

## INTERNATIONAL

## Congo rebels dissolve leadership

KIGALI, Rwanda (AP)— Congo rebels fighting to oust President Laurent Kabila have dissolved their leadership, state-run Radio Rwanda reported Monday.

The decision by members of the Congolese Democratic Coalition to oust Ernest Wamba dia Wamba came after a series of overnight closed-door meetings, the radio station said.

The new makeup of the rebel leadership was to be announced later by a 12-member committee.

Wamba and his supporters boycotted the meeting of the rebel General Assembly, which was at the group's stronghold in Goma, in eastern Congo.

Wamba, a former lecturer at the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, was not immediately available for comment.

The rebels have been divided over their failure to successfully organize an administration in the eastern half of Congo that is under their control, and to rally

popular support behind the 9-month-old war.

Wamba has repeatedly accused fellow rebels of setting the stage for the return of politicians who served under Mobutu Sese Seko, the ex-Zairian dictator toppled by Kabila in May 1997. Last month, Wamba left Goma in protest and went to Kisangani, Congo's third-largest city.

Both Rwanda and Uganda initially sent troops and arms in support of the rebels, but have become openly critical

of the movement since. They say the rebels have failed to win over a population wearied by the second rebellion in as many years because of their internal divisions.

The rebels accuse Kabila of mismanagement, corruption and fomenting ethnic strife. Despite diplomatic initiatives to secure a cease-fire and a withdrawal of foreign troops, fighting has continued. Kabila is receiving military support from Zimbabwe, Namibia and Chad.

## Massive strike in Guyana crippling country

Bert Wilkinson

Special to Sentinel-Voice  
GEORGETOWN (IPS)

— Complaining of low salaries and physical and verbal abuse from parents, teachers in Guyana decided to heed a call from their union to get out of the classroom in support of a strike by the country's civil servants for higher salaries.

The Guyana Teachers' Union announced that it had had enough of the government's indifference to cries for better pay and joined about 15,000 civil servants, who have been on strike since late April. The teachers are demanding a 40 percent pay increase. The government says it can only pay 4.6 percent.

The teachers' strike will be a big blow for the Janet Jagan administration which challenged the ability of the Guyana Public Service Union to successfully call out civil

servants. The country's 9,000 teachers have not taken any strong industrial action for the entire decade and it would seriously hamper student preparation for the mid-year annual Caribbean Examinations Council examinations.

"We have been trying for months to meet with the finance minister and we have been unsuccessful," union president Bertram Hamilton said after the union called in reporters to announce it was joining other government workers on the picket line.

It was announced recently that teachers have been leaving the country in large numbers to take up more lucrative offers in places like Botswana, Nigeria and some Caribbean islands where they make up to four times the salary they earn in Guyana. More than 100 teachers went to Botswana earlier this year, and hundreds of others are

expected to leave later this year for other countries.

A Guyanan teacher with a university degree earns some \$177 per month. A two-bedroom house in the city is rented for the same amount. In order to supplement their income, many teachers have made an industry out of offering private lessons to slow learners or students preparing for examinations.

"Extra Lesson Classes," as they are called, sometimes have as many as 70 students, each paying 2,000 Guyanese dollars per month for private tuition. Some classes are held a few hours before the start of the regular school day while others are held after.

While the Education Ministry and some parents have criticized this practice, others argue that the exodus of teachers has led to a lowering of standards in a country which once boasted of a 96 percent literacy rate,

among the highest in the world.

Even government officials acknowledge a 70 percent literacy rate could be an overestimate. Off the job so far are nurses, customs officers, clerks, national insurance staff and a host of others. Other unions, including one representing municipal workers, say they will join the strike also.

Ferryboat workers have also been downed, leaving farmers with tons of produce stranded on each side of the three main rivers. The Civil Defense Commission has put out public appeals for help at hospitals.

For its part, the government is constrained by tough spending guidelines from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank and cannot make a better offer to the civil servants, Finance Minister Bharrat Jagdeo said.

## Peace Corps workers ferried out of Uganda

KAMPALA, Uganda (AP)— The United States has suspended Peace Corps operations in Uganda because of concerns about volunteers' security, the U.S. Embassy said Monday.

U.S. Ambassador Nancy Powell expressed regret about the decision to withdraw the 43 volunteers in a May 11 letter to the Ugandan government, the embassy said in a statement.

The volunteers were already leaving the East

African nation and some might be assigned to other countries, the embassy said. Peace Corps volunteers in Uganda were working on environmental conservation projects and training primary school teachers, among other jobs.

"The decision is theirs," said Basoga Nsandhu of the Ugandan president's information office.

Peace Corps volunteers first came to Uganda in 1964 but were withdrawn in 1973

because of insecurity created by former dictator Idi Amin's murderous rule and subsequent civil strife.

Operations resumed in 1991, five years after President Yoweri Museveni came to power and restored some semblance of order.

However, Museveni's government is fighting rebels in the country's north and west and a series of bombs planted in public places and vehicles have killed 47 people since 1997.

On Feb. 28, Rwandan Hutu rebels raided camps in western Uganda and kidnapped more than 30 tourists. They targeted those from the United States and Britain, saying those governments have backed Rwanda and Uganda — countries which have sent troops to back rebels trying to oust President Laurent Kabila in neighboring Congo.

Eight of the tourists, including two Americans, were hacked to death.

## WORLD BRIEFS

## SOUTH AFRICA'S FIRST POST-APARTHEID ELECTIONS SET FOR JUNE

JOHANNESBURG (IPS)— South Africa's first post-apartheid election, beset by lawsuits, legal challenges and other obstacles, now appears ready to take place as scheduled on June 2, according to the country's Independent Electoral Commission. According to published reports, the ruling African National Congress is edging toward a two-thirds majority in parliament and Deputy President Thabo Mbeki is expected to move easily into outgoing president Nelson Mandela's job. IEC chief executive Mandla Mchunu said at least 15 political parties will contest the elections nationally as opposed to the initial 60.

## AFRICA'S INCOME INEQUALITY EXCEEDED ONLY BY LATIN AMERICA

ADDIS ABABA (IPS)— Africa is the second most unequal region in the world and without a reduction in the income gap between rich and poor there may be a political explosion as the have-nots demand a piece of the economic pie, said K.Y. Amoako, executive secretary of the U.N. Economic Commission for Africa. "Africa's income inequality is pronounced, exceeded only by inequalities in Latin America," he said. According to the Economic Report on Africa, Africa's richest 20 percent receive more than half of the continent's total expenditure while the continent's bottom 20 percent share a paltry 5.2 percent. This latest findings by the ECA show that those in the top 20 percent receive nearly 10 times the income of those in the bottom 20 percent. This compares with South Asia, which has the lowest inequality ratio, where the share of the top 20 percent is 40 percent of income.

## THIRD WORLD FAVORS RADIO OVER INTERNET COMMUNICATION

UNITED NATIONS (IPS)— Group of 77, a coalition of 133 developing countries, wants the United Nations to keep radio, and other traditional media outlets, as a means of disseminating information rather than relying only on the internet. The switch to the global information super highway would give an unfair advantage to rich nations over the poor, say the developing nations. "The gap in information technology is likely to affect inter-state cooperation in a number of areas, including commercial and economic relations," said Ambassador Samuel Insanally of Guyana, chairman of the Group of 77, told the UN Committee on Information. "The United Nations must ensure that developing nations are more equitably served." Secretary-General Kofi Annan has assured the Group of 77 that the UN's Department of Public Information will continue to maintain and expand the use of traditional means of information — including radio and printed material — because of the constraints faced by developing countries in an age of computers and the global information superhighway.

## NIGERIAN IMMIGRANT'S DEATH IN AUSTRIA SPARKS PROTEST

LAGOS (IPS)— Human rights groups in Nigeria are protesting the death of a Nigerian immigrant while in police custody in Austria earlier this month. The immigrant, known as "Marcos O," died of exhaustion after being gagged by three Austrian police officers attempting to enforce his deportation. In two separate protest letters to the Austrian Ambassador to Nigeria and the Nigerian Minister of External Affairs, Ignatius Olisa-Emeka of the Constitutional Rights Project, a Lagos-based human rights group, expressed shock and outrage over Marcos' death. "The media accounts of the extreme humiliation and degrading treatment meted out to this hapless Nigerian have remained undenied by the Austrian government, thus leaving us to accept them as the true account of the events leading to Marcos O's untimely death," said Clement Nwankwo, executive director of CRP.

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