

Borders in the Limelight

March
2015

This monthly memo provides a snapshot of recent news articles related to border issues in Africa. Apart from capturing the latest delimitation and demarcation activities on the continent, additional emphasis is placed on cross-border cooperation, security, conflicts, migration, economic activity and experiences of everyday life in African borderlands.

Ce memo mensuel offre un aperçu de plus récents articles tirés par la presse au niveau des questions transfrontalières en Afrique. D'ailleurs, à part expliquer les derniers développements au niveau des activités de délimitation et démarcation frontalière, une importance supplémentaire a été attachée à toutes questions liées à la coopération transfrontalière, la sécurité, la migration, l'activité économique et la vie quotidienne des régions frontalières africaines.

EAST AFRICA

[Kenya to build a wall on Somali border to keep out al Shabaab](#)

Kenya, guardian Africa Network, March 2, 2015

Kenya is going to build a wall. Not just any wall, but a “separation barrier”, to employ the euphemism coined by Israel to describe the towering, snaking structure that now separates it from Palestine’s West Bank.

Kenya’s version will be built along sections of its notoriously porous border with Somalia. A physical rendering in bricks, mortar and barbed wire of a line on the map.

“Construction works will begin soon. We expect to have finished the project before the end of the year,” said Lamu county governor Issa Timamy, as reported in the Daily Nation. Further details on the project are not yet forthcoming, and Lamu county have not responded to requests for comment.

All that is known is that the wall will be erected along the sections of border near the coast, and that its intent will be to keep out illegal immigrants from Somalia as well as dangerous al-Shabaab militants. A threat felt keenly after al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the Westgate mall attack in Nairobi in 2013.

Can countries really shut themselves off from their neighbors?

“This is where immigrants have been arrested trying to cross into the country or having already entered through the border in Lamu. This is a good idea and we support it because we believe it will go a long way to secure this region and indeed, the country as a whole,” said Timamy.

Walls are a comforting proposition. There is something reassuring about shutting the everyone else out and pretending as you go to sleep at night that the world’s problems are not yours; that the bad guys can’t get you.

But how does this theory translate on to the international stage? Can countries really shut themselves off from their neighbours? Can cartographical borders become man-made barriers? (...)

Uganda denies massing troops in South Sudan along Sudan border

The Africa Report, March 3, 2015

Ugandan troops based in South Sudan are not massing along the Sudan border, Ugandan military officials said on Tuesday; after Sudan's state news agency reported 16,000 Ugandan soldiers were due to arrive near the frontier.

Sudan's Suna news agency on Monday said Ugandan soldiers were massing near the border to fight rebels opposed to President Salva Kiir's government, a move that Sudan finds "unacceptable and presenting a danger to Sudan's stability".

Uganda, however, denied the allegations.

"That is a bad lie. Ignore it," Uganda's military spokesman, Paddy Ankunda, told *Reuters* in a text message.

Senior Sudanese government officials said Suna's report was representative of Khartoum's concerns.

"The second issue is Uganda's hosting of Sudanese rebels so this is a very serious step for us," a senior Sudanese official told *Reuters*.

Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni and Sudanese leader Omar Hassan al-Bashir, two strongmen who came to power in late 1980s, have had a historically fraught relationship.

Uganda sent troops to South Sudan soon after clashes broke out in Juba, the capital, and spread to major oil producing regions in December 2013.

Uganda has been credited with giving South Sudan's military an edge over rebels loyal to Kiir's former deputy Riek Machar.

A representative of those rebels, Goi Yol, at peace talks in Addis Ababa agreed with the Suna report and warned the troop movement could "escalate the war" at a time when the two sides are within reach of a deal.

"It is mind-boggling that we are having more troops being added at this point," Yol said shortly before Kiir and Machar were due to meet for another round of negotiations.

Analysts and Western diplomats have voiced concerns that the South Sudan conflict could destabilize east Africa and suck other countries into a regional war, as happened when Congo was engulfed in chaos and violence between 1998 and 2003.

Burundi, Tanzania discuss border demarcation to meet AU deadline

SPY Ghana, March 9, 2015

Members of the joint commission in charge of border demarcation between Burundi and Tanzania met Monday in Burundian capital Bujumbura to expedite the border demarcation process to meet the African Union (AU) deadline set for 2017.

Representatives of partners including the German Cooperation Agency (GIZ) and the AU attended the meeting aimed to mobilize funds in order to finalize the work before the AU deadline. “We have met to discuss the achievements already made and the way forward. Our financial partners have accepted to finance our activities on border demarcation between Burundi and Tanzania,” said Brigadier General Ildephonse Habarurema, chairman of the commission on Burundi side.

He said he is sure that the border demarcation will meet the AU deadline before 2017 with the financial aid promised. According to Habarurema, everything is in place for the demarcation of the border between Burundi and Tanzania.

“The only challenge we are facing is that the 450 km long border from the north in the province of Muyinga to the south in the province of Makamba is a hilly terrain. Thus, it is not easy to set up demarcation terminals,” said Habarurema.

According to him, members of the joint commission mandated to determine the border demarcation between Burundi and Tanzania are going to deploy to the field to explain to the citizens on borders about the necessity of the work.

The outdated border demarcation was done in 1924 during the colonial period. The demarcation is aimed at complying with an AU deadline for African states to have determined their borders by 2017 to avoid possible conflicts.

The AU and the GIZ support the convening of the Burundi-Tanzania Joint Technical Committee meeting on Border Demarcation

AU Peace and Security, March 13, 2015

Bujumbura, 13 March 2015: Members of the Joint Commission in charge of Border Demarcation between Burundi and Tanzania concluded their Joint Technical Committee meeting on the reaffirmation of the international boundary between the two countries, in Bujumbura, Burundi. The JTC meeting, which took place from 9 to 13 March 2015, was supported by the African Union Border Programme (AUBP) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH.

The meeting reviewed the implementation of the plan of activities developed by the two countries in 2014. The two countries, which have been engaged with the AUBP since 2011, were each represented by fifteen members from the relevant National Boundary Commissions in charge of border demarcation.

Speaking during the opening session, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Burundi, Amb. Salvator Ntacobamaze, acknowledged the support provided by

the AU and the GIZ, and reiterated the importance of implementing the AU Border Programme's Strategic Plan 2015-2017, as part of the efforts to promote sustainable peace and development in Africa.

On his part, the Head of the AUBP, Amb. Aguibou DIARRAH, commended the initiative taken by the Government of Tanzania and of Burundi in the implementation of their demarcation exercise. He urged the two countries to accelerate the signing and ratification of the African Convention on Cross-Border Cooperation.

The meeting adopted the joint Work Plan for 2015-2016. The meeting was concluded with a visit, by the Joint Commission, to the demarcation site at the Burundi – Tanzania Border.

Sudan and South Sudan conclude the third meeting of their joint border commission

AU peace and Security, March 20, 2015

Addis Ababa, 20 March 2015: The Joint Border Commission (JBC) of the Republic of South Sudan and the Republic of Sudan concluded, on 18 March 2015, in Addis Ababa, its 3rd meeting, with the signing of an Agreement for the establishment of an Escrow Account to meet the cost of demarcation of the boundary between the two States. The three-day meeting was held under the auspices of the African Union Border Programme (AUBP) and in accordance with the JBC Resolutions adopted in Juba, South Sudan, from 7 to 8 February 2015.

The Agreement was signed on behalf of the Republic of South Sudan by Mr. Michael Makuei Lueth, Minister of Information and Broadcasting, and, on behalf of the Republic of Sudan, by Dr. Al Rasheed Haroun Adam, State Minister at the Presidency, in the presence of representatives of the AUBP.

The meeting also adopted the final list of the members of the Joint Technical Team (JTT) consisting of equal numbers of surveyors, cartographers and other relevant experts from each State, as proposed by the JBC session of February 2015. The meeting also considered and adopted the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Joint Demarcation Committee (JDC) to manage and supervise the boundary demarcation exercise.

The signing of the Agreement marks a new step in the implementation of the Cooperation Agreements signed, between Sudan and South Sudan, in September 2012, under the auspices of the AU High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP). It also constitutes an encouraging development in the implementation of the AUBP, whose two core objectives are the delimitation and demarcation of African borders where such an exercise has not yet taken place and the promotion of cross-border cooperation, notably on the basis of the AU Convention on Cross-Border Cooperation, also known as the Niamey Convention.

WEST AFRICA

Abidjan accueille une réunion sur la sécurité frontalière entre la Côte d'Ivoire et le Liberia

French.news.cn March 11, 2015

ABIDJAN, 10 mars (Xinhua) -- Une réunion sur la sécurité dans les régions frontalières entre la Côte d'Ivoire et le Liberia s'est ouverte mardi à Abidjan avec pour objectif de renforcer la coopération et d'accompagner le développement des régions frontalières entre les deux pays.

"Le mécanisme de coopération qui nous réunit renforce la coopération entre la Côte d'Ivoire et le Liberia, c'est un indicateur de sécurité durable et de prospérité pour ces deux pays et la région", a déclaré la représentante du secrétaire général de l'Onu pour la Côte d'Ivoire, Aïchatou Mindaoudou.

La rencontre, la troisième du genre, réunit des représentants des gouvernements ivoirien et libérien et des forces onusiennes présentes dans les deux pays.

Aïchatou Mindaoudou a insisté sur la nécessité d'"accélérer et de rendre encore plus efficace la coordination des échanges entre Etats partenaires" pour résoudre les questions de sécurité dans les régions frontalières. Elle a encouragé les efforts pour "opérationnaliser" la structure de coopération dans les domaines de la conduite d'opérations sécuritaires synchronisées de part et d'autre du fleuve Cavally.

Dimanche, le président ivoirien, Alassane Ouattara, a dit vouloir demander un "droit de poursuite" aux autorités libériennes pour juguler les attaques meurtrières en territoire ivoirien perpétrées par des individus armés non identifiés qui passent la frontière.

Des opérations militaires terrestres coordonnées par les armées des deux pays avec l'appui de l'Opération des Nations unies en Côte d'Ivoire (Onuci) et la Mission des nations unies au Liberia (Minul) ont permis de renforcer la sécurité frontalière.

"Toute avancée pour opérationnaliser cette stratégie renforcera nos réalisations communes en accompagnement des efforts des autorités dans la sécurisation des régions frontalières entre la Côte d'Ivoire et le Liberia", a indiqué la patronne de l'Onuci.

Le ministre ivoirien des Affaires étrangères, Charles Diby Koffi, a pour sa part, annoncé "la réactivation de la grande commission mixte de coopération" entre la Côte d'Ivoire et le Liberia.

C'est un "cadre de concertation et d'échanges" pour trouver des "solutions idoines" aux problèmes communs que rencontrent les deux Etats, a-t-il souligné.

A en croire Charles Diby Koffi, la reprise de la coopération bilatérale augure des "perspectives heureuses" en termes de mise en oeuvre de projets structurants en matière d'interconnexion hydroélectrique ou routière, d'activités génératrices de revenus ou de projets à impact rapide pour les populations locales.

Il a souhaité que la réunion fasse des recommandations sur la tenue à Abidjan d'une réunion du Conseil conjoint des chefs coutumiers et des anciens des communautés transfrontalières, le retour des réfugiés et le renforcement des actions conjointes de sécurisation à la frontière.

LIBERIA: Grand Gedeh, River Gee Agree To GPS To Resolve

Border Dispute

GNN Liberia, March 13, 2015

The people of Grand Gedeh and River Gee Counties have agreed for national government to use the Global Positioning System (GPS) to resolve a long-running border dispute between the two counties.

Stakeholders of the two counties reached the decision at the end of a three-day boundary harmonization meeting held in the towns near the disputed boundary.

The delegates resolved that the use of the GPS in the disputed area would establish the main points between the two existing customary boundaries.

The disputed area is located between Killepo, Kanweaken in River Gee County and Putu Pennokon in Grand Gedeh County.

The towns are on the main highway linking the capital cities of the two counties---Fish Town, River Gee County and Zwedru, Grand Gedeh County.

The meeting was attended by the Superintendents, District Commissioners, Legislative Caucuses, Elders, Traditional Leaders, Women and Youth Groups of the two southeastern counties.

A release from the Ministry of Internal Affairs Friday said the proceedings were held in a peaceful manner. The delegates from the two counties recounted both the historical and traditional bonds that unite the people of Grand Gedeh and River Gee Counties.

They advised their citizens against any form of violence while awaiting the survey and affirmed their commitment towards the peaceful resolution of the boundary dispute.

The boundary harmonization meeting was organized by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and facilitated by the Carter Center.

Meanwhile, the Ministry praised the leaderships of the two counties, including their Legislative Caucuses, for the peaceful manner in which the meeting was conducted.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs also commended the Carter Center for the level of support to the government's community-level peace initiatives, especially involving traditional leaders.

Ghana: Security experts fret over ill-defined maritime borders

The Africa Report, March 18, 2015

Maritime security experts meeting in Ghana's capital, Accra have expressed worry over vaguely defined maritime borders in the West African region, which they say have encouraged pirates to launch more attacks along coastal areas.

The West African region has suffered several attacks by pirates and other gangs of criminals in recent times, from Angola to Nigeria and in Togo, Benin and Ghana.

A Ghanaian registered fishing vessel was hijacked a few months ago and moved across borders to Nigeria, but when the vessel was released one crew member was dead and two are still missing at sea and presumed dead, Ghana's chief of naval staff Rear Admiral Geoffrey Mawuli said on Tuesday.

A Ghanaian navy ship also succeeded in rescuing a hijacked vessel and arrested eight armed pirates, who are currently standing trial in Accra.

"We, the naval forces and other security agencies have to stay a step ahead of the criminals," Mawuli told participants at the second coastal and maritime surveillance Africa conference and international defence exhibition, 2015, underway in Accra.

"The criminals take advantage of our ill-defined international maritime borders to commit crimes in one country and immediately move into another country's territorial waters to evade arrest.

"Pirates and other criminal gangs have been emboldened and are launching more daring attacks and also becoming more violent."

The falling crude oil prices are also said to be a threat to security in the region, while dwindling investments in the offshore oil and gas industry are likely to impact on investments in maritime security.

Ghana's interior minister, Mark Owen Woyongo, said crimes at sea have assumed alarming proportions and pose a huge threat to global commerce, particularly in West Africa.

Stakeholders in the maritime industry are making huge investments in infrastructure, driving the need for security and protection solutions, he said.

The threats confronting African states in the maritime domain are transnational crimes perpetrated by the same criminal gangs, Woyongo noted, and called for interregional and interagency efforts to combat maritime crime which has taken centre stage in the Gulf of Guinea.

The conference is one of the initiatives the security experts are taking to help naval forces in the West African sub region share ideas and harmonise strategies to deal with rising pirates and other criminal activities.

Nigeria election: Borders closed

BBC, March 25, 2015

Nigeria has ordered the closure of all its land and sea borders ahead of Saturday's tightly contested elections. Intelligence reports indicated that foreigners planned to cross into Nigeria to vote, Interior Minister Patrick Abba Moro told the BBC.

The presidential and parliamentary polls are expected to be the most tightly contested since military rule ended in 1999.

Nigeria is also battling an insurgency along its northern-eastern border.

Regional forces have been recapturing territory from the Boko Haram insurgents in the last six weeks.

A government statement said the borders would be shut from midnight on Wednesday to midnight on Saturday, local time, to ensure the vote went off peacefully.

President Jonathan's PDP party has been in power since 1999 when military rule ended

President Goodluck Jonathan is facing a strong challenge from ex-military ruler Muhammadu Buhari.

Thousands of Nigerians who fled the six-year insurgency, and are taking refuge in neighbouring states, would not be able to vote, reports the BBC's Habiba Adamu from the capital, Abuja.

Boko Haram has carried out cross-border raids in Cameroon, Niger and Chad.

It has denounced the elections as un-Islamic.

A state of emergency is in force in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa, three Nigerian states where Boko Haram is strongest.

Guinea closes border with Sierra Leone as it ramps up efforts to end Ebola

U.S. News, March 30, 2015

CONAKRY, Guinea (AP) — Guinea closed its border with Sierra Leone on Monday as part of new efforts to stamp out Ebola, an official said.

The current Ebola outbreak in West Africa has killed more than 10,300 people, mostly in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Liberia currently has no Ebola patients, and Sierra Leone has seen a fairly steady decline in cases in recent weeks. But the disease remains stubbornly entrenched in Guinea more than a year after the outbreak started and authorities are now ramping up efforts to eliminate the disease.

Guinean President Alpha Conde announced this weekend that emergency measures would be "reinforced" for a 45-day period in five districts, including some along the border with Sierra Leone. The decision to close the border was made in the context of those new measures, according to Cmdr. Mamadou Alpha Barry, spokesman for the national gendarmerie.

Previously, Guinean authorities had monitored people crossing into the country for symptoms of the disease.

Sierra Leone, however, was keeping its side of the border open, according to government spokesman Theo Nicol. He confirmed that the Guinean side was closed, although he said Sierra Leone had not been formally informed.

The sudden border closure caught many people off guard. Djalima Balde, a Guinean who had been visiting Freetown, the Sierra Leonean capital, was stuck at a border crossing on Monday.

"We weren't given any information," she said. "I'm here with my three children, who are hungry. But they say we can't pass."

Guinea sent security forces to the border on Friday night in response to reports that Sierra Leoneans were streaming over to avoid a three-day, nationwide shutdown over the weekend to help end Ebola.

Réapparition des cas d’Ebola en Guinée : Les mesures de prévention renforcées à la frontière

Le soleil, March 31, 2015

Le ministre de la Santé et de l’Action sociale a informé, hier, que les mesures de prévention ont été renforcées au niveau de la frontière avec la Guinée où des cas de la fièvre hémorragique à virus Ebola ont réapparu ces derniers jours. Selon Awa Marie Coll Seck, 2 médecins et 7 infirmiers ont été déployés dans la région médicale de Kolda pour renforcer les équipes déjà en place. « Ces agents de santé vont se relayer à Kalifourou, premier village frontalier avec la Guinée, où les personnes suspectes devraient être prises », a-t-elle indiqué, ajoutant que ce personnel va recevoir, dans les prochains jours, plus de matériel d’information pour expliquer aux passagers les modes de prévention. Mieux, le coordonnateur du Centre des opérations d’urgence sanitaire va envoyer une équipe à la frontière, en vue d’observer le dispositif mis en place. La maladie à virus Ebola a fait sa réapparition dans des localités de la Guinée. Ce qui a obligé ce pays de décréter, dans certaines zones, l’état d’urgence.

NORTHERN AFRICA

La Mauritanie signe le texte sur les mécanismes juridiques de l’UA

Alakhbar, février 28, 2015

ALAKHBAR (Nouakchott)-L’Etat mauritanien a signé le texte sur les mécanismes juridiques de l’Union Africaine par le biais de son ambassadeur en Ethiopie et représentant permanent auprès de l’Union Africaine, Hamadi Ould Meimou, a rapporté l’agence mauritanienne d’information.

Ces mécanismes juridiques comprennent la « convention de l’Union Africaine sur la coopération transfrontalière (convention de Niamey) » et la « charte de l’union africaine sur les valeurs et principes de la décentralisation, de la gouvernance et du développement local. ».

Ils incluent également le « protocole relatif à la création du fonds monétaire international » et « la convention de l’union africaine sur la sécurité cybernétique et la protection des données personnelles. ».

on a compte aussi le « protocole portant organisation du tribunal africain de justice et des droits de l’homme » et « protocole portant acte fondateur de l’union africaine relatif au parlement panafricain. ».

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