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West Africa: The Approbation of a New World Order

Alexander MEZYAEV

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The number of conflicts in Africa continues to grow, with more and more new countries getting drawn into them. The situation in West Africa is particularly grave; this part of the continent is being threatened with total destabilisation.

The armed conflict in Mali is still going on, where, at the start of 2015, the number of attacks on national and international security force personnel, most notably those working with Mali's armed forces and the UN peacekeeping mission, rose sharply. The start of the new year was also marked by new attacks on towns and villages, as well as on local leaders who support the peace process, by terrorist groups. The Malian army, the local population and UN peacekeepers are all

suffering serious losses. All in all, the UN Mission in Mali has, over the last six months, become the bloodiest UN mission currently in operation. On the eve of the new year, UN bases were even subjected to rocket attacks (1). Several days ago, UN armed forces took part in an offensive involving air strikes on certain settlements for the first time. The operation drastically altered the attitudes of those living in the north, who are now demanding the immediately withdrawal of UN troops from the country (2).

Towards the end of 2014, an uprising took place in the Republic of Burkina Faso resulting in the resignation of President Blaise Compaoré. The UN Secretary General, however, formally recognised the revolt as a “popular uprising”, and no sanctions were imposed on the new authorities. Officially, the popular uprising was triggered by the attempts of Compaoré (3), who had ruled the country for 27 years, to change the constitution so that he could run for office for a third term. Mass protests began on 28 October and lasted for four days, during which time 30 people were killed and more than 600 were injured. On 31 October, Compaoré stepped down and fled the country.

It is interesting that the internal political instability in a number of countries in West Africa is specifically linked to heads of state seeking third terms. Following the overthrow of Burkina Faso’s president, the political situation escalated in Benin, where President Yayi Boni also submitted an amendment to parliament in order to be able to run for president for a third term. In November, there were mass demonstrations in Togo, where President Faure Gnassingbé put himself forward for the elections taking place in March 2015 for a third time. Although the constitution of Togo does not prohibit such a nomination, it should be borne in mind that the current president is the son of General Gnassingbé Eyadéma, who ruled the country for 38 years (4). Mass demonstrations also took place in the Democratic Republic of Congo in mid-January, during which dozens of people were killed. These demonstrations were also caused by the desire of the current president of the DRC, Joseph Kabila, to run for a third term.

A political crisis arose in Niger after the country’s head of parliament, Hama Amadou, was accused of child trafficking. Although a warrant for his arrest was issued immediately after parliament lifted his immunity, the arrest did not take place since the suspect had by then already fled the country.

There is also still an ongoing crisis in Nigeria. Terrorist attacks by Boko Haram (BH), as well as violence and shelling, have become more frequent of late, especially in north-eastern Nigeria (5), and BH is also attacking military and security facilities with increasing frequency. The victims of these terrorist attacks are not just ‘infidels’, but also Muslims, BH militants are not just setting fire to Christian churches, but also mosques, and Muslim theologians are also being attacked. It seems that the increased terrorist activity in Nigeria is also being motivated by the upcoming elections (the country’s general elections are set to take place in February). Presidential candidates, including Muslims, are being attacked (former president Muhammadu Buhari, for example, who ruled the country from 1983 to 1985). The authorities are trying to fight Boko Haram, but their hands are tied by the constant hints resounding from the UN and, most importantly, the International Criminal Court, as well as warnings against the violation of human rights during anti-terrorist operations (6).

In recent months, BH militants have noticeably increased the size of the territory under their control. Recently captured towns include Buni Yadi (in Yobe State), Gamboru Ngala, Dikwa, Bama, Malam Fatori (in Borno State), and Maiha (in Adamawa State). A new system of government is being developed in the areas under BH control, and Sharia law is being established. In November 2014, the leader of Boko Haram, Abubakar Shekau, announced the creation of an Islamic caliphate. Its borders extend far beyond the boundaries of Nigeria into both Cameroon and Niger. The biggest terrorist attack in the whole bloody history of BH took place on 3 January 2015, when more than 200 people were slaughtered in the town of Baga.

The Ebola outbreak in West Africa has resulted in the virtual isolation of entire countries. Land and sea borders have been closed, and flights to and from these countries have been stopped. This area of total isolation includes Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Moreover, the victims of Ebola are not just those infected with the virus. Several dozen people have died as a result of clashes between police and demonstrators in various cities in both Liberia (including the capital Monrovia) and Sierra Leone. There is a state of emergency in place in all three of these countries, and elections in both Guinea and Liberia have been cancelled. At the same time, the Liberian parliament has refused to grant the country's president, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, additional emergency powers to help fight Ebola.

All the old problems still remain, including transnational crime. The amount of drugs being seized by police is increasing, but this says more about the rise in their illegal transit than about the country's success in combating drug trafficking. Attempts to save Guinea Bissau from the fate of becoming a channel for drug trafficking have not yet met with success. Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea is also flourishing...

The West Africa of today has become a major testing ground where a new model of global governance is being developed. A number of zones stand out that could later be extended into other territories. These include a zone for the West's direct control over natural resources, which the jurisdiction of national governments does not cover; a zone for the safe transit of drugs; a zone for sea piracy (international racketeering as part of international trade); a zone for large-scale medical experiments; and a zone for all-out terror (for the purposes of intimidation, for example). As an alternative, there is the zone of new and relatively peaceful neo-colonialism, where direct foreign control will be offered in exchange for the protection of a territory from all of the above... It goes without saying that this system is not only being developed for Africa.

(1) According to a report by the Foreign Minister of Mali, Abdoulaye Diop, on the night of 29-30 December 2014, terrorists attacked a ship belonging to the Mali Shipping Company travelling from Bambu to Timbuktu. On 3 January 2015, Tuareg politician Aroudeyni Ag Hamatou, the mayor of Anderaboucane and a former stalwart of the peace process, was killed as the result of an ambush in Menaka. On 4 January, several Nigerian soldiers were injured following a car bomb attack on peacekeepers in the town of Gao. On 5 January, several people died as the result of a terrorist attack in the town of Nampala, just 500 km away from the country's capital, Bamako.

(2) Malians protest over UN airstrike, a report by the TV company eNews Africa

(3) Compaoré himself came to power in 1987 following a bloody uprising, when he overthrew the government of President Thomas Sankara.

(4) His son gained power at the age of 38.

(5) In July 2014, 82 people were killed during a terrorist attack in Kaduna State. In November, an explosion in Bauchi State claimed the lives of 10 people. In the same month, 46 college students were killed and more than 80 injured in an explosion in Yobe State. On 12 November, dozens of people were injured in an explosion in Niger State. On 25 November, more than 45 people were killed by two child suicide bombers at a market in Maiduguri. On 27 November, 40 people died after a bomb exploded in Adamawa State. On 28 November, 120 people died and more than 270 were injured following an attack on Kano's Central Mosque. On 11 December, at least 40 people were killed at a market in Jos after two bombs exploded simultaneously. (Information taken from a report by the UN Secretary General "On the activities of the UN Office for West Africa", dated 24 December 2014).

(6) See the latest report (2014) by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court on preliminary examination activities in various countries.