wounded and the cruelty with which both ethnic groups acted (burning people and using knives), the United Nations called on the government and the population to ensure that human rights were respected. (BBC, Reuters, 17/07/13; UN, 19/07/13)

## **IRAQ: More 100 people die in the toughest offensive since the start of Ramadan, bring the total fatalities in July to 500**

About 100 people died and another 230 were wounded in coordinated attacks against two prisons near Baghdad, a car bomb attack in the north of the country and a wave of attacks in Baghdad and its hinterland in the middle of the month. The target of the attacks in Baghdad were shopping zones, in districts with Shiite majority. The attacks against the prisons were perpetrated by suicide insurgents wearing belts of explosives, causing three car-bomb explosions and launching a hundred mortar shells and dozens of rockets against the prisons. During the holy month of Ramadan, which began on 10 July, the attacks and sectarian violence in the country increased, harking back to the conflict between the Shiite and Sunni communities between 2006 and 2008. The growing discontent of the Sunni minority when faced with a government having a Shiite majority, like the population, tensions associated with the war in neighbouring Syria and the total paralysis of the State have fuelled the violence in the view of a number of analysts, after months of a period of relative calm that began at the end of 2008, when the US forces were still deployed in the country. Nobody has claimed the attacks, though the diversity of targets — markets, mosques, football grounds, cafes, shops — suggests that they were on the one hand attacks that sought to create an atmosphere of widespread fear and, on the other hand, acts of reprisal by one religious community against the other, in the view of various analysts. The UN representative in Iraq, Martin Kobler, stated in the middle of the month that the last four months had been the bloodiest in the last five years, leaving a balance of 3,000 dead and 7,000 wounded. According to the calculations of the France Press agency, these

attacks have brought to 500 the number of deaths in Iraq since the beginning of July, and over 2,000 since the start of the year. (El País, BBC, 21 and 22/07/13)

## **PAKISTAN: A serious escalade in violence in the most densely populated city, Karachi**

The NGO Human Rights Commission Pakistan has alerted to a serious escalade of assassinations and violent crimes in Karachi, the most densely populated city in the country and a commercial and financial centre. According to its balance, more than 1,700 died in the first six months of 2013, compared to 1,200 in the whole of 2012, and 1,100 in 2011. June was the most violent month, with 300 fatalities. In that first half of 2013 as many as 700 politicians and 100 police officers have been assassinated. And between the end of June and during July the violence continued in various parts of the country, with several focal points of conflict active. Among the incidents of sectarian violence, 28 persons died and several dozen were wounded as a result of a double attack in Quetta (province of Balochistan, south-east) against a Shiite mosque. Similarly, one of the heads of security of the Pakistani president, Bilal Sheik, was assassinated in the southern city of Karachi in a suicide attack. (RFE/RL, 1, 16/07/13)

## **RUSSIA (NORTH CAUCASUS): The top leader of the North Caucasus insurgency announces the end of the moratorium on attacks against civilians in Russia**

Doku Umarov, top leader of the self-proclaimed Caucasian Emirate, which groups together Islamist-type insurgencies in North Caucasus, announced the end of the moratorium measure proclaimed by the insurgency in January 2012 and prohibiting attacks against civil objectives in Russia. In his message, launched on the Internet and withdrawn a few hours later, he urged all insurgent movements in the region to prevent the holding of the 2014 Olympic Games, to take place in the city of Sochi (region of Krasnodar, in the federal district of the south). During the month of June, 39 people died and another 43 were wounded due to violence, according to the balance drawn up by the independent portal the Caucasian Knot, disseminated in July. Of the fatalities, 26 died in the republic of Dagestan, nine in Kabardino-Balkaria, two in Chechnya and another two in the territory of Stavropol. (Caucasian Knot, 16, 17/07/13; RFE/RL, 03/07/13)

## **SYRIA - LEBANON: The EU includes Hezbollah on the list of terrorist organisations**

The EU has decided to include the military branch of Hezbollah on its list of terrorist organisations, according to a unanimous decision of the foreign ministers of the 28 Member States. Following a strong diplomatic offensive by the United Kingdom, which had already designated the Shiite militia party as terrorist, the European countries overcame their last points of resistance and decided to take a step with potentially destabilising effects in the Middle East. The blockade affects the military branch, while political collaboration with the Lebanon will continue. Hezbollah participation in the Syrian conflict in support of the regime of Bashar al-Assad has ending up convincing an EU that needs to send out political signals against the massacre in Syria. In order to prevent the decision damaging European relations with the Lebanon, where Hezbollah forms part of the government, the EU set on record in its resolution that the agreement “does not prevent dialogue with all political parties, financial transfers or the supply of humanitarian aid” to the country, as pointed out by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs, Catherine Ashton. This isolation of the Lebanese militia may nevertheless pose security problems for the European troops, among them Spanish troops, in the Lebanon. The United States has positively rated the message issued by the EU to Hezbollah. The United States and Israel had repeatedly called for adoption of the measure, which may generate enmities towards Europe in the Middle East. Inclusion on the list involves freezing of the organisation’s assets in

Community territory. It also means closer surveillance of anyone suspected of forming part of the military organisation. (El País, BBC, 22/07/13)

## ALERT

### **AFGHANISTAN: The government calls for a truce during Ramadan, while the Taliban militias accelerate their campaign of violence**

Following an initial announcement attributed to the Taliban militias, announcing a ceasefire during the period of Ramadan, the Taliban stated that the communiqué had been false, asserting that they would step up their military campaign during the month. For his part, the Afghan president Hamid Karzai, had called upon the insurgent groups to impose a truce during Ramadan, and as a goodwill gesture at the beginning of July sixty Taliban prisoners in the province of Kandahar had been released. Among the violent incidents, two successive bombs in Helmand province killed five people in mid-July, including three civilians. A suicide attack at a police base caused the death of twelve people in the province of Oruzgan. At least two dozen Taliban died in military operations in the east in the middle of the month, according to the Afghan authorities. An attack was also launched on a precinct in Kabul used by foreign companies that supply materials to the NATO. The Taliban militias also temporarily closed their office of representation in Qatar, in protest against the removal of the Taliban flag and a sign with the name "Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan". The insurgents accuse the United States and Afghanistan of making use those symbols as an excuse to abandon the peace talks. On a political and electoral note, Karzai gave the go-ahead for changes in the body for electoral supervision. The new legislation retains the electoral commission for allegations, which had played a key role in reports of fraud in the 2009 presidential elections, while removing the two posts held by international representatives of the UN. The next elections for the presidency will take place in 2014. (BBC, RFE/RL, 1-18/07/13)

### **INDIA (KASHMIR): Several actors in Kashmir call upon India and Pakistan to resolve the political conflict through dialogue**

Shortly after the visit of the Indian prime minister, Manmohan Singh, to Jammu and Kashmir at the end of July and a subsequent meeting between the latter and the special envoy of the Pakistani president, Nawaz Sharif, an increasing number of Kashmiri actors added their voices to call upon India and Pakistan to resume talks about the conflict in Kashmir. That was the line taken by the governing party (National Conference) and the current president of Jammu and Kashmir (Omar Abdullah), as well as the main opposition party (PDP) and the previous prime minister (Mufti Mohammad Sayeed). According to those voices, steps should continue to be taken to pursue measures to encourage confidence and cooperation, as well as cross-border trade on the Control Line. For its part, the Hurriyat Conference movement also urged India and Pakistan to place resolution of the conflict in Kashmir at the centre of their negotiations, to listen to the voice of civil society civil and to respect the wishes of the Kashmiri population concerning the political status of the region. It also urged the United Nations, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference and international human rights organisations to involve themselves more fully in supervision of the human rights situation in Kashmir. (Hindustan Times, 06/07/13; Kashmir Media Service, 07 and 08/07/13; Indian Express, 26/06/13)

**INDONESIA (WEST PAPUA): A recently released leader of the OPM announces his intention of continuing the armed struggle from a group encampment in Papua New Guinea.**

One of the leaders of the armed opposition group OPM, Danny Kogoya, recently released after having been a prisoner, declared his intention of continuing his armed struggle until the independence of West Papua had been achieved. During an interview with Radio Australia from the Victoria military encampment in neighbouring Papua New Guinea, Kogoya announced that he currently had 200 active combatants and another 7,000 in reserve, though it is hard to verify those figures. Kogoya, who acknowledged his group's difficulties in obtaining armaments and munitions, also urged several of the leaders of the secessionist movement in exile to meet with him at the above-mentioned encampment (one of the group's principal historical bastions) in order to strengthen the OPM. Last month, the governments of Indonesia and Papua New Guinea signed an extradition treaty that some sources think may be used to extradite Kogoya. However, the prime minister of Papua New Guinea declared that the treaty only applied to common criminals, not to activists, and that the two governments had not yet defined the exact scope of the extradition treaty. The government of Papua New Guinea does formally recognise the sovereignty of Indonesia over West Papua. (ABC Online, 10/07/13; Radio Australia, 09/07/13)

**MALI: Instability persists despite the lifting of the state of emergency and establishment of the MINUSMA**

At the beginning of July the UN took control of the peacekeeping mission in Mali (MINUSMA). With this handover of power, soldiers from all over Africa will form part of the mission. The forthcoming 28 July elections in the country are also giving rise to various actions aimed at improving security in Mali. On the one hand, the army re-entered the city of Kidal, controlled by the rebels and whose occupation had become one of the greatest obstacles to the holding of elections on 28 July. This recovery took place thanks to a peace agreement between the rebels and the government that culminated with the voluntary return of the rebels to their barracks under the supervision of the UN peacekeeping forces. Alongside that, the state of emergency that had been in place in the country since January was lifted. With the approach of the elections, however, several altercations have taken place between members of the Tuareg community and the black African population, culminating in four deaths and many wounded. Inter-community tensions persist in Mali, and despite the presence of Malian troops in Kidal since the beginning of July the troops have remained in their barracks in order to avoid confrontation with the population at large and the rebels. In the face of the tensions that still exist in the country, Tiebele Drame, architect of the June ceasefire, has withdrawn his candidature for the forthcoming elections on 28 July due to rejection of his proposal for postponement of the elections. According to Drame, optimum conditions do not exist for the holding of elections. Indeed, four electoral officials were kidnapped and later released in the north of Mali, on the outskirts of Kidal. At the same time, a bomb was found in the city's market. Finally, Nigeria has announced the withdrawal of many of its troops from the UN mission, due to the internal needs in Nigeria itself. (BBC, 05-06/07/13; BBC, 17-19/07/13; Reuters, 01, 12, 17-19/07/13; All Africa, 19/07/13)

**NIGERIA (BOKO HARAM): Instability persists in the north of the country as a result of the armed actions of Boko Haram and the government response**

An attack on a school in the State of Yobe by the insurgent Boko Haram group left 42 dead and forced the authorities to close all schools in the region as a precaution, owing to other such attacks in recent times. The State of Yobe in the north of the country was declared an emergency zone by the government in May. According to the Nigerian army, the Islamist bases in the north-east of the country were substantially destroyed thanks to a military

offensive that lasted two months and that led to the detention of many members of the armed group and the release of several kidnapped persons. The Nigerian government recently announced the withdrawal of its troops from Mali and Darfur, where peacekeeping missions were in place, due to the internal violence created by the Boko Haram attacks, which according to the government, mean the army must be there to re-establish security in the country. (BBC, New York Times, IRIN, EFE, 05-06/07/13; Reuters, 15, 17/07/13)

### **SERBIA – KOSOVO: The Kosovar parliament passes an amnesty law, under pressure from the EU, in order to speed up the integration of the Serbian population in Kosovo**

In a second vote in mid-July the Kosovar parliament passed a proposed amnesty law, posited by the government and also urged by the EU within the framework of the process of dialogue for the normalisation of relations between Serbia and Kosovo. The objective of the law was to accord an amnesty to all persons who had been accused of certain criminal offences between 1999 (after the end of the war) and June 2013. The initiative arose out of a concern that the Serbian population of Kosovo accused of resisting Kosovar legislation might be jailed once the Serbian-majority zones of Kosovo came under the control of Pristina, even though decentralised. The text was nevertheless rejected in parliament in the first vote at the beginning of July, with sectors of the opposition accusing the government of promoting a piece of legislation that could be used to absolve senior politicians involved in criminal activities. Other sectors called upon Serbia to reciprocate in relation to the Albanian population in the south of Serbia. In reviewing the measure, the government withdrew clauses such as those that reduced sentences for people condemned for crimes such as murder, harassment, defamation or theft, which has also generated much controversy. A clause was also added, removing an amnesty for criminal offences that had resulted in physical injury or murder. The foreign minister of the EU, Catherine Ashton, had for her part urged Kosovo to pass the amnesty law. (Balkan Insight, 5-19/07/13)

### **SOMALIA: The government denies the existence of peace talks with al-Shabab**

The minister of defence, Abdihakim Hagi Mohamud Fiqi, denied media reports claiming that the government was involved in peace talks with one of the leaders of al-Shabab, Muktar Robow Abu Mansur. The minister pointed out that the government was pleased at the dispute taking place between al-Shabab factions, and also at the desertions that had been occurring, while stressing that the government was not at present holding “official talks” with members of the breakaway faction of al-Shabab. In June, the leader of al-Shabab, Ahmed Abdi Godane, ordered the arrest and execution of various leaders of the group, among them Ibrahim Afghani, Hassan Dahir Aweys and Abu Mansur. While the first was executed, the second handed himself over to the Somali authorities and the third managed to escape to the region of Bakool. The governor of Bakool, Mohamed Abdi Tall, has informed the media that Abu Mansur was indeed in the region and that the local authorities were holding talks with him. The comments of the minister of defence came in response to the information from the governor of Bakool. Alongside this, clashes occurred between government forces and al-Shabab militants in the region of Bakool, in which at seven people died. Clashes also occurred in the capital of the region of Bay, Baidoa, between government forces and the security officers of the city’s deputy mayor, causing at least three deaths and leaving dozens wounded. And in that same region, the Ethiopian security forces began a withdrawal from various districts. Finally, mortar attacks occurred on the Digfer hospital in Mogadishu (under construction, financed by Turkey), the third mortar attack in three months in the capital. (Garowe Online, 06, 09, 10, 15 and 18/07/13)

**SUDAN (DARFUR): Seven UNAMID soldiers die as a result of an insurgent attack**

The clashes between the army and the insurgency which had been occurring over recent months in rural zones of the region reached urban zones, occurring in the second largest city of Darfur. In parallel, seven Tanzanian soldiers in the hybrid UN/AU peacekeeping mission (UNAMID) died and 17 were wounded when attacked by an armed group in the region of Khar Abeche. It was the worst attack on UNAMID since 2007. The attacks on blue helmet soldiers may constitute war crimes, according to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), for which reason the ICJ has stated that it will investigate and try the attackers if the government of Sudan does not take proper action. Finally, the UN confirmed the withdrawal of two battalions of Nigerian soldiers from the mission at the requirement of the government of Nigeria. (BBC, 14/07/13; Reuters, 04, 13, 17/07/13; All Africa, Tanzania's Daily News, 21/07/13)

**SUDAN-SOUTH SUDAN: The UN Security Council extends the mandate of the UNIMISS until 2014**

The UN Security Council has extended until 14 July 2014 the UN mission in South Sudan (UNIMISS), focused on consolidating peace and security in the country and on establishing optimum conditions for development. A positive response was accorded to the intentions of the UN secretary general, who aims to reorganise the mission geographically so that soldiers are concentrated only in zones of high risk, for the purpose of protecting civilians. Clashes continued in several regions of the country, among them the State of Jonglei, which suffered fresh outbreaks of violence that left thousands of people isolated due to humanitarian agencies being unable to reach the zone. Since its independence two years ago, South Sudan has suffered sporadic inter-community violence and tensions with Sudan owing to the border conflict. In this regard, South Sudan will have to cut its oil production at the end of July owing to the Sudanese government's closure of the cross-border oil pipelines. Those pipelines are the only outlet from the country for its crude oil. The closure comes as a result of the alleged support of the government of South Sudan for the rebels fighting against Sudan along the frontier. Oil is the country's main source of revenues, for which reason it is feared that it may collapse if the pipelines are indeed closed. (UN, 11-12, 15-17/07/13; Europa Press, 17/07/13; Reuters, 19/07/13; Reuters América Latina, 20/07/13)

**TURKEY (SOUTH-EAST): The Kurdish armed group PKK warns of the risk of a standstill in the process of dialogue if the Turkish government does not take forward steps**

The former president of the executive committee of the KCK/PKK and new leader of the armed branch (HPG), Murat Karayilan, warned that the process of dialogue between Turkey and the Kurdish movement could shortly come to a standstill if Turkey fails to take forward steps. Among the reasons for the standstill, Karayilan pointed to the lengthy imprisonment of many Kurdish politicians. Some sources estimate at several thousand the number of Kurdish activists, politicians, journalists and lawyers awaiting trial, within the framework of the operation against the Kurdish KCK/PKK organisation. Karayilan said that another reason for the standstill was the violent reaction of the police to Kurdish demonstrations in the district of Lice (Diyarbakir, south-east) at the end of June, leaving one dead and nine seriously wounded. At the beginning of July, the Turkish government expressed its determination to go ahead with the process, but pointed out that the second phase was not starting because the first, that of the withdrawal of the PKK to outside Turkey, had not been completed. The Kurdish group, on the other hand, had announced at the end of June the completion of the withdrawal. The Kurdish BDP party declared that all units of the PKK were in movement, withdrawing, and that the vast majority had already left. Alongside this, the governing bodies of the Kurdish movement (KCK and Kongra Gel) at the end of July announced a political manifesto, in which they reaffirmed their commitment



to the process of dialogue, a unilateral truce and the process of withdrawal of the Kurdish forces to the north of Iraq, while also announcing civil mobilisations to put pressure on the Turkish government. Later, at the end of July, after another visit by Kurdish MPs to the main leader of the KCK/PKK, Abdullah Öcalan, in prison since 1999, the latter said that the process was continuing with seriousness and rigour, and urged the Turkish parliament to present democratic reform with the start of the new parliamentary period, in October. (AFP, 1-18/07/13; Firat, 12/07/13)

## PROGRESS

### **PHILIPPINES (MINDANAO-MILF): The government and the MILF reach an agreement on distribution of wealth and generation of revenue**

The government and the MILF announced an agreement on distribution of wealth and generation of revenue, one of the four appendices of the Framework Agreement on Bangsamoro whose signing remained pending. With this agreement, there remained only two appendices so that the two parties could sign a definitive, all-round peace agreement. The agreement on distribution of wealth and generation of revenue was reached during the 38th round of negotiations in Kuala Lumpur, which had to be prolonged for a further two days due to no agreement having been reached by the end of the four days of talks initially scheduled. The appendix provided for 75% of the revenue from exploitation of natural resources being managed by the government of Bangsamoro, though it also stipulated that the revenue from the energy sector would be divided equally between both governments. Several analysts feel that the signing of this agreement was of the utmost importance, as Mindanao is one of the most underdeveloped regions in the country and has practically no taxation system to ensure the public administrations have sufficient funds. (Philippine Star-17/07/2013; BBC, Philippine Star, GMA, 14/07/2013)

### **INDIA (ASSAM): The government agrees to concede the status of “catalogued tribes” to five communities of Assam, one of the demands of the ULFA**

Following a tripartite meeting between the central government, the government of Assam and a delegation of the ULFA, New Delhi agreed to concede to five communities of the State of Assam (Moran, Motok, Chutia, Koch-Rajbhongshi and Tai-Ahom) the status of “scheduled tribes” (“catalogued tribes” or “recognised tribes”). That had been one of the main demands of the faction of the ULFA that participated in the peace negotiations with the government and had been led by Arabinda Rajkhowa. When the central government made the decision official, most of the population of the State of Assam would be recognised as “scheduled tribes”, thereby guaranteeing, among other questions, property rights, the impossibility of disposing of their land, and the assignment of a certain number of seats in the legislative assembly of the State. For its part, one of the cultural organisations representing the Bangladeshi community in Assam frontally opposed the measure, considering that it decisively eroded their rights and wellbeing, thus leading to a major crisis being anticipated in Assam if New Delhi did finally approve the measure. According to the government, one of the chief problems that Assam had suffered in recent decades had been the inter-community clashes between indigenous communities of Assam and the immigrant population. (Times of India, 05 and 14/07/2013)

### **ISRAEL – PALESTINE: Israel announces the release of Palestine prisoners as a goodwill gesture ahead of the re-opening of peace negotiations**

Israel accepted one of the main demands of the Palestinian Authority for re-opening the peace negotiations, and undertook to release an as-yet unspecified number of Palestine prisoners, according to the Israeli executive. At the end of July, under the auspices of the

US Secretary of State, John Kerry, the direct talks between Israelis and Palestinians will be re-opened in Washington, having been halted at the end of 2010. Israel will be represented by the minister of justice, Tzipi Livni, while the Palestinian Authority will be represented by the negotiator Saeb Erekat. Among the main Palestinian demands for returning to the negotiations was the release of 350 prisoners, more than one hundred of whom had been in prison since before the Oslo agreements of 1993. According to the organisation Addameer, there are 4,979 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails. According to Palestinian sources under a status of anonymity, Kerry had offered the parties a new system of negotiations. The Whitehouse will be issuing an official declaration that will establish the basis for non-binding negotiation on the frontiers of a future Palestinian State, on the construction of settlements in Cisjordania and East Jerusalem, and on the right of Israel to exist and defend itself. Each party will be able to negotiate by accepting or rejecting the points in that declaration, thus offering the parties the ability to enter into negotiations despite internal opposition, without great commitments. The PLO is demanding that the basis be the achievement of a Palestinian State in accordance with the 1967 frontiers. At present, some 500,000 Israelis are living in settlements in Cisjordania and East Jerusalem. Since he took possession of his post in February, Kerry has visited the zone on six occasions, seeking minimum points of agreement to salvage the peace process. (El País, 19, 20/07/13)

## **MYANMAR: The council that groups together the national minorities is proposing Aung San Suu Kyi as mediator in the peace talks with the government**

The United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC) is proposing that the opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi take part as mediator (or at least as observer) in the peace talks that the government is holding with the Council, which groups together organisations that represent the country's national minorities. Aung San Suu Kyo has occasionally shown herself prepared to take part in measures for managing the armed conflicts that Burma had suffered in recent decades. The UNFC request came shortly after delegations of the government and the UNFC had met in Thailand and agreed to meet again in the first week of August, also in Thailand. During their meeting, both parties had discussed the current political and social situation, the government road map for achieving peace with several armed groups and the demands of the UNFC. One of the chief obstacles in the way of progress in the peace process has been that the government seeks to achieve a ceasefire agreement of national scope and only later deal with the political demands of the various armed groups, while the UNFC considers that the talks on a ceasefire and on the political causes of the conflict must be carried out in parallel. In addition, the president of the lower house and of the officialist USDP party, Shwe Mann, called for a greater participation by congress in the peace process and in ensuring that any agreements eventually reached do not run counter to current legislation. (The Irrawaddy News Magazine, 03, 10 and 15/07/2013; Mizzima News and KIC News, 11/07/13)

## **SOMALIA (SOMALILAND): The government and Somaliland reach an agreement in Istanbul for joint management of air space**

Peace talks were held from 7 to 9 July between the federal government of Somalia and the self-proclaimed Republic of Somaliland, located in the north of the country. The Turkish government had hosted and facilitated the holding of those talks for the second time since April. Referring back to the prior documents achieved in preceding rounds held in Chevening, Dubai and Ankara, the document signed by both parties in this third round lays down, firstly, joint running of the Somali air space, by proposing the creation of a bilateral control body based in Hargeisa for joint running of the air space and dividing of the benefits deriving from it; secondly, a commitment of the parties to continue with the talks; and thirdly, scheduling of the next meeting to be held in Turkey within the next 120 days. This agreement is seen by various analysts as a triumph for Somaliland, following the line

embarked upon at the London conference in February 2012, in which the British government showed its ongoing support for a solution based on a negotiation between equals (“two-state” solution). The federal construction of the State of Somalia meets with the sympathy of the various regional entities and governments, since it means the creation of a national entity with power divided between the federated States and the government, with running closer to the citizenry and respecting the clan-based majorities and minorities of the country. However, while the anti-federalists promote the existence of two States, Somaliland and Somalia, the present situation and the Constitution also recognise Puntlandia and Jubalandia. (Garowe Online, 8, 10 and 11/07/13)

## **THAILAND (SOUTH): The government of Indonesia shows ready to involve itself in the peace talks between the insurgency and the government of Thailand**

The government of Malaysia, which is facilitating the peace talks started at the end of February between the government of Thailand and the armed opposition group BRN, has declared that both parties have undertaken to put an end to the episodes of violence during Ramadan, up to approximately 18 August. In the event of violent incidents occurring, both parties are said to have committed themselves to verifying them through a joint team. Despite the existence of serious doubts about the degree of authority that the leadership of the BRN has over its cells on the ground, both Malaysia and Bangkok have shown themselves to be optimistic concerning a reduction of violence over that period, in which the government of Thailand is thought to have undertaken to reduce counterinsurgency operations, replace soldiers by police officers in certain regions and send certain prisoners closer to their places of origin. The government of Indonesia has also shown a willingness to take part in the peace process if so requested by the government of Thailand. In that respect, the foreign minister declared that his potential role would not necessarily involve direct participation in the peace talks, but rather sharing his experience in the resolution of conflicts in Indonesia, such as the Aceh conflict. For its part, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) also expressed its total support for the negotiations under way, though without referring to one of the demands publicly posited by BRN: participation of the OIC as an observer in the peace negotiations. (Bangkok Post, 08 and 10/07/13; Bernama, 21/07/13)

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