

What is the reality of what is happening in Burundi and what is the future

By: Shabani Mwalimu

More than six months have passed that Burundi was rocked by violence after President Pierre Nkurunziza announced he would seek a third term. In the disputed July election boycotted by the opposition, Nkurunziza from Hutu - the largest ethnic tribe in Burundi, won a third term in office. About 200 people have been reported to have been killed since April as well cases of arbitrary arrests, extrajudicial killings, and speeches of hate from political leaders have been escalating generating fears of genocide. This situation has led more 210,000 to flee the country.

The situation in Burundi which is keenly watched globally has drawn attention and received concerns from the international powers who are the key players in Burundi politics i.e. Europe and the US.

Initially America's stand has been working out to have a possible political deal between Nkurunziza and the leading oppositions. This was clearly illustrated by its Secretary of State John Kerry who said on the eve of post- election violence:

"The United States is deeply disappointed by President Nkurunziza's use of undemocratic means to maintain power through an electoral process that was neither credible nor legitimate," he further said ***"It is imperative that the government of Burundi re-engage in a meaningful, serious dialogue with opposition and civil society leaders to reach a consensus on the way forward for Burundi to regain the trust and confidence of its citizens and the international community, and prevent even greater instability, refugee flows, and violence."***

So, US is not siding with Nkurunziza this time instead she is deserting her efforts to reach into a solution that will keep Burundi under her grip.

Europe which funds about half of the annual budget of Burundi favors Nkurunziza but the turmoil has raised concerns and made it playing a carrot and stick politics. Initially, European Union and Belgium halted earmarked aid for supporting recent elections. After the eruption of post- election chaos, Europe seems to continue issuing 'sanctions' but at the same calling on Burundi to hold talks on human rights violation while US presses to hold talk with oppositions.

But as the violence keeps escalating now, the US seems to quickly have accepted the step of sending a United Nations peace keeping forces based in Congo. This is after the UN adopting the French resolution to send peacemakers as demonstrated in a joint statement on Burundi issued by Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson, African Union Chairperson Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, and European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherin on Thursday, 12 November 2015. The statement expressed an urgency to convene a meeting of the Burundian government and opposition representatives in Addis Ababa, or Kampala under the chairmanship of President Museveni.

Therefore it is likely that sending troops in Burundi might force Europe to surrender into Americas' demands i.e. have political deal between the Government and the Opposition.

However the situation will not be such easy as a long standing ethnicity that makes Burundi to be a slippery state. Burundi plunged into to civil war which lasted into twelve years (1993-2005) resulting into loss of estimated 300,000 lives. This casts a darker future of Burundi one of the three countries in the eastern flank of Congo aligned to the US which serves as its strong fortress in Central Africa. Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda have been used by America to work out on uprooting European influence in the Great Lake region.

Since by early 19th Century America succeeded in taking off Burundi and other Great Lake states from Europe (France and Belgium).

Since the struggle by Western powers over Africa is still going on, more domestic wars will be witnessed. Africa needs a lasting solution Islam - true universal Ideology- that will guarantee peace and stability for all mankind.

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